

THEOSOPHY
FOR BEGINNERS
AND FOR THE USE OF LOTUS CIRCLES

BY

CATHERINE W. CHRISTIE

(Third Edition)

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING SOCIETY

BENARES AND LONDON

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

ADYAR, MADRAS, INDIA

1915

Printed by Annie Besant at The Vasantā Press, Adyar, Madras.

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To
THE NEW ZEALAND SECTION OF THE
THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
AND
TO MY FRIENDS AND CO-WORKERS OF THE DUNEDIN
BRANCH, THROUGH WHOM I CAME IN TOUCH WITH
THEOSOPHY, AND LEARNED TO LOVE AND
TO WORK FOR IT, I AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK

PREFACE

WHAT I have here written is, I know, very imperfect and inadequate, when viewed in the light of the sublime fulness of the Ancient Wisdom, but it may interest some who would be discouraged at the sight of a fuller or more learned exposition ; so I send it out hoping that it will do a little good—will at least encourage the children of our Lotus Circles in particular, and beginners in Theosophy in general, to take up the study in a more comprehensive way later on.

Each chapter contains the lesson for one afternoon in a Lotus Class, and this arrangement leaves a margin of three weeks for summer holidays.

I have endeavoured, by the use of simple language and a simple style, so to present these teachings that my readers can use them in their daily life, and thus prove their truth and value to themselves.

To me they explain all the apparent injustice in the world, give a reason for all we see in life, and the knowledge that, while our future is in our own hands, we are encompassed about by a crowd of

unseen helpers ; also that, being part of God, we can never be lost or dropped out of the great world-plan ; while far ahead of us there stands the goal of human evolution—Divinity, a glorious realisation to be reached by all, it depends upon ourselves when.

I wish also to gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to the writings of Mrs. Besant and Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, and the help received in compiling these chapters from Mrs. C. F. Gaston's excellent little catechism—a book I heartily recommend to the teachers of all Lotus Circles.

CATHERINE W. CHRISTIE

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THE few changes made in the wording of this edition do not alter the meaning of the text, they are merely corrections save in one instance, chap. xvii, where a few lines have been added.

The fact that the first edition is already sold out, shows that the book, elementary as it is, has still a work to do, and this time the author sends it forth with added courage as it is accepted and printed by our beloved President, Annie Besant, and bears the seal of the Theosophical Society upon its cover.

May it help some of the little ones to find the old, old path, and treading it, to develop the Christ within.

C. W. CHRISTIE

ADYAR, *July* 1910.

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THEOSOPHY FOR BEGINNERS

CHAPTER I

THE ANCIENT WISDOM

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul according well,
May make one music as before.

TENNYSON

AWAY far back in the early days, when the world was young and men and women were quite different from the men and women of to-day, there was only one Religion, and everyone knew it was true, because the teachers of that day were as gods among their pupils.

They were divine men, godlike in appearance, and of great stature, and majestic with a majesty born of purity, knowledge, power, and love : kings not because the people had chosen them for their rulers, but because they were kings by nature, by divine right.

No one thought of disputing their authority, or of doubting their teaching, for no one knew anything save what the kings had taught them.

In those days everything was part of religion, and the wise kings taught their subjects all that we now

learn in our schools, colleges, and universities, and a great deal more than anyone can now teach us, for the people of to-day have forgotten most of the Ancient Wisdom, and many will not even believe that the divine kings ever existed, though proofs of their existence, their knowledge, and their power abound and are constantly coming to light.

For instance, brave explorers sometimes find remains of the wonderful civilisation of those olden days in the exquisitely carved ruins of magnificent buildings—buildings much more enduring, and on a far grander scale, than any we can build, hidden away in the silent depths of great gloomy forests, or standing sentinel in the desert—the gate between past and present.

Haunted cities of a buried past are they; themselves almost buried 'neath the slowly drifting sands of the long, long, lonely ages. Then there are the wonderful Bamian statues, and the statues on Easter Island—statues representing giant men, some nearly two hundred feet high, others from one hundred down to sixty feet in height; and all were carved out of stone hundreds and hundreds of years before Christ, even hundreds of years before Buddha.

Our Bible tells us that "There were giants in the earth in those days" (*Gen. vi. 4*); that is, before the flood, for the divine kings lived long before Noah, and it was only after they left the world, and men and women had forgotten their teachings and become foolish and wicked, that the great flood came which altered the face of the earth, buried Atlantis beneath the ocean which bears its name, and left us with only fragments

of the Ancient Wisdom broken up into different religions, and now, after all these centuries, being gradually pieced together again under one of its old names—Theosophy.

The name Theosophy means Divine Wisdom, and is made up from two Greek words, "Theos"—God, and "sophos"—wise: so when we say we are Theosophists we mean that we are learning to be wise about God; that we are students of the Divine Wisdom—the Ancient Wisdom taught thousands and thousands of years ago by the divine kings.

These kings planted the seeds of the Ancient Wisdom in the minds of men, and they can never die; but if we wish them to grow we must tend them and give them room to grow.

CHAPTER II

BROTHERHOOD

Heart, are you great enough
For a love that never tires?
Oh heart, are you great enough for love?
I have heard of thorns and briars.

TENNYSON

MANY years ago, in Egypt, some European scientists, when examining a mummy, found several grains of wheat in its hand. These grains looked exactly like any other grains of wheat one might pick up, yet they had lain in that mummy's cold, dead hand for ages.

The finders planted the grains. They grew and produced fine full ears of wheat; so you see seeds will grow when given the right conditions, though they have lain dormant for ages. Now, just as these seeds lay apparently dead for ages, yet grew and multiplied when planted and tended, so will the seeds of the Ancient Wisdom, planted ages ago in the human mind, grow and increase when we give them the right conditions—a class, or a teacher at home, and patience and perseverance on our part.

Every human being has some of these seeds in his mind, planted in the human mind by the divine kings,

and handed on, race after race, as part of the nature of man.

More than this, we have the seeds of divinity within us, seeds that with care and *determined cultivation* will grow into divine powers.

These powers have lain latent in us just as the seeds of wisdom have; they cannot grow till we find them out and make our hearts soft and warm with love for them to grow in.

To do this we must love, not only every human being, but everything in the world. We are all brothers, for we have all the same father—God; and we are *His own children*, part of Him, not adopted children who may prove themselves aliens and leave Him, but His very own; so to Him we must return when we have learned all the lessons the world can teach.

The world is God's school. We come into the lowest class, and as we learn more and more we are moved up class after class till we know everything; then we shall "go out (to school) no more."

God is love; so we must make the divine seeds—the seeds of love—grow in our hearts and minds till we are all love, as God is; and the best way to begin is by loving other people. "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "This commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (I, *John*, iv. 20—21).

We must begin by loving everyone, no matter what may be the colour of his skin—white, black, brown, or

yellow, and no matter whether he be rich or poor, wise or foolish, good or bad; and we must love the animals, especially those we have petted, or attached to us as beasts of burden, or in other ways, and so made them unfit to lead a wild life or find food and shelter for themselves.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
 All things both great and small;
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all.

COLERIDGE

We must also love trees, plants, flowers, rocks, stones, and all the living creatures that dwell in and among them, for it is our Father's life that is in them all. They are in the lower classes—that is all the difference. "The birds and beasts and creeping things"—'tis writ—"touched" (and still touch) "meekly at the skirts of brotherhood."

In God's school, creatures are given different kinds of bodies when they pass into higher classes. Minerals are the hardest bodies; the life of God can scarcely move in them. Vegetable bodies are softer and more plastic. Plants can turn to the sun, or catch hold of something, and then let it go again if they do not like it: climbing plants often do this. Animal bodies are still better. They can move from place to place, and they have five senses, as we have. Human bodies are best of all; so we who live in them must remember that all the lower creatures have a right to our love and protection.

Pity makes the world
Soft to the weak and noble for the strong.

.....

Man who prays
For mercy to the gods is merciless,
Being as god to those ; albeit all life
Is linked and kin, and what we slay have given
Meek tribute of the milk and wool, and set
Fast trust upon the hands which murder them.

EDWIN ARNOLD

So taught the Lord Buddha centuries ago ; but few of us have learned this lesson yet, and, because we have not, all wild animals flee from us, and the earth is full of pain and cruelty.

Some of God's children have learned all their lessons, and so can do everything that needs to be done in the world. They are full of love for everybody and everything. No animal, however wild, flees from them. Even a tiger would roll at their feet as a pet cat does at ours. Such men have perfect bodies—beautiful, strong, majestic ; bodies that never grow old, are never sick, but remain young and beautiful as long as they are needed. These are the MASTERS whom we all love, and who remain in the world to help us instead of going away into the glorious heaven they have earned.

They are our "Elder Brothers," strong, brave, and pure—divine men, our guardians, and also the guardians and teachers of the Ancient Wisdom, just as were the divine kings of ancient times ; only, their way of teaching is different now.

CHAPTER III

REINCARNATION

Shall any gazer see with mortal eyes,
Or any searcher know by mortal mind ;
Veil after veil will lift—but there must be
Veil upon veil behind.

EDWIN ARNOLD

IN some of the deepest and darkest forests of Central Africa there are strange wild men and women—black dwarfs, with very little mind-power, very few ideas, and very strong passions. They cannot talk, for they have no language; but they make strange cries and gestures, and shrill, whistling noises, so they are called “Whistlers”.

Though they are human beings they appear to have less power of thought and less wisdom than many of our pet animals. They are in a very low state of evolution—that is, they are in one of the lowest classes in God’s school for human beings.

A little higher than the “Whistlers” come the Hottentots and the Australian aborigines, some of whom can never learn to count more than two; they say : one, two, more ; and some of them cannot remember things from one day to another.

These people are souls who have not had many lives on earth as men or women. They have not been back here very often, so have learned only a very few lessons, and can use only the lowest type of human body, the bodies of races that are dying out, because all their good scholars have passed on into higher classes and into better bodies.

If they do their best in this life, and learn all they can, they will get better bodies next time; but only if they do their best. The law is the same for them as for us.

What would you think if one of these men were to come to us and say: "There never was a yesterday, for I cannot remember it; and there can be no tomorrow, or some of us would have seen one"? You would think him very foolish indeed for thinking he could have grown a man's body in one day, and you would probably wonder how he explained the fact that he knows certain things belong to him, and that he recognises his relatives, his friends, and his enemies at sight if he has not seen and known them before to-day.

It would seem so clear to you that he brought over the knowledge from the yesterday he cannot remember, and it would seem strange to you that he did not notice how babies grow into children and children into men and women, since no baby grows into a man in one day.

Now there are people among us, people who are very wise in many matters, yet who treat the theory of reincarnation in exactly the same way that the

Australian aboriginal treats the, to him, theory of past yesterdays. They cannot remember their past lives, therefore they deny that there have been any.

To students of Theosophy this seems a very foolish position, for they are taught neither to accept nor reject any teaching until they have examined all the evidence for it, and have experimented with it themselves to see if it be true.

Having proved by these means that it is true, or untrue, to us, we Theosophists must live accordingly—as if we believe, or as if we disbelieve; and we must never judge others, or be impatient if they cannot see things as we see them.

A Theosophist must be “tolerant to all, even to the intolerant,” and he must always remember that what is proof to one person may be no proof to another. What each needs is experience—to see, to feel, to hear for himself; and having done so, he has no right to ask others to believe before they also have experienced.

CHAPTER IV

REINCARNATION—(*Continued*)

So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

• TENNYSON

IN studying reincarnation, and in speaking of it to others, we should remember that, though the teaching is almost new in our country and in our day, it is the belief of millions of people, some of whom are as wise and good and learned as any among us; and that they have kept it from the days of the divine kings, while we have forgotten it.

It is also both wrong and foolish to call these peoples heathen, just because they do not believe what we believe. Some of them think we are heathen, and even yet speak of us as "the barbarians of the West".

A story is told of some British children who, when leaving home for a trip to the Continent, said they might like foreign countries, but that they "hated foreigners"; yet a few weeks later, when travelling in France, they were very indignant upon hearing a French child speak of them as disagreeable foreigners.

We are very much like these children when we come to matters of religion, and as Theosophists we ought to put an end to such folly in ourselves at once, for the so-called heathen have in their scriptures exactly the same teachings as we have in our Bible. We and they have been taught to interpret them differently; that is all.

Now, what is the exact meaning of the word reincarnation? It means coming back again in the flesh. Like the word Theosophy, it is made up of two parts—the Latin words “caro”—flesh, and “re”—back or again; so its full meaning is coming back to the earth again to live in a body of flesh.

These bodies are ours, not ourselves, but our property. We live in them till they are too old and worn out to be of any use to us; then we leave them and they die.

We go away for a time, leaving them buried in the earth, or cremated, according to the custom of our country; and by-and-by we come back again to earth, having, as a rule, forgotten all that happened while we lived here before.

One reason for thus forgetting is, that when we return to earth, we each get a new body, a new brain, a new mind, different parents and surroundings, and often a new religion. We have to be in one of the advanced classes, one of the highest, before we can bring back the memory of the past.

Each time we return to earth we learn a little more, and between every two lives we have a beautiful holiday in Devachan—Heaven—in which we think

over all that happened while we lived in our last body. This makes us wiser, so that when we return we have grown in many ways.

Our minds are larger and stronger, and we know more to start with than we did at the close of the last life; but as it takes us some time to teach our new brain and our new body all the things we know, we appear to be just new, ignorant little babies and children.

You will remember what we learned a little while ago about the savages who cannot remember yesterday; well, in many lands, and in many of our own books, the past is spoken of as yesterday, the present as to-day, and the future as to-morrow.

The clay hardens into iron, but the potter moulds the clay.

Destiny to-day is master, man was master yesterday.

Our lives are all joined one on to the other, like links in a chain. We have a certain amount of work to do in each, and, if we are lazy one day, we have to work harder the next day, to make up. This is why work seems to be so unequally divided.

CHAPTER V

REINCARNATION—(*Continued*)

Below the highest sphere four Regents sit
Who rule our world ; and under them are zones
Nearer, but high, where saintliest spirits dead
Wait thrice ten thousand years, then live again.

EDWIN ARNOLD

HAD we always done our best—indeed, if we had but kept on steadily trying a little to do what is right—we should have had better bodies each time we returned to earth, for we should thus have earned them, and not only earned them, but definitely ordered them from Those who make the moulds or patterns of all human bodies. It is time we took ourselves in hand, and lived so as to have better bodies for our next life upon earth. We can do it if we like ; but most of us are lazy, so prefer to keep coming back again—doing turned lessons.

Each time we return to earth-life we come to learn new lessons, and do new tasks ; so we come into all kinds of human bodies, into different countries, and into very different circumstances.

When we make mistakes in judgment, or do what we know is wrong, thinking it will bring us something

we desire, we suffer. In our next life, when the same choice meets us, or the same temptations come to us, conscience says: "*Don't*," for conscience is the memory of unpleasant experiences.

We cannot yet remember events, and it is well that we cannot—we could not bear it. But some day we shall remember, some day when we are in a much higher class; and meantime conscience is memory enough.

No two people have consciences exactly alike, for no two people have had exactly the same experiences; therefore we should be charitable to others. They act differently from us because they have had different experiences in the past, and we have no more right to say they are wrong than they have to say we are wrong, and they, as well as we, may say with the Apostle Paul: "Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?" (I. *Cor.* x. 29.)

One of the most important things we have to do is to control our bodies. Your body is yours, not you. Feed it as you think best. Do not give it all it wants; it has very little sense, and will eat, drink, and sleep either too much or too little, unless you keep it in order.

If you wish to have a healthy body you must be its master; and as it is a creature of habit, it will soon learn to like whatever you choose to give it.

A refined body cannot be made from coarse food, therefore be careful to eat pure food. The flesh of animals is not pure food. This is why so many Theosophists, and an ever-increasing number of people who are not Theosophists, refuse to eat it.

Alcohol also coarsens the physical body, so those who wish to refine their bodies will take neither flesh-foods nor alcoholic drinks. You may, of course, please yourself when you are men and women ; but remember, if you wish to hasten your evolution, that is, if you are in a hurry to get into the higher classes, you must refine your body in this life, and earn a good body for next life, in order to do it, and that eating flesh and drinking alcohol is as foolish for you as putting lumps of lead on his heels would be for a man who meant to run a race and wished to win.

This getting exactly what we deserve is called karma, and karma must have a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER VI

KARMA

Higher than Indra's ye may lift your lot,
And sink it lower than the worm or gnat ;
The end of many myriad lives is this,
The end of myriads that.

EDWIN ARNOLD

KARMA is a Samskr̥t word, meaning action. Every action produces an effect, that is, makes a difference to somebody or something ; thus it is a cause first and an effect afterwards. Therefore we speak of karma as " the law of cause and effect " .

Throwing a stone is an action ; the stone strikes a pane of glass and breaks it. The break is the effect of the action of throwing, but this is not all. The broken window is now the *cause* of further trouble. Your pocket-money, perhaps, has to go to replace it, and you are thus unable to buy the present you so longed to give your mother or a friend, and the effect upon you is a feeling of keen disappointment. This may make you moody or irritable, and, unless you are very careful, you may allow the disappointment or the irritability to become the cause of your doing something else that is wrong, and so on. There is no end to the result of action, no end to karma ; so when

we are wise we shall be very careful, indeed, about our actions, so that their effects will be good.

Every action is first a cause, then an effect, which in its turn becomes a cause and starts something else; so it is possible for us to do an action that will start something good and helpful, which will go on and on, making a chain of love and goodness right round the earth till it returns to us again in blessing—good karma—and makes us strong enough to start a bigger and a better chain.

Throw a pebble into a lake, and watch the effect. There is a splash, and a number of little rings form round the place where it strikes. See how the rings gradually widen and widen till they become too wide and too slight for our eyes to follow.

Wider and wider they grow, till the last one makes a tiny wave on the shores of the lake. That little pebble has moved every drop of water in the lake, and its work is not yet done. The shores of the lake are hard and unyielding. They throw back the tiny wave, but very gently, for its force is well-nigh spent. The water then moves back till it once more slightly pushes the pebble that caused the disturbance, but the pebble now lies quietly on the bed of the lake, and the water this time receiving no resistance settles down soft and still over and around it.

The effects of our actions come back to us just as the waves do to the pebble; and so long as we are angry with them, and angrily try to throw them off, just so long shall we make new waves for karma to beat back upon us and disturb us.

If we are kind, and keep ourselves peaceful, the returning waves of trouble will grow weaker and weaker and gradually die down altogether, but never till they have gone right to the end and come back to us again.

This is a hard lesson to learn, but every one in the world has to learn it, so it is wise to begin at once.

Enter the Path! There spring the healing streams
 Quenching all thirst! there bloom th' immortal
 flowers,
Carpeting all the way with joy! there throng
 Swiftest and sweetest hours!

EDWIN ARNOLD

CHAPTER VII

KARMA—(*Continued*)

The Books say well, my Brothers, each man's life
The outcome of his former living is ;
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,
The bygone right breeds bliss.

EDWIN ARNOLD

ONCE a big brown bear with her three little ones was walking through a forest looking for something to eat. They came upon some honey in a trough under a tree, from a branch of which a great log was suspended, so that it hung immediately over the trough and almost down upon it.

The bears could get the honey, but the log was in the way, so the mother bear gave it a push and they all began to eat. The log swung off, and came back, hitting her on the head. She grew very angry and knocked it away savagely. Out it went, further than ever, and came back with a bigger sweep, struck one of the little ones and killed it.

Furious now, the mother struck at the log with all her force ; it swung out, came back with a great rushing sweep, struck her again upon the head, and killed her, leaving two frightened, motherless, little bears whimpering in the big, lonely world.

Poor old bear! She did not know that the log couldn't hurt her unless she set it in motion, so she was not to blame; but we know better. We know that everything we do comes back to us, so we are to blame if we lose our tempers and set things going which come back upon us and hurt us.

All this going out and coming back to us is the working of the law of cause and effect, or karma. We call it karma, because it is easier to say "karma" than the law of cause and effect.

There are several kinds of karma, but most of us speak as if there were but two—good karma and bad karma. When anything pleasant comes to us and makes us happy, we say it is good karma. When anything comes to us that hurts us, or makes us unhappy, we say it is bad karma. When we speak or think in this way we make a mistake; there is no bad karma.

Everything that comes to us is right and good. If we dislike it, we may be sure it has come to show us our mistakes, or prevent our doing wrong. If we like our karma, it has come to show us we have done right, and we must never forget that karma knows nothing whatever about us. It neither loves nor hates, rewards nor punishes. It is never angry, never pleased. It is simply "The Law," and everyone and everything that moves is making it—making karma; that is, setting the law in motion.

Karma knows nothing about us. Does the fire know us when it burns us? No. It is the nature of fire to burn, to give out heat. Keep at a safe distance, and it

warms us and gives us pleasure or light, cooks our food for us, or burns up anything we wish to be rid of; but go too close, use it wrongly, and it hurts. Its work is to burn, and it knows nothing of the result—that is our affair, and we are foolish if we grow angry and blame it because we have made a mistake.

Here are some things our Bible says about karma : “ Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he shall also cry himself, but shall not be heard ” (*Prov.* xxi. 13) ; and again, “ Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out ”—reincarnate no more (*Rev.* iii. 12) ; and again, “ Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap ” (*Gal.* vi. 7).

We see differences, inequalities all around us. Some are rich, others poor, some beautiful, others deformed. We see invalids who spend nearly all their lives in pain, and people who are so strong and healthy that they scarcely know what pain is. And now that we have heard of karma we know the reason—each is reaping just what he sowed, and at the same time getting another chance to learn his lesson, and we must never lose an opportunity of helping, for that is our chance.

For instance, if we see a drunken man in a ditch, it is his karma to be there, certainly—his karma for being drunk. But it is our karma to help him, otherwise we should not have seen him ; and, having seen him, if we do not help him, we have made what we call bad karma, and shall be neglected ourselves when in need of help.

Never mind about his deserving to be there—that is not our business ; help him. That's why we passed that way. Had it been his karma to die unaided, no one would have seen him.

All rich people have earned riches, poor people have earned poverty. There is no unfairness, no favouritism ; so it is foolish to be envious if poor, or purse-proud if rich, as it depends upon the way we use things whether we shall get them again. All rich and healthy people are not happy ; all poor and all sick people are not miserable : watch them, and notice who are happy. Those who are happy in spite of circumstances are the people who are in, or who are going into the higher classes in God's school.

CHAPTER VIII

KARMA—(*Continued*)

Who toiled a slave may come anew a Prince,
For gentle worthiness and merit won ;
Who ruled a King may wander earth in rags
For things done and undone.

EDWIN ARNOLD

OUR future is in our own hands. We can make it what we will, but we cannot alter things all at once. It has taken many lives to bring us to our present position, and it may take a long time to get away from it or alter it.

We, western people, both old and young, are generally in far too great a hurry. If things do not move at once, we grow impatient and cease trying. We are like the men spoken of in an old Chinese proverb, we find an egg and expect it to crow. We must be persevering and patient, and in the end we shall overcome all difficulties and receive "our heart's desire"; and we have the promise of our Heavenly Father to cheer us: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out"—reincarnate no more (*Rev.* iii. 12).

Again we are told: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, *that* also shall

he reap" (*Gal.* vi. 7). Therefore, sow happiness, and you will reap it; sow misery and disease, and you will reap misery and disease.

We see inequalities and apparent injustice all around us—rich and poor, the beautiful and the deformed, the clever and capable, and beside them the stupid, the idiot, and the insane. Why these differences? They are reaping what they sowed—either in this life or a past one; and now that we have learned about the law of karma we need not fret over them, for we know there is no injustice, because in this reaping they are learning a new lesson and getting another chance.

No one has abundance, no one is starving unless he has earned it; and all now depends upon how he uses his abundance or bears his misery and starvation, whether he will again have the same circumstances or something very different. If we do not learn our lessons the first time they are given us, we get them over and over again until we do.

Although every one gets exactly what he deserves, that does not excuse us from helping those who are suffering. If we meet someone who is hungry, it is our duty to feed him, give him half of our food if we cannot give him a whole meal for himself; even give him all, if his need is great and we can do without. If it had not been his karma to be fed, and our karma to feed him, we should never have been allowed to meet.

All people—children as much as older folk—have some things in their lives they value and are proud of, and some things they dislike, are ashamed of and would like to hide; sometimes it is worldly position,

sometimes a name or a peculiarity in appearance, or inability to do something that others do easily, and other children constantly remark upon it or purposely annoy them about it. If we have never heard of karma, we naturally grow angry at this and quarrel ; but Theosophical children should check the feeling of anger, and remember that in a former life they have earned it, perhaps even wished for it, or prayed for it, and now that it has come, it is folly to fret or be unhappy. It is wiser to make the best of it, so that it will never come again. It only comes back, like the bear's log, if you fight it, or is a lost opportunity if you misuse it.

CHAPTER IX

ALCHEMY

Unconquered will, unslumbering eye,
Faith such as bids the martyr die,
The prophet's glance, the Master's hand
To mould the work his foresight planned.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

THE word alchemy is made from two Arabic words—"al kimia"—the secret art. Some scholars say it comes from one Arabic word "al," and one Greek word "chuma"—a melting or fusion. We will take all three words—al, kimia, chuma—and these three words taken together mean the secret art of melting or fusion; and that is the full meaning of alchemy.

For thousands of years there have been alchemists—clever, learned men, who have spent all their lives in trying to find out the great secret of how to change one metal into another; they all try and ever have tried to change the base, common metals into gold, and many strange and some terrible stories are told of their doings, for, although they were learned and clever, they were not all good.

While they were trying to find out this great secret they discovered many other things that ordinary folk knew nothing about, so people grew afraid of

them and angry with them, even when they did not purposely use their knowledge to frighten or harm others. Sometimes, indeed, they feared them after being helped by them; so the alchemists were hunted out of the towns when discovered, and were sometimes killed. But there was no killing the wish to know, so others arose to help those that escaped.

They had often to hide in queer out-of-the-way places, and resort to strange ways of carrying on their work, but nothing could stop them. At the risk of their lives they kept on; for when human beings are quite sure a thing is worth having, they will get it or die in the attempt.

Alchemy is of two kinds—physical and spiritual; and in both men are doing the same thing—trying to find out the same great secret: how to change base, worthless, common things into pure, valuable, rare gold.

The physical alchemist tries to change or transmute other metals into gold. The spiritual alchemist tries to change and succeeds in changing the lower human passions of anger, jealousy, hate, envy, etc., into the pure gold of peace, kindness, love, and generosity.

No ordinary physical alchemist has succeeded in making gold from other metals, but many spiritual alchemists have changed all that was common, base, and bad in their natures into purity, goodness, and love; and now They are willing to teach us to do the same.

They are so pure, so strong, and so beautiful, that we cannot but love and reverence Them. They are

the Masters of Wisdom, and what They have done we can do if only we persevere. They tell us that the only failure is ceasing to try.

Just as at the end of a school year or term there is an examination which some pupils succeed in passing, while others fail, so at the end of a term or period in the life of a world there is an examination in alchemy, and only those who are pure gold in character can pass.

It is a very difficult examination, and the pupils have a hard, rough, narrow path to tread, with a strait gate at the end through which only characters of pure spiritual gold can pass. It is hard to find, too, this gate; and many give in before they reach it, so "few there be who find it" (*Matt.* vii. 14) during each term, and get through.

Those who fail have to come back to school and try again.

CHAPTER X

ALCHEMY—(*Continued*)

Wisdom and love shall win the roughest hearts ;
So shall the angel who has closed for man
The blissful garden since his woes began,
Swing wide the golden portals of the West,
And Eden's secret stand at length confessed !

O. W. HOLMES

WE have all come back to school, and each one of us is now busy at two kinds of work—sowing and reaping. Reaping the result of our last life upon earth, and sowing seeds of joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, for our reaping in lives to come.

Let us see how a knowledge of spiritual alchemy will help us to tread the "narrow way," pass through the "strait gate," and so be of "the few" who succeed.

There are three main things in each of us which must be changed from bad to good, from base to pure : (1) Thoughts ; (2) Desires ; (3) Actions.

THOUGHTS make character, and give us our human companions for next earth-life and for the Heaven-world as well as for this.

DESIRES make opportunities and habits.

ACTIONS make environment, that is, all the things that surround us—our home, the place we live in

—town or country—our social position, whether high or low, and therefore the kind of work we have to do, and the result of it in poverty or riches.

We can be anything we desire to be, when we know how to act, and there is no escape from the results of our actions.

Bad thoughts are those which hinder us, hinder our evolution; that is, they prevent the good seeds—the seeds of our divinity—from growing in us; they also pass out from our brains and hinder other people.

We cannot stop thinking. We shall always have thoughts, so we may as well have good ones. When a bad thought comes, think of its opposite, fill your mind with it, then the bad one will have no room to live.

If an unkind thought comes into your mind, make yourself think a kind one. The two cannot live together; and as good is stronger than bad, it will either turn the bad right out, or gradually change it into good, and you will have done some spiritual alchemy.

If you find it difficult to think kindly of a particular person, go and help him in some way. We always end in loving those we are kind to, and we grow like our thoughts too; thus thoughts make character.

Your thoughts bring you your companions by going out from you to them, and causing them to think of the same things. If your thought is bad it makes them worse than they were before it came to them; and then you get them for companions partly because you and they are alike, and “like draws to like,” and partly because you must have an opportunity of helping them after having done them harm.

Bad desires are those which hinder you by filling the space which should be filled by good helpful ones, and they must be changed, or they will make bad habits, and bring opportunities for doing bad deeds. Like thoughts, our desires "are always with us".

If you persist in desiring something which belongs to another, your desire will keep you near the thing you want, and some day you will take it and become a thief.

Desire only good things, things of the soul and spirit, for they will make you a helper, a blessing wherever you go. Examine your desires, and if they will make you a helper of others keep them and use them; then all lower ones will gradually change their nature. Your feelings, too, will change, and you will have learned spiritual alchemy.

CHAPTER XI

ALCHEMY—(*Continued*)

Feet, knees, nerves, sinews, energies divine
Were never yet too much for men who ran
In such hard ways as must be this of thine.
. The heroic heart
Within thee must be great enough to burst
Those trammels buckling to the baser part.

E. B. BROWNING

THE last thing to be changed is action. It is last, because it is the outward expression or working out of thought and desire. Actions are as a rule the result of thoughts and desires which we have encouraged until they have grown too strong to be suppressed.

Your actions in past lives have given you your present home, your wealth or your poverty, and your social position. Your actions now are making all these for your future.

Do kind actions, and you will reap kindness. Share your money, your food, your clothes, your pleasures with others; and by and by, if not at once, money, food, clothes, and pleasure will come back to you from others.

If they are long in coming back to you it is because you are paying off some old debts, old karma for unkind actions in the past, and there is no room as yet for the good things to come into your life ; but sooner or later all will come back to you.

Be selfish, or greedy, or unkind, and some day you will be poor and hungry and badly treated. Be unselfish, loving, and helpful, and some day you will be cared for, loved, and helped. This alchemy is the only sure road to happiness, because it is the only right one—the only way that changes those who walk in it from weary travellers into joyous helpers.

Be kind to those in a lower position than yourself, and you will rise to a still higher position. Be cruel and an oppressor, and you will come back a serf yourself.

Turn hate into love by doing kind actions to everyone and everything. We always end in loving those we help. Try it ; try helping someone or something you do not like, and you will soon prove this to be true.

Hate is like cold, rusty iron ; love is pure gold. Be an alchemist, and a successful one.

At first you will do right actions for the sake of the results ; it is a good beginning, but only a beginning. Gradually you will grow into goodness, and do good actions because it is your nature to do them. You will then have changed your whole nature into the pure gold of loving unselfishness, and the world will smile at you because you smile at it.

The world is very like a great mirror. We see ourselves in it. If we scowl at it, it scowls back ; if we

smile, it smiles. So be wise, and smile. Even though the smile is but skin-deep at first, it will go deeper in time, and like sunshine will warm you right through.

Be spiritual alchemists, turning all base things into love, joy, peace. It can be done; it is worth doing; BEGIN NOW.

CHAPTER XII

MAGIC

Divinest Magic ! hid within the heart
Of all that sorrows, joys, lives, and hath need ;
Thy life in ours makes choice of " better part,"
And moves within us till the soul is freed.

CHITRA

MAGIC ! Hold yourself perfectly still and think of this word as you say it. Now, if I could read your minds I should see a picture in each of them. Some of you will have a picture with a great and terrible genii for a central figure ; others will have a beautiful fairy, or a company of fairies ; while others will have wizards, witches, spectres or weird-looking alchemists, and all will have something strange, unusual, and delightfully terrifying.

It is delightful, is it not, to see terrifying things at a safe distance, and to know that they cannot come any nearer, unless one invites them ? And yet we say they might—and then, oh ! Now, this is just how most people feel when they hear the word magic. They keep it, and all they think it means, in a quiet corner of their minds ; and now and then, when they have

nothing else to do, and are very comfortable, they take it out and pretend to frighten themselves with it. They look at it all dressed up in the fantastic garments of their thought, and enjoy the little thrills of sham fright it gives them. Then half glad, half sorry that no one believes in magic now-a-days, they put it back again, and forget all about it until they are in some great difficulty, when, with a sigh, they remember it, and wish it were true and real, and that genii and fairies, wizards or brownies could be appealed to.

Theosophy helps us when we are in such a position, for it tells us that magic *is* real, *is* true, and that the greatest magician is man, only he does not now know it, because he has forgotten it, and has for the time lost many of his magic powers.

English dictionaries tell us that the word magic comes from the Latin word "magus," a magician, and the Greek word "mageia," enchantment, and that it is "the *pretended* art or science of working by the power of spirits, sorcery, enchantment ; the secret operation of Nature's causes".

Theosophy agrees with this definition if the word *pretended* is omitted ; but it tells us more, far more. It says the word magic means great. In Samskr̥t it is "māhāt," and in Latin "magnus," and means Great Life, or Life in Spirit ; so to us magic is the great or divine science, and, like alchemy, it seems to be of *two kinds*, that is, it has two aspects—white and black ; the difference is one of motive.

White magic is spiritual, good, beautiful. Black magic is harmful, bad, repulsive. Neither is pretended

nor imaginary, both are real, and we all feel their influence though we may know nothing about them.

Most people of our day and race have forgotten all about magic, so it is unfashionable to believe in it; but as our motto is, "There is no Religion higher than Truth," we must learn all we can, and speak out bravely when we know a thing is true.

Every child, every man and woman, is slowly but surely becoming either a white or a black magician. It depends upon themselves which.

A few know this, and those who know it work harder than the others, no matter which line they are on. The black magician works with the bodies, the white magician with the mind and spirit of man.

CHAPTER XIII

MAGIC—(*Continued*)

The "still, small voice" within hath ever been
The motive-power divine of deeds exprest ;
The strongest forces those that work unseen
Within the forms by them made manifest.

CHITRA

A BLACK magician is selfish. He works for himself and against others, so hinders evolution. A white magician is unselfish and loving, works for others and so aids evolution. If both do the same good deed, good in its outward effect, even then one is bad and the other good according to his motive; for in magic goodness or badness depends entirely upon motive—upon the spirit of the action.

For instance, a black and a white magician might both save a life, say the life of a boy: the black magician because he wanted that boy's help in some of his selfish schemes; the white magician because he loves everyone, and so loved the boy though that boy were his worst enemy. Both magicians have done a good deed, so both have made the karma of added safety from death by accident; but the black magician has injured his character by his bad motive, while the

white magician has improved his by his good motive, and yet both have done the same thing—a seemingly good action. The motive makes all the difference—a difference in character, and character is constantly making new karma.

The path to black magic is the path of selfishness. It is a very broad path in its early stages. It has to be, for everyone tries it first, and on it everyone carries so many possessions that he needs a great deal of room, and is very angry indeed and very abusive if anyone gets in his way. People at this stage are always quarrelling.

No one on this path has time to help another, and the further he goes the less he feels inclined to help; for rougher and darker grows his path, and more and more unkind and cruel his travelling companions, till at last, as a rule, he can bear it no longer and turns back.

For some time after he turns he differs from the rest in only one particular—*his face is turned in the right direction*, and every step is taking him nearer the white path, though he knows it not.

He is still selfish, like the others, and he still holds on to all his possessions; but this is much more difficult than before, for now he has to push through the crowd going in an opposite direction, and they hate him for making their way more difficult. Gradually he drops one thing after another from sheer weariness; and then, thinking he must surely die, now all is gone, he is surprised to see the light from the White Path shining in the distance, and it looks so bright and attractive

that he pays it more and more attention and gradually comes nearer and nearer to it. He then discovers that ever since he turned back he has been travelling towards the junction of the two paths, which ran parallel and close together at first, and he is now so close that with a little effort he can step from one to the other.

CHAPTER XIV

MAGIC—(*Continued*)

He that to his prejudice will do
A noble action and a gen'rous too,
Deserves to wear a more resplendent crown
Than he that hath a thousand battles won.

POMFRET

OUR returning pilgrim is now so close to the White Path that he sees clearly the faces of the travellers upon it, and is struck by their happy, hopeful expression, the numbers of radiant helpers there, and the ever-increasing joy of the helped as they in turn help others.

He sees too that they, unlike those on the Dark Path, have less and less to carry as they go, because in some mysterious way they change all their burdens into powers, into character, and the more they help others the stronger they grow, so that when they come to very hard places they have grown so strong that these seem no worse, no harder to get over, than the little difficulties they met at the very beginning.

In helping others thus, the travellers on the White Path grow so loving and beautiful that the light of unselfish love shines through their bodies and lights

up the dark places of the path, not only for themselves but for others.

Seeing this, the man returning from his weary journey on the Dark Path tells it to those around him, but they are much too anxious to get on their own way to listen to him. No one believes the story of the Dark Path till he has tried it for himself.

Some poor deluded pilgrims tread the Dark Path right to the end, but only those who go by the White Path have gained happiness by their long, hard pilgrimage.

Towards the end of the journey the others are powerful certainly, but they cannot reap the full benefit of their strength; they cannot combine, for they cannot trust each other.

Each lives for himself, is hard, cruel, and unloving, and would sacrifice a comrade to advance himself. Having trod the first stages of the path, and become more or less powerful, they are called Black Magicians and Brothers of the Shadow. They are not happy though they are powerful. No one is happy unless able to love, and a Black Magician has killed out love.

Not only this, sooner or later he finds out that, however hard he tries, he can never be quite as strong as the White Magicians—the Brothers of the Light—and this is a very bitter truth to him.

These two classes of brothers—for they are all our brothers—are always in opposition: the White aiding evolution, the Black trying to hinder it. The latter try to hinder it because they know that when it

is complete they will lose their power, and must in new worlds—on a new chain of globes—begin the long, long weary journey anew.

Some of them find out before the end, and take as their karma the work of tempting and trying souls, when such trials are necessary. They do this because they cannot suddenly change their nature after building it up for ages and ages; and in doing this dreadful work because it has to be done, and in order to work off their bad karma, they are really converted. They are no more working selfishly, and they rejoice when human beings are strong enough to resist them. Marie Corelli wrote a story about one of them and called it *The Sorrows of Satan*.

CHAPTER XV

MAGIC—(*Continued*)

In good or ill leave casuists on the shelf,
He never errs who sacrifices self.

BULWER LYTTON

AS at the beginning, the two paths are so close together and so much alike, we must be very, very wary lest we step aside and get on to the wrong one. To keep on the White Path we must watch our thoughts, our desires, our actions, and our feelings toward others with very great care.

There is one unfailing test which each one can put to himself, thus: am I, in taking this step, harming anyone? Does the doing of this make me love or hate my companions? Does it make me care most for loving or for being loved? If answering all these questions honestly he finds that he is harming no one, and that he is growing in loving sympathy for all beings, he is on the right path.

If, on the other hand, he finds he is growing more and more determined to have his "rights," no matter who suffers, and that he dislikes those who hinder him or get ahead of him, he is on the wrong path, and had better do "right about face" at once.

Every Theosophical book upon magic, and every true teacher of the Ancient Wisdom, warns us against the smallest beginning of selfishness, and against using any magic powers to help ourselves. It may be a very long time before we have such powers, but some day we shall have them, so it is wise to guard ourselves from the very beginning.

Jesus had magic powers, and He is our example in this as in all things. He fed the five thousand when they were hungry (*Mark* vi. 41), and He made wine from water to quench the thirst of the guests at the marriage feast (*John* ii. 3-9). Yet when He Himself was "an hungered," He would not make bread, though His doing so could have hurt no one, and though the king of the Black Magicians—the Devil—tried to persuade Him to do it (*Matt.* iv. 3). Jesus knew all the rules of White Magic, for He had trodden every step of the White Path and has left His footprints that we may follow.

All the Great Masters—the Holy Ones—have conquered everything that we must conquer. They never ask us to do anything that They have not done, and They know we can do it all too by the power of spiritual alchemy, the seeds of which are lying dormant in each one of us, ready to grow into magic powers as soon as we are ready and willing to cultivate them.

At the end of the White Path all are White Magicians, clothed in the dazzling white robes of purity, and with a golden halo shining round each head—the golden halo of pure Buddhi, pure wisdom and love that

has changed every selfish thought and desire into its own beautiful nature.

Such Beings are our Elder Brothers, and They are so good and so powerful that They are entrusted with the knowledge of Nature's hidden laws; can calm the raging seas, as Jesus did (*Mark* iv. 39); can "remove mountains"; can appear in any part of the world at any moment, and enter any place though doors and windows be shut, "because they love everything, and are therefore all-powerful and afraid of nothing," for perfect love casteth out fear.

Wild animals, poisonous serpents, beasts of prey, all know a Master and love Him. Lions and tigers roll at His feet and purr as cats do at ours. Nothing will harm or can be harmed by One who is all love.

The "*fear* of the Lord" is only the "*beginning* of wisdom" (*Pslam* cxi. 10). The end is love, the "perfect love which casteth out fear" (*I John* iv. 18).

CHAPTER XVI

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN

Man is his own star, and the soul that can
Render an honest and a perfect man
Commands all light, all influence, all fate ;
Nothing to him falls early, or too late.

FLETCHER

A CONSTITUTION is something that has been built up, or set up. The word is made from two Latin words—"con," with or together, and "statuens," setting up. When we use it in speaking of ourselves, of men, we mean one of two things : either his natural frame of body or his peculiar temperament. If you look in your Lotus Class Catechism you will see a whole chapter of questions and answers there under this heading, and every one of them deals with one of the bodies we use every day and every night.

This is a very puzzling and a very interesting subject, and we are fortunate in having Theosophical books to learn from, as they tell us more about it than any other books.

The Bible tells us of two of our bodies—a natural body and a spiritual body—and it gives us many hints about the others, but no details. Theosophy, which

gleans knowledge from all the scriptures of the world—that is, from all the Bibles of other nations and peoples, as well as our own—tells us much more clearly. It tells us that we have always four bodies: (1) the Physical, (2) the Astral, (3) the Mental, and (4) the Causal; and that when we understand them we shall not only be able to use them all together, as we do now, but separately, one by one, as we require them and according to the part of the world we wish to visit. For just as we use a ship at sea, a balloon in the air, and a carriage on the ground, so we need different bodies or soul-vehicles for different planes of nature; and some day we shall understand this perfectly.

We shall then at will leave our physical body asleep, even during the daytime, and go away to any part of the world in our astral body, and in that body visit the whole of the astral plane.

This seems very wonderful to us when we hear it for the first time, but it is only the beginning of the wonders opened up by the teachings of Theosophy. Every night you leave your physical body so that it may sleep. It is only a human animal, and must sleep, or it would die; so you leave it to its rest, and go wonderful journeys, clothed in your astral body.

The mental body is still more wonderful and more beautiful. In it you visit the mental plane—that plane of matter in which we do all our thinking, and where all our thoughts are made before they get into our brains.

The causal body is the only body that lasts throughout the whole of our human incarnations. It is the

most beautiful of all, because only the very best parts of us can enter into it.

It is always in the highest part of the heaven-world, and we go back to it after each earth-life, and come out of it and back to earth again every time when we are ready for and require a new physical body.

The causal body is our real home and our treasure-house. All we have that is worth keeping is stored up in it. When we speak of going back into it after death, or of coming back to earth from it, we mean that we have made a change in our consciousness; not that we have ever really left the causal body. We are always in it. You will understand this better when you have read the chapters about the mental plane or heaven-world.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN—(*Continued*)

The mould of a man's fortune is in his own hands.

BACON

THIS beautiful causal body which lasts us through all our human incarnations is made in part of the outside layer of a group-soul, and holds within it that part which has learned most from life in the bodies of a number of animals—has reached the top of its class, and has there learned something the other parts could not take in.

Still striving to learn more, it kept reaching up higher and higher towards the life and wisdom of God which it felt stretching downwards to help it, till, one day, it broke away from the animal-group, and, springing upwards, joined itself to the higher, and the two became one—a transparent, oval, egg-shaped body, something like a soap-bubble before the flashing colours appear in it.

In this egg-shaped, transparent body which it has made for itself, the soul lives till the end of its human incarnations, for it is now a human soul.

It has all the experiences of animal life in it, joined to the higher life from above, the life of the higher

mind; and now it is a human being, sending down out of itself soul after soul into the world to learn lessons in a body and bring them back to it at the end of each life. Every life on earth puts something new and beautiful into the causal body; and everything that goes into it appears as a brilliantly flashing colour, so it grows more and more beautiful as the man grows in wisdom and understanding.

We call it the causal body because it contains all the causes of our future actions, thoughts, desires, and circumstances.

The result of everything that has happened to us is stored up in it, and this is in turn the cause of all that is going to happen to us. It is our treasure-house, our treasure in heaven, which nothing can take from us and nothing can spoil.

Everything that is worth keeping is stored up in there for us, and is ours for ever; and that is why the Lord Jesus tells us: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (*Matt. vi. 20*).

Those who can freely use their mental bodies tell us that the causal bodies of people differ very greatly. Ask your teacher to show you the pictures of the causal bodies of (1) a savage, (2) an undeveloped man, (3) a developed man, and (4) an Adept, and you will see how very different they are.

You will find all these pictures and many more in *Man Visible and Invisible*, a book by C. W. Leadbeater. The causal body of a savage is almost empty in

appearance ; but, as the man develops, learns more, all he learns appears in the causal body as beautiful flashing colours, and great streams of light, full of wisdom and love, pour out from it for the help of others.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN—(*Continued*)

The mind's the standard of the man.

WATTS

OUR three lower bodies—the mental, the astral, and the physical—last for only one incarnation; so if we do our best in one life, we gain something new, something worth putting into the causal body. Part of what we thus gain goes to make our new mental body for next life, and in this way we shall, if we have done our duty, get a better mental body every time we return; and this is of great importance to us, as man is a thinker, and the mental body is our body of thought.

We use our mental body when we study and when we think. No one can be a good student and pass examinations with credit unless he has a good mental body, and no one has a good mental body until he has worked for it.

Every time you think, you are building your mental body; and when you try very hard to understand something, and think all around it, you are building well.

When you have worked hard at building your mental body for a time, something unexpected generally happens, something that tests your powers of thought. Perhaps some problem that you found too difficult six months ago comes under your notice, and you are surprised to find it less difficult. You take courage, and try again to solve it, and lo! it comes out right the first time. This shows you that you have been building well in the meantime, and it encourages you to go on.

We are always getting such tests. There are many examinations that no earthly examiner sets us.

Have you ever watched a stone or brick building going up, and noticed how every morning it is a little bigger than it was the day before? Stone after stone or brick after brick is built in, and the walls grow day by day till the building is complete.

Your thoughts are like living stones and bricks, your mental body like the building, and you are the builder inside, building up your body around you. When it is finished you can alter it here and there, but you have to live in it till that life is done. It may not satisfy you; but as long as that life lasts you must make the best of it—you cannot get another. In your next life on earth you will start with all the improvements you made in your previous life, and some new and better material for building; the new material being made of the efforts and failures of last life which you have worked up in heaven, and which are now part of the contents of your causal body, and ready for your use at any time.

Each new life on earth is thus spent in a new and improved body, and as soon as you are settled in it you begin to work on it and improve it still more, unless you are lazy and let it go to ruin for want of your care and attention. If you do this, then you'll have a ruined building to begin with next time, for it will be made of the old neglected material.

The thoughts you get all by your own effort, when you are trying to understand something that no one seems able to help you with, your very own thoughts, are the best for your building. They make your mental body grow far more quickly than any others; and if you keep on thinking in this independent way, you will soon think great thoughts.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN : THE MENTAL BODY

Our ideals are framed, not according to the measure of our performances, but according to the measure of our thoughts.

A. J. BALFOUR

GOOD thoughts, such as thoughts of God and of how to help others, are like blocks of polished marble—strong, smooth, beautiful. Selfish, bad thoughts are like common clay, bad bricks, or crumbling sods, and are neither useful nor ornamental so far as building is concerned.

Either kind of thoughts will make the walls of a mental body, but think of the difference ! Who would wish to build and then live in a building of ugly sods or bad bricks, if he could build for himself a marble place ? Surely no one !

Well, it is in your own hands, this building. You can choose—indeed, you *must* choose ; no one can choose for you. You must build your own home, and you must live in it when built. Which will you choose ? Crumbling sods, or blocks of polished marble ?

Here is a valuable hint, and with it an opportunity of practising alchemy—spiritual and mental

alchemy. Every time you change a bad thought into a good one, or refuse a bad thought that offers itself and admit a good one instead, an ugly clod or brick is pushed out of your mental wall, and is replaced by a block of marble of the same size; therefore you have only to persevere in your alchemy for a long enough time, and you will be rid of all the bad material which you built in while you were foolish and ignorant, and which makes weak places in your walls. Thus you will have a perfect palace of a mental body.

The mental body is the highest and finest, and therefore the most important, of the three new bodies we get for each new life upon earth. In it we do the most lasting work, for nothing lower than mental work makes what goes into the causal body. All that we do in our lower bodies—the astral and the physical—is the result of our thinking. A wild beast does many things without thinking. He wants to do a thing, and he does it without thinking what it may lead to; but all men, especially civilised men, even when their bodies are quite young, think about everything and make plans for the future.

A performing bear once picked up a kettle of boiling water. It burned him, so he hugged it tighter and tighter, and danced about, spilling the boiling water over himself till he was nearly mad with pain and fright, but he never thought of dropping it. His nature was to squeeze an enemy to death; that was all he knew. When he recovered he would forget the kettle, but when he saw another he would probably be afraid of it and run away; yet he would not do as a

man would—think over the whole adventure, see where he made a mistake, and plan out his course of action for the next meeting with a kettle. A man would not rest till he had mastered the kettle, so as to use it against an enemy and for himself, and in thinking and planning, he would make power which would go into his causal body at the end of his present incarnation. If he used the power to harm anyone, and they paid him out so that he suffered greatly, he would think a deal about it, and see his mistake, and the memory of his mistake would go into his causal body; and in his next life, when he was tempted to do the same kind of thing, the memory would say: “*Don't*; it hurt last time.” This is what we call conscience—a memory of past experiences. Our consciences are different, because we have had different experiences.

CHAPTER XX

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN: ASTRAL BODY

So let extend thy minds o'er all the world in knowledge.

MILTON

OUR next body—the astral—is the second body we learn to use consciously. It is lower and coarser than our mental body, and it is higher and finer than our physical body.

We can all use our physical bodies, and we know them so well that many of us think they are ourselves; but we cannot all yet use our astral bodies and know we are using them, though more and more are now learning to do so.

The astral body is the body of desire. Every time we wish for anything, love anything or anyone, hate or are angry, feel happy or miserable, we are using our astral bodies even if we know nothing about them. We use many things we do not understand.

We all know how to send a telegram, or to press the button to turn on the electric light, but very few of us know anything about electricity. Well, it is just the same with our different bodies. We use them all day, and every day, yet we know very little about them.

Still, in time, we have to learn how to use them consciously, and either all together, as we do now, or separately, as the need arises, and our very next step in evolution is taken in learning to use the astral body.

We all use our astral bodies at night while our physical bodies are sleeping, and many of our so-called dreams are memories of what we have seen, heard, and done on the astral plane and in our astral bodies; and this is how and why it all happens.

You are a spirit, so you cannot sleep. You never want to sleep, for you are never tired; but your physical body gets very tired, because it is an animal, therefore it needs rest and sleep, and, if you did not let it sleep, it would die. Now, it cannot sleep while you are in it, for you keep it awake; so when it needs a rest you quietly slip out of it, and use your astral body instead.

Away you go to do a great deal of useful work that you could not do while in a physical body, and to enjoy such play as you cannot even imagine down on the physical plane.

Your astral body is not as beautiful as the mental, but is far more beautiful than the physical. It is larger than the physical, and it is luminous, and has beautiful colours flashing through it; at any rate, it ought to have, if you are trying to be good and unselfish and helpful.

There is as much difference in the astral bodies of different people as there is in their physical bodies; just as some physical bodies are coarse or badly formed, delicate, sickly or healthy, beautiful or common-place,

so you will find astral bodies ; and they are just what their owners have made them. Most of us are taught that we have had nothing to do with arranging the kind of body served out to us, but Theosophy teaches us that we have—that, in fact, everyone gets just exactly the body he or she has earned, and that no one is to blame but ourselves if we get an ugly, a sick, or a deformed body ; also, that if we have a beautiful, healthy, and strong body, we have earned that, so no one need be jealous or think we have been specially favoured. Beautiful desires and emotions make a beautiful astral body, just as beautiful thoughts build a beautiful mental body.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN : ASTRAL BODY

(Continued)

All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

THE astral body is much finer than the physical, so it is also more plastic, and is therefore constantly changing in appearance, changing with every strong emotion and every strong desire.

As a rule, it takes a long time to make much change in the appearance of a physical body but an astral body will change its appearance quite suddenly in response to every change of emotion ; so when living in it we cannot hide our feelings or our real natures as we can and often do when in the physical body. Thus the people we call bad people—those who allow anger, hatred, jealousy, greed, and other bad passions to rage through them—have very ugly, coarse astral bodies, with dark, muddy colors rushing over and through them, and each passion as it surges through makes a visible change in the astral body.

Good people—that is, people who are trying to do what is right and kind, and who check their

bad passions, and encourage love, unselfishness, and sympathy to grow in their hearts—have beautiful astral bodies, so bright and shining that they are often mistaken for angels when seen by those who do not know about astral bodies.

Just think how delightful it will be when we can remember in the morning all the lovely things we have seen when roaming about at night in our astral bodies, and all the good work we have then done as helpers! Theosophy teaches you how to remember.

Sometimes children remember dreams in which they found themselves helping others—perhaps helping a lame child to walk, showing a terrified child how to get out of a burning building, getting close to a mother and whispering softly in her ear (so softly that she takes the whisper for her own thought) that her little child is in danger, and guiding her to where the little one was playing near the edge of a deep well, or perhaps near a precipice, or making a great blazing bonfire that would soon have caught him and burnt him to death.

All these dreams are *real*. Loving little children, as well as grown-up folk, do these things in their astral bodies. Sometimes the people who are helped see them, but often they do not; that does not matter, so long as they get the help.

Long ago, in the days of Bible story, when other means of sending messages would have been too slow or too dangerous, dreams were used; and when we understand our astral bodies, and how to work in them, dreams will again be used. Of course, there are

nonsense dreams which are of no use to anyone. We will learn about them in another lesson.

If you wish to have a beautiful, useful astral body you must build it as carefully as you build your mental body; only you must use emotions, desires, and feelings instead of pure thoughts. Thought mixes with desires and emotions, but only the thoughts that are dominated by them are used in building your astral body.

You can change your emotions, feelings, and desires from bad to good, just as you change your thoughts.

For instance, if you dislike someone, and you know that is wrong, and wish to change that dislike into love, go straight away and do that person a kindness. Then every time you think of him, or see him, you will remember your kind act, feel happy, and so begin to love him, and the love will show out in your astral body as a new beauty.

On the other hand, if you allow yourself to say unkind things, or to do unkind deeds to others, your conscience will prick you and make you unhappy every time you see them. This will annoy you, make you angry, and soon you will hate the sight of them; and thus you will spoil your astral body by building coarse materials and ugly colours into it. Besides this, you cannot see true in the astral body unless you are true and loving yourself, for your thoughts and feelings make pictures of themselves all round you.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN : PHYSICAL BODY

For what is form, or what is face,
But the soul's index, or its case ?

N. COTTON

THE physical body is the body we know most about—the only body, indeed, that some people know anything about ; and those people who know only the physical body would probably laugh at you if you told them of other bodies. But we who are Theosophists have to learn about all our bodies—why we have them, and how to use them ; so we must not mind what other people, who have not studied or learned about them, say of us.

We speak of the physical body as *our body*, as if there were no other, because it is the body that our friends recognise us by, and by which we know other people. It is quite easy to say : “ My body is not I, your body is not you,” and many of us know this is true ; but we do not realise how little we know of each other, except by the body.

Suppose your mother has dark hair, brown eyes, pink cheeks, and a plump body, and one day she

came to you in a body that had yellow hair, blue eyes, pale cheeks, and was very slight and tall, you would not, probably could not, believe your mother was in it. So you see we know each other by our physical bodies, though it is not always the bodies that we love. We love the soul that lives in the body, and by degrees we grow to love the body by which we recognise the soul within.

Always remember that your body is your house, it is not you, and that you will live long after it is dead, and that you will get another body when your present one is worn out, will use it until it is old and worn-out in its turn, or is killed by accident or disease.

Some people are too fond of their bodies, so let them have all their own way ; pamper them, and so make them useless and ill. This is very foolish. A body that is ill is only a hindrance and a source of misery to us.

Our bodies require plenty of exercise, good food, cleanliness, rest, sleep, and fresh air ; and as they have no minds, it is our duty to do the thinking for them and see they get these things.

Knowing these things, we must neither spoil them by over-indulgence, nor neglect or be cruel to them. They are absolutely necessary to us, and are the very best servants we have ; but they are only animals—beautiful human animals if we take care of them—and they need all that other animals need to keep them healthy and in good working order. Without them we could not contact the physical plane—this means, we could not touch, taste, see, hear or feel any

of the things around us, could not see the emerald green of the grass, the gorgeous colouring of the flowers, nor hear the song of the lark as he soars away, away up, up into the blue sky. Nor could we see the streams, like silver threads in the distance, sparkling and flashing 'neath the beams of the sun as they ripple onward to where the great, green waves are dashing themselves against the rocks and covering them with white foam from their snowy crests.

Without our physical bodies the beautiful things of the physical plane would be unknown to us, and we should lose all the valuable lessons it teaches. Take care of your physical body, love it and train it as you would love and train a pet animal, and it will repay you by being a good servant.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN: PHYSICAL BODY

(Continued)

Moderation is the silken string running through the pearl chain of all virtues.

BISHOP HALL

Do not overwork your body, and do not ruin it by over-indulgence. Make moderation and temperance your watchwords, and it will be able to do a great deal of work for you; also be careful how you feed it, for much depends upon the choice of food.

Give it coarse food, and drink that will overstimulate and excite it, and it will gradually become coarse-looking and irritable, and annoy you greatly.

Give it finer, pure food and drink that will allay its thirst without exciting its nerves, and it will become refined in appearance, and have strong, steady nerves.

It is very easily managed in this respect, for it grows to like what it is fed with. If you give it highly seasoned food—pickles, sauces, etc.,—and plenty of flesh-foods, it likes them, and dislikes plain and less stimulating food; but when you find that coarse and stimulating food is making it unmanageable, and you

begin slowly to change it for purer and less highly seasoned things, it gradually comes round, and in the end prefers the new diet.

At first it will rebel, just like any other animal, and will long for the strongly flavoured, tasty dishes; but if you persevere, and remember always that you are the master and it the servant, it will do as you wish. Then if after, say, a year of the finer food, you were to give it one of its old coarse meals of flesh, sauces, and stimulating drinks, it would feel quite sick and ill. We are creatures of habit; and good habits get quite as firm a hold on us as bad ones, though many people forget that.

Try while you are young to teach your body to like the cleanest and mildest foods, and you will never wish for the others, and will not share in the karma of those who are so cruelly treating our younger brothers—the dumb animals, birds and fishes, who are unable to protect themselves against us.

You cannot altogether change your body in one life, but you can improve it, and can *order* a better one for next time—next life. The body you are now wearing was made for you at your own request. You ordered it by your thoughts, your actions, and your desires of last life; and a pattern or mould was made to your order, and sent down to earth, and your new body was built into it. Therefore you cannot alter the shape of it, but you can make it of any material you like.

Do you remember what we learned about the building of the mental body? Well, you can choose

the materials for your physical body too, and thus make a vast difference in its appearance and in its usefulness.

Did you ever go shopping with a shilling? You perhaps see a beautiful toy, just the thing you want. You ask the price, and find it is five shillings, so you cannot get it. By and by you come across another, just the same pattern, but it is rough and ugly. It will not work easily, and you know it won't last, but it is only one shilling, and you have to put up with it. It is the toy you want, but not a good one. It is made of coarser and less workable materials. In it is the same difference as there is between an image of brick and one of marble, or a body made of coarse materials and one made of fine.

Make your physical body of fine materials if you wish it to work well, please you, and wear well.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN : THE ETHERIC DOUBLE

How the wild swayings of our planet show
That worlds unseen surround the world we know!

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

THE etheric double is made of very fine physical matter called ether, as the name etheric implies; and it is called a "double" because it is so much like the physical body that it is often mistaken for it. Still, there is always something strange in its appearance and behaviour which makes those who see it uneasy.

It is never entirely separated from—never all out of—the physical body during life, and can never go far from it after death; but it can go a short distance away, and then it is so much like the whole physical body of the person to whom it belongs, and it acts in such a strange, silent way, also is so utterly unconscious of all but one thought or desire, that people who see it and do not understand these things are terrified, and rush off saying they have seen a ghost.

They have seen what most people call a ghost; but as the word ghost means spirit, it is not a good name for it. It is not a spirit.

Most ghosts seen by nervous, terrified people after the death of friends are merely etheric doubles; and as an etheric double cannot speak, or indeed do anything but show itself, and has very little consciousness, it is very foolish to be afraid of it.

Though it can never wholly leave the body during life, part of it can, and often does. At death it is all out of the physical body, and often goes to friends of the dead person, or to acquaintances; and it is then so like the body it belongs to, that those who see it think they see their friend. Everybody has heard of "a silent grey ghost". Well, the etheric double is a "silent grey ghost". It is violet grey, like the clouds at sunset after the pink and gold have faded out from them.

It is the vehicle of *prāṇa*, and while it is in the body it is all through it, and all round every cell in it, just as the air is all round everything inside our houses. *Prāṇa* is the life-force or life-breath, and is of a golden colour, with a rosy light shining through it. It runs through and on the ether along the nerves of the body and round the nerve-cells, and so keeps it alive and enables the nerves to do their work.

If the whole of the etheric double left the body there would be no ether in that body for the *prāṇa* to run along, so the body would die. Sometimes this does happen when a patient is kept too long under the influence of chloroform, and gets an overdose of it.

Chloroform turns nearly the whole of the etheric double out of the body, and then the nerves cannot feel anything, for they are dead for the time, nearly dead altogether. This is why doctors give people chloroform when they have to cut away any part of the body. If you had your fingers, toes, or legs badly crushed by machinery, they might have to be amputated; and if your etheric double were not nearly all outside, turned out of your body while the doctor cut them off, you could not bear the pain.

Both etheric and astral bodies leave the physical when such drugs as chloroform are put into it in great quantities. The soul will not stay in so defiled a house, so slips out, taking his other bodies with him, and leaves the physical to its fate.

CHAPTER XXV

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN : THE ETHERIC

DOUBLE—(*Continued*)

Dim, fantastic, shadowy, grey,
Glide strange ghostlike forms away,
A silent company, weird and dread,
The empty vestures of the dead.

CHITRA

WHEN we leave the physical body at night that it may sleep, we do not take the etheric double with us—it stays with its counterpart, the physical body ; and the etheric brain helps the physical brain to make what we call nonsense dreams from the thoughts that have passed through them during the day, or are attracted to them while we are away in our astral body.

All the time we are away, our physical brain is like an “Æolian harp,” and thoughts are like the breezes which play through its strings. When we return to the body we read these nonsense dreams recorded on the brain, and think they are our real dreams, but they are not ; only, they have made us forget our astral experiences.

Being made of physical matter, the etheric double cannot work in, or even enter, astral matter, so it stays

ever with its physical companion, and grows coarse or fine, as does the physical body; therefore, those people who see etheric ghosts, and understand them, can tell whether the bodies they belong to are coarse or fine.

The etheric double, like our bodies, tells tales of us; for it, like them, is built of the material we have chosen by the food we have given it. It dies when the body dies, and goes to pieces side by side with it and in the same parts; so that when a physical body is going to pieces—decaying under the ground—its etheric double hovering over the grave is a very ugly sight indeed.

On the other hand, when a physical body is embalmed after its death, and so cannot decay, its etheric double cannot break up either, and if the embalmed body is moved from place to place the etheric double goes too. It cannot help it. It is the mould of and the finer part of the physical body, and cannot be separated from it by more than a few feet.

What a strange place the mummy-room in the Museum would seem to us if we could see the etheric doubles of all the mummies hanging over the mummy cases! Sometimes these etheric doubles are used by astral beings who have no physical bodies, and then many unpleasant things happen.

Some day when we are clairvoyant—that is, when we can see etheric and astral entities—we shall be able to see these creatures and thousands of others, and be able to watch real ghost-stories being acted before our eyes.

Many people, when they hear this, say : “ Oh, that is dreadful ! I am glad I cannot see these ugly things. I'd rather not be clairvoyant ”. These people forget that a clairvoyant sees many very beautiful things that they cannot see, and that it will be the same with clairvoyant sight as with physical. We all see unpleasant and ugly and terrifying things sometimes, but we never hear anyone say : “ Oh, I wish I were blind, ” because of them ! They are too anxious to see all the beautiful things that the power of seeing shows them. We cannot have one side of anything in this world. We must take both, and the pleasant makes up for the unpleasant.

CHAPTER XXVI

CORRESPONDENCES

A man without knowledge, as I have read,
May well be compared to one that is dead.

THOMAS INGELEND

THINGS that correspond are like each other in their dimensions and in the arrangement of their parts. Some correspondences are exact, while some go nearly all the way, and others are but slight. Now, we are told that our bodies, our whole constitution in fact, correspond to that of the globe in which we live. Let us see if we can understand this, and know that it is true.

Our body is, so we are told, the temple of the living God. This means, that your body is your little world ; that you live in the centre of it, send your life through it, and govern it, and that you are responsible for what it does. In a very small, tiny way, you are to your body what the Logos is to our world and what the God of the universe is to His universe.

This is far too great a thing to understand thoroughly ; but we have to know all about it some day, so we may as well begin now, and begin by knowing ourselves,

and gradually enlarging our ideas till we can take in the thought that the whole world is the body of a great being, and is much like our own bodies, only vastly greater.

We have part of everything in our bodies that the great earth has in it; and the matter of our bodies is arranged in the same way as the matter of our planet. We are a part of God set to rule this body; and the Logos who is God of our planet is also part of Absolute Deity—that great Spirit out of which everything, both great and small, comes, and into which all returns. Separate parts, or parts that seem to be separate, are called gods, but they are all part of the One Great God—the Absolute.

If knowledge so wonderful as this can be obtained, you will wonder why so few of us know anything about even the three worlds next above the physical and our three bodies that correspond to them; and you will naturally ask where these bodies are, and whether we use them one at a time, separately or all together.

Knowing about them is just like knowing about anything else. The knowledge comes by study, and we do not study anything until we wish to know about it, or until we see it. You have now taken the first step towards knowledge of these bodies. You have heard about them, and you have been told what to do to improve them, and that by improving them you will in time learn to use them, and know that you are using them. Now you must do the rest yourselves.

We live in all of them at the same time, for, until we have learned a very great deal about them, and

practised and practised, we cannot separate them one from the other at will; yet this is what we do when using them separately.

You have all at some time seen a wooden ball soaked through and through with water. Well, if you have learned chemistry you know, because you have proved it to yourself by experiment, that there is air all through and through every drop of water that has soaked into that wood, that gas penetrates through the air, and that ether penetrates every particle of gas in it; so that when you hold that wet wooden ball in your hand, you are really holding a creature called a ball, which has four bodies and an etheric double, just as you have. Yet you see only one body, though you know it is wet; know it by the sense of touch as well as by the sense of sight, and because you have learned chemistry you know about the parts you cannot see.

People who know nothing of chemistry, gas, ether, etc., would not believe if you told them these things; but that does not alter the fact that they exist, and are there, and that you know it.

CHAPTER XXVII

CORRESPONDENCES—(Continued)

Man is man's A. B. C. There is none that can
Read God aright, unless he first spell man.

QUARLES

WE will carry our study of the correspondences a little further, for it will help us to understand our constitution and our bodies a little better. Think of that wet ball as an egg-shaped ball, then it will be the same shape as our auric egg. We are each surrounded by a luminous egg-shaped cloud. Look again at the pictures in *Man Visible and Invisible*, and you will know what I mean.

As the water soaks the wood it must follow the shape of it, so there is an egg-shaped ball of water as well as a ball of wood.

The air is in every drop of water, so that makes an egg-shaped ball of air. Gas is in every particle of air, therefore there is a gas ball also; and ether is in, round, and through every part of gas, air, water, and wood, so you have a ball of ether.

Now this is just the way our bodies interpenetrate. While we are awake, doing our work during the day,

there seems to be only one, but that one has the materials of all the others going through and through it, and each is doing its own work.

The wet wooden ball cannot separate its different bodies one from the other and use them one at a time, because it is only a collection of bodies. There is no mind inside to learn about them, and how to use them; but you are a soul, with a mind living in your bodies, and you can learn to use them either all together upon the physical plane, or one by one upon other planes, the planes of which they are a part, and of which we shall learn in our next chapter.

Each of the four bodies which interpenetrates the others is made of matter of different degrees of density, like the planes. The densest of these is the physical body, and it is made of physical plane matter. This is what is meant in *Gen.* iii. 19: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

God speaks there of Adam's physical body, not of Adam himself, for Adam is a living soul. A soul cannot die or turn to dust: it lives for ever. Read *Gen.* ii. 7: "And the Lord God *formed* man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

We do all our physical plane work in our physical bodies, work out in actions our past thoughts and desires, and make new karma to be worked out by and by.

In our astral body we do astral plane work, living, moving about in it on the astral plane, which is a grade finer than the physical, and is the astral body of our

planet; but as our five physical senses are of no use there, and few of us can use our astral senses while awake in the physical body, we have to separate the astral from the physical when we wish to enjoy astral sights and sounds, and, leaving the physical asleep or in a trance, go off in our astral form.

The mental body is the body in which we think, and when in it we are like a little atom in the big mental body of our world. A human being clothed in his mental body is very beautiful, and much more imposing than when in his astral or physical bodies, for the physical body is the smallest and coarsest of all. The astral body is beautiful, and the mental grand as well as beautiful.

Very advanced men—Chelās (disciples) of the Adepts, and Adepts themselves—use their mental bodies when they have to go long distances to give instructions or warnings to their workers.

It is possible to go from one end of the world to the other with the speed of thought in one's mental body.

The causal body is the most beautiful of all, but we do not move about the planes in it. It lives in the higher mental plane; and when we have cast off our three lower bodies, we live in it in perfect bliss till it is time to come down to earth again. It is our treasure-house, because all that is worth keeping is in it. Our work during our later incarnations is to make a bridge between it and the mental body. When this bridge is made we shall know all about our past lives and all that has happened to us, and the sooner we can make our bodies fine the sooner will this happen.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PLANES OF NATURE

Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day and cease to be ;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

TENNYSON

WE all know, or think we know, that our earth is a great globe circling round the sun, and we have many learned names for the forces that keep it and other worlds in their places, but how many of us have found out for ourselves by experiment that this is true? Very few indeed. Yet we have all been told that it can be proved that there are wonderful sensitive instruments for detecting the movements of the earth, force, direction, etc., and that by means of these *anyone who has the power to understand and use them* can prove it for himself.

Note this qualification: *anyone who has the power*. Not anyone or everyone can prove it, only those who have the power. Who gives the power? How do we get it? God gave the power in the beginning, by putting it where we can reach it, if we try hard enough. Those who have it have worked for it. They

practised thinking and experimenting until they were strong, powerful thinkers and steady, accurate workers, and then used their powers of thinking and working along that particular line till they found out what they wanted to know; and we must do the same.

We know our earth is this, and does that, we say, and most of us are content to use the knowledge gained by other people in this matter, act as if we had proved it, and put our own attention, use our own powers of thought upon something else—something that is nearer at hand, and so seems to us to be of more importance, since the world, if it does go round, will go on its way whether we know of it or not.

This is quite right, so long as we do not interfere with others when they neglect what we think important, and go after something which seems worth nothing to us. We must always remember that people see things differently; that is part of God's plan for getting everything done.

Everything has to be learned, and everyone has to learn it; but no one learns everything in one life, so each takes up something, and the more variety there is the better. If everyone wanted to learn or to do the same thing at the same time, then only that one thing would be attended to—everything else would be in a state of confusion.

Let each do what he is best fitted for, and, until he has time to touch other things, take as a theory to live and work by, the results of other specialists, just as they will take his results to work with by and by, if he finds out anything worth knowing on his line.

A specialist is one who makes a special study of something, and passes on the results of that study to others. We Theosophists have a number of specialists in our Society. Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott were the first two. Now we have Mrs. Annie Besant, Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, and many others. Their work is the study of the Science of the Soul—where it comes from, what it is, what bodies it wears, the world it lives in and where it goes when it leaves this world; and it is they who write many of the books we use in our study.

We know the soul comes from God, and is part of Him; that it wears and uses four bodies while going through an earth-life, and that each of these bodies is made from the matter of one of the great planes of our earth or world.

When we speak of our bodies we say we are speaking of the constitution of man. When we speak of the planes we say the constitution of our world, our earth, or our planet.

The earth has seven great planes or bodies, just as we have, though as yet we have learned of only three of ours; and these planes interpenetrate just as our bodies do—that is, they are all through and through each other, so that they make one great body—this world—with its finer matter penetrating the coarser, as ether penetrates gas, gas water, and water solids.

Each kind or grade of matter is named according to its degree of density or coarseness, and is called a plane. The first and second are the finest and highest. They are the spiritual planes. The third

plane is called the nirvāṇic, the fourth plane the buddhic, the fifth the mental, the sixth the astral, and the seventh, which is the lowest and coarsest, is called the physical. It is the plane we know most about. To many it is the whole of our world ; and if you tell them of any other plane they either laugh or grow angry. When this happens, it is best to leave the subject alone. Some day they will take it up of their own accord, experiment and study till they know these other planes are a reality.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE PLANES OF NATURE—(*Continued*)

Nothing in Nature is unbeautiful.

TENNYSON

Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part.
Do thou but thine.

MILTON

WHEN we read of higher and lower planes we must remember that the words higher and lower are used in the same way as in describing a high or a low thought. We do not mean that one plane is placed above the other, like slabs of blue, yellow, and red rocks in some of the great canyons of the new world, but that some planes are more spiritual and finer than others.

We say that God is above us, yet God is in and through everything.

There is a very great deal to learn about all these planes, but, as we are concerned with only three of them at the present time, we shall devote most of our time to them. It is on these—the three lowest—that ordinary human evolution takes place; that is why we have bodies made of the matter or substance of each of them.

Each of the seven great planes has seven sub-planes, and each has all grades of matter of its own plane in it, from the lowest to the finest. Two of the great planes—the mental and the physical—have a division in them, making an upper and a lower half; but there is no gap, wall, separation such as you see between ridges of differently coloured rocks—the division is more like that of the colours in the rainbow. We see red, orange, yellow, etc., quite distinctly, yet it is difficult to say exactly where one ends and the other begins. We only know that after a bit there is no red, but a distinct orange, and a little further the orange is gone, and we find yellow, and still further on green, blue, indigo and violet.

The finer part of the mental plane is called the higher mental, and here live our causal bodies. It is here we come for our heaven life between earth lives. On the coarser part of the mental plane we use our mental bodies, and very beautiful they are, if we have been thinking clearly and determinedly.

The finer part of the physical plane is made of ether, and from it is made man's etheric double, which is not really a body, but a ghostly, violet grey counterpart of the physical—the silent grey ghost you have already heard about.

The coarser or lower part of the physical plane is made up of solid, liquid, or gaseous matter. The finer or upper is composed of four grades of ether, thus making the seven sub-planes. Here they are: (1) solid, (2) liquid, (3) gas, (4) ether i., (5) ether ii., (6) ether iii., (7) ether iv.

These upper sub-planes of the physical are called the etheric, the super-etheric, the sub-atomic, and the atomic sub-planes.

Our physical body corresponds with these, as it also consists of two parts; the dense physical—flesh, bones, etc.—composed of the solid, liquid, and gaseous matter of the plane, and the ghostlike etheric double, made up of the matter of the etheric sub-planes. It is, as you have already learned, the receiver and transmitter of sensations and the vehicle of the rosy-golden prāṇa—the life.

CHAPTER XXX

THE ASTRAL PLANE

There is no death ; what seems so is transition :
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the Life Elysian,
Whose portal we call death.

LONGFELLOW

THE astral plane is the plane next to the physical, and is a grade higher or finer, just as the astral body is a grade higher and finer than the physical. It is the plane we all reach and live in directly we leave the physical body, either by sleep, death, or trance. It is not and yet *is* a place. It is the finer matter that penetrates through and through the coarser matter of the physical plane. When we are in our physical bodies we see and feel only physical matter, and are thus living on the physical plane ; but when we are in our astral bodies we see and feel only astral matter, and are then living on the astral plane. Each plane is a reality and a place to us while we are living consciously in it.

When anyone slips out, or draws himself out, of the physical matter, which is his physical body, he finds himself at once in astral matter and clothed

in an astral body. He is as much alive as ever, only he feels more so, because his astral body is finer and lighter than the physical, and the atmosphere of the astral plane is finer and lighter than that of the physical, so that movement there, except in the very lowest sub-plane, is joyous, easy, and speedy as the flight of thought.

It is not necessary to die to go there. Everyone is on the astral plane while his physical body sleeps, or is in a trance, and often when unconscious through other reasons.

Try to imagine that you are wrapped from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet in a thick, heavy suit of clothes, that aches, grows tired, becomes bruised and sore, and has only a few holes in it for you to see, hear, smell, touch, and taste through, and that you are toiling along a rough road, very weary and often terrified, and able only to see a very little way ahead, and that suddenly your heavy suit, worn out, falls off, and you find yourself in a soft, light, flexible suit, without an ache or pain, and quite incapable of feeling either, and which carries you, like a flash, wherever you wish to go, and directly you think out your wish. This is the difference between life in a physical body on the physical plane, and life in an astral body upon the astral plane. These suits are the bodies we wear, and the higher we go the finer they become, because they are made of the materials of the planes we live in.

For a short time after death, life on the astral plane is very much the same as life on the physical, for the region the so-called newly dead find themselves in is

so like the world they have left that many will not at first believe they are what their friends call dead. Gradually, however, the helpers on the astral plane make them understand, for there are many helpers there—advanced men and women whose physical bodies are asleep, others who have been longer there, and some who are merely visitors passing through it. All these are kind, and ready to help a soul who is confused, puzzled, or making a mistake as to where he is.

Children have a delightful time, and are specially guarded and cared for. To them the astral plane is a veritable fairyland, where everyone is kind. All their toys are alive, and all the characters in their book of fairy-stories walk, ride, or fly about, and do all the things they expect them to do; for our thoughts have made long-lived, strong thought-forms which have a real existence there.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE ASTRAL PLANE—(*Continued*)

The tissue of the life to be
We weave with colours all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown.

WHITTIER

THE astral plane is very, very crowded, for all the heroes, heroines, strange monsters, genii, dragons, giants, and fairies that have delighted men, women, and children for centuries are there, besides the real people whose physical bodies are asleep or dead, and the visitors from higher planes who are passing through or temporarily living there to help someone.

Santa Claus is there, laden with toys; Cinderella and the Prince, Puss in boots, Tom Thumb, Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, etc., etc., Don Quixote, and all the great array of gods and goddesses from pretty little Cupid with his bow-and-arrows to the great, black, ugly devil with his hoofs, horns, and tail. All real, yet all unreal, made out of astral matter by the thoughts and desires of millions and millions of human beings who have read and thought and dreamed about them till they have made thought-forms

which will last as long as there are people who think about them. This is why people who get glimpses of the astral plane from time to time, and who have not learned enough about it to know the real from the unreal, the artificial from the natural, see just what they expect to see and want to see, and so are quite sure that they are right and those wrong who differ from them.

All Theosophists ought to be helpers on the astral plane, both before and after death, for they are taught about it, and have guide-books of it, so that they can, if they like to take the trouble, gain a very fair knowledge of it before death, and thus be quite at home on it when entirely separated from their physical bodies. They can also help to people it with pleasant thought and desire forms, and can refuse to think of the ugly creatures in fiction or in religions, and so help them to fade out, as they all must when people stop thinking them. We must remember, too, that our thought-forms are sometimes used to help or to hinder, to do harm or to do good, long after we think we have done with them.

The cause of the greatest suffering for ordinary people and good people who have just passed from earth-life is the great grief of the friends they have left behind. This grief reaches the soul, disturbs it, causes a heavy gloom and a feeling of great trouble and misery to settle upon it. Surely, knowing this, we will try not to moan and cry and long for our dear ones who have gone from us through the gate of death. It is wrong and cruel to encourage our pain

and grief at the death of a friend, for it wakes him up out of his pleasant reverie and review of his life, and draws his attention to us and to our sorrows instead of allowing him to take in his new surroundings and go on his journey. We should rather send helpful, loving thoughts and prayers to speed him on his way, and, checking our natural, though selfish, grief at our loss while awake, go to him bright, happy, and loving while our physical bodies are sleeping. This can be done always at night, and sometimes during the day, if one has time to put the body to sleep, for it is only the body that sleeps; the man—the spirit *never sleeps*.

This is all true, and vouched for by those who know, because they have tried and succeeded. It is all a matter of knowledge and of practice.

Wicked and depraved people suffer after death at first, because they have still their appetites and passions, but have no physical body through which alone they can satisfy them. But this suffering gradually becomes less as the passions and appetites die out; and then the man passes out of his astral body, leaving it to go to pieces as the physical did, and entering his mental body goes into the heaven world.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE MENTAL PLANE

I sent my Soul, through the Invisible,
Some letter of the after-life to spell :
And by and by my Soul returned to me,
And answer'd, I Myself am Heaven and Hell.

OMAR KHAYYAM

THE mental plane is the plane next the astral. It is the third plane counting from below. It is higher or finer than the astral, and is separated into two great divisions: the higher having three sub-planes and the lower four. It is upon the four lower planes that a man lives when functioning—that is, when living an active life—in his mental body; for the mental body is made of the matter of these four sub-planes.

We always use mental matter when we think, for every thought requires matter to work in. The matter of the mental plane vibrates only to thought; nothing else has any effect upon it, and nothing else can live in it or use it. It vibrates to thought in the same way that astral matter vibrates to desire, or to thought mixed with desire, and in the same way that physical matter vibrates to actions.

Only pure thought can enter heaven. Thus every one is perfectly happy there ; so happy that we cannot picture their bliss and peace—it is far too great for us to understand. Thus you will see that heaven—the mental plane—and pure thoughts are the one thing. The mental plane is that portion of the world that we all know as heaven ; so if we could keep our thoughts perfectly pure we should be in heaven without dying. But while we are living in our physical bodies that is impossible, as these bodies are full of desire, are always wanting something, and so our thoughts too are mixed with desire. Heaven shuts out everything else ; it is perfect peace and bliss. The Great Masters have heaven all round about and in Them always ; that is why Their bodies do not wear out. They can go right into heaven, and shut the rest of the world out when the physical body needs rest.

When we enter heaven our desires drop right away from us, and only pure thoughts and the pure part of our mixed thoughts go with us ; thus some have much more to take into heaven than others, but all are satisfied, for each has as much joy, bliss, and peace as he can hold.

All the friends we love and wish to see are there, for, even if they have gone back to earth, we have a living image or thought-form of them ; and every time they think lovingly of us, their loving thought fills it, so that we always have them at their very best. If they are living in the heaven-world, as we are, then it is even better, for they are able to show themselves more fully. But however it may be, we are always satisfied

always perfectly blissful; and when we have thoroughly learned our lessons about the mental plane and our mental bodies, we shall see all this for ourselves and without first dying.

In heaven we gather strength for our next earth-life by thinking over all that happened in the last earth-life, and making it into a stronger, purer, more unselfish character for the next. Every one goes to heaven for a time between one earth-life and the next. Even the people we call wicked go to heaven for a time, but their heaven is very different from the heaven of a good man. They have not nearly so many pure thoughts to take there.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE MENTAL PLANE—(*Continued*)

Father, I choose! I will not take a heaven
Haunted by shrieks of far-off misery.

GEORGE ELIOT

Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer?
Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?

Voice of the Silence

WE see by the foregoing chapters that the teaching of Theosophy is very different from that of religions which say that only good people—people who are saved from sin and its consequences—go to heaven. Theosophy shows us how to prove for ourselves that the heaven world is only part of the world we live in, and that it is not eternal but periodic; that we have many earth-lives, and that at the close of each we spend a longer or shorter time in heaven, according to the amount of material for thought and character-building we take with us; and that every man, every human being, has done this from the very beginning of his life as a human being.

There is some good in every human being for he is part of God; and as he develops that good

part, cultivates the seed of divinity which is himself, he has more and more good in him, so has more and more to take into heaven, and so, as a rule, has a longer and longer time there as he becomes more and more God-like.

Every kind action, every loving thought, sets a spiritual force in motion which draws him into heaven when his life upon the physical and astral planes is over. This force, this divine loving energy, is part of God, for "God is love". The lowest criminal, if he has a spark of unselfish love in him (and everyone has), goes to heaven, if only for a short period, like a flash; and that little flash into heaven and out again gives an added impulse to the tiny seed of divinity which is by and by going to grow into a great and good man.

Thus, for a great many hundreds of lives our time in heaven between two lives grows longer and longer, and our time in hell—the lower sub-planes of the astral—grows shorter, till at last our troubles here upon the physical plane are the worst we ever have. Then some new rules come in which modify those we have till then worked under, and it is very difficult indeed to say how long or how short our heaven-life may be; for instance, we may have a great deal of spiritual force to work up into character, yet may do that working up very quickly, and so in a short time find ourselves in the causal body—our treasure-house on the higher mental plane, and made of its matter.

Our mental body then fades out, dies as did the astral and physical, and we live in our beautiful

treasure-house till the time comes for us to return to earth. Then we leave our treasure behind us, and take its results with us as character and conscience, descend once more to earth, and learn new lessons and put old mistakes right; and this goes on over and over again, till we learn to make no new causes for rebirth and owe no human being anything.

Then we may go even higher than the causal body, if we so wish; but by that time we are too unselfish to choose to go into an eternal heaven—Nirvāṇa—and leave suffering human beings to toil and suffer without our aid. So, unless God has some other work for us to do, we return to help the world. We become Teachers, Masters, where once we were pupils.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE METHOD OF RETURN TO EARTH-LIFE

Only while turns this wheel invisible,
No pause, no peace, no staying place can be ;
Who mounts may fall, who falls will mount ; the
Go round unceasingly : [spokes

Light of Asia

THE returning soul plunges outwards or downwards, taking with it the result of its last life on earth ; and this result having been looked at as the key to its next life on earth it sees in a flash, as it starts on its outward journey, the whole of that coming life spread out before it. This may account for the certainty with which we look forward to certain things coming into our lives : we cannot remember exactly how they are to come, but we know they will come.

One thing, however, in relation to this we must never forget, and that is the strength of the human will, for it is part of the will of God. Many things that showed out in the coming life as possibilities may be prevented from ever becoming realities if we set our wills to prevent them ; thus it is well to take these memories of troubles we have seen in our future as warnings, and prevent them coming. There is a wise

old proverb which deals with this. It says: "You dread the death you'll never die." And this is very true; many people spend years of misery waiting for troubles that never come.

On the other hand, a memory of what he saw in that glimpse may make a man strike out in a line that all his circumstances seem to forbid, and he may be a success in spite of them, and all because he knew what he could do if he tried, so had courage to keep on trying.

At the close of his last life on earth he had made certain powers and qualities; so now in his new life he is given a physical body which will show forth these qualities, and be good enough to enable him to go one step farther on the same lines.

Thus a scholar who has done fairly well in his last life will get a body which will express what he has gained and a brain which will take in and express a great deal more. In this way he makes better and higher qualities and powers life after life.

It is the great Angels or Gods called the Lords of karma who choose his parents for him, and make the first mould or pattern into which his new physical body is built. This is Their work, because They can see every thought, word, and deed of every human being, so know exactly the kind of body each needs and the only parents or the best parents for him. In *Rev.* iv. 6, 8, you will find a description of these great Angels who are full of eyes within. John saw Them in his vision as four great beasts; but we must not think of them as being only

four in number—the numbers given often mean something quite different from the surface meaning.

As the soul, or man, goes downward, his mental power made in his last life becomes active, and as he thinks he draws around him mental matter of the same quality as his thoughts; that is, his thoughts must have something to live in and think with, and that something is mental matter, and it forms his new mental body.

When he reaches the astral plane his passions, desires, and emotions do the same thing. They draw round them the kind of astral matter that suits them, because it is of the same quality, and that makes his new astral body.

Thus you see that all his old passions and desires that were not conquered or worn out in last life were left on the astral plane as he went upwards, and now he picks them up again. They are his, so are naturally attracted to him. They could not go into heaven, for they were impure.

Having now clothed himself with a mental and astral body, he waits till his physical body is ready for him, and he guards it, watching over it and his future mother and father, till he is once more a little human child, and has to begin teaching his new body all that he has learned in other lives. If it is a good body, it learns quickly; if not, it gives him a great deal of trouble; so we should be very careful what kind of body we earn.

CHAPTER XXXV

LIFE IN THE NEW BODIES

If thou would'st reap sweet peace and rest, disciple,
sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future harvests.
Accept the woes of birth.

Voice of the Silence

As a rule, the soul is not in full possession of his new physical body until it is seven years old, but in the case of advanced souls the time is shortened. They are often in full possession some years sooner, and are able to bring through from the causal body a great deal of the knowledge stored there, and impress it upon the new physical brain; thus we see a genius in any given line frequently shows abnormal, that is, unusually great, powers before he is seven years of age. Handel, the great musician, for instance, composed before seven years of age, and waked the whole household by getting up in the night and playing the piano when only three and a half years old. He had not been taught music at that early age. He brought the power with him—the power gained in past lives.

Thus we see how foolish it is to be envious or jealous of those who are able to do easily, and with scarcely any teaching, things that we cannot do at all in this

life, no matter how good our teachers are and how hard we try. Those who know things, or learn things easily, have done all the drudgery of practice, of trying and failing and trying again, in a past life. We are only beginning now, so have all the drudgery before us ; and we, like them, will conquer, will succeed, and come into a new life, with powers fully grown, when we have done enough trying and practising.

When inclined to be down-hearted, look at those who will never in this life be able to do as much as you can now. When, on the other hand, inclined to be uplifted, proud, and vainglorious, look at the great writers, thinkers, philanthropists and statesmen of the world, and note how far they are beyond and above you ; or better still, look at the Christ or the Buddha, and remember that They had also to learn, as you are doing, and that you can do what They have done. Take courage and have patience.

The new body and mind, with a new brain for the mind to work through, are just good enough to express what you learned in your past lives, and to take you a stage farther on in your evolution.

Your brain-power, courage, perseverance, and will-power have decided for you your rank as a worker in the world. It would be useless to give a dunce a position as headmaster of a college. Your personal appearance, too—your beauty of form or the opposite—fit or unfit you for certain positions ; but if all these are favorable, your health may be so poor that you may be forced to live the life of an invalid, seldom or never able to use the wonderful powers you

have made. Rest assured that whatever your new life is, whatever the powers of your new bodies, you are reaping exactly what you sowed, are wearing exactly the bodies you ordered by your past thoughts, desires, and actions.

CHAPTER XXXVI

LIFE IN THE NEW BODIES—(*Continued*)

Having attained to the worlds of the pure-doing, and having dwelt there for immemorial years, he who fell from Yoga is reborn in the house of the pure and the blessed.

Bhagavad-Gītā

THIS teaching of the reign of law throughout the universe will be a great comfort to us when we fully understand it. Are you discontented with your life? Then study it in the light of your own nature. Quite young people—children of seven or ten years—can do this. Do not say: "I cannot help being hot-tempered or discontented; it is my nature"; but look right into your heart when alone, and for your own satisfaction find out what has given you the things you do not like.

Are you an invalid with a body full of pain? Look right into your nature, and see if there is even a little bit of cruelty or unkindness in you that may have been much bigger and stronger in the past, and may have prompted you to cruelly ill-use someone else's body, and make it as full of pain as yours is now.

Is your pain the kind that comes usually from over-eating or over-drinking? See if there is not the remains or the seed of gluttony, greed, or over-indulgence in

you yet, and kill it by thinking and acting temperately ; thus you will order a healthy body for your next life. If you cannot find these faults in yourself, then perhaps, though they may have caused you to be born an invalid this time, they may have been conquered long ago ; and the good, wise Lords of karma did not give you the invalid body till you were good enough to bear it without becoming wicked because of your anger at it and the pain of it. We must look into our own natures to find the cause of all our troubles and all our joys, and it is good to know that our deepest thinkings are secrets from everyone but ourselves. That is one reason why it is wise to be quite honest in our self-examination. We need not fear others knowing and misunderstanding.

Do you fly into a rage at the least thing ? Then be sure your new astral body has a great deal of coarse matter in it, and so responds to the vibrations of rage that strike it from outside, as well as being easily aroused to anger from within. You did not control it in last life, and you picked up some of your own anger-filled astral atoms on your way back from heaven and worked them into your new astral body, and now are tormented by a bad temper.

Have you a beautiful home, a healthy body, and a contented, happy disposition ? Then you must in the past have helped to make beautiful homes for others, must have taken care of your own body, and must also have passed through much sorrow and pain and learned to bear it the right way—that is, without growing angry, rebellious, and wicked.

CHAPTER XXXVII

LIFE IN THE NEW BODIES—(*Continued*)

Or he may even be born into a family of wise Yogis; but such a birth as that is most difficult to obtain in this world.

Bhagavad-Gītā

YOU will see by what we have read and studied in the previous chapters that our new bodies are not the cause of our shortcomings or of our powers and successes, but the result of them; and believing this, is where we Theosophists differ so greatly from most people.

You are born into a family because you are like the parents of it. You are not like the others because you are born of the same father and mother.

This may seem a difficult saying, but you will find that it explains life much better than the other theory; and if it be true, as Theosophy tells us it is, you will see that there is no one to blame but yourself if you have bad-tempered, cruel, or foolish parents, or brothers and sisters who are disagreeable and selfish, for you belong to them by the law of affinity—of likeness—or have done something that has tied you to them by the close tie of blood-relationship.

On the other hand, if you are in the happy position spoken of in the verse of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* given at the head of this chapter, then you have earned that good position.

But perhaps you find yourself in a family, the other members of which are unlike you, and with whom you have very little in common, though your physical bodies are very much alike. In that case you are reaping the result of past actions, desires, or thoughts which you have outgrown, but which could not be worked out in any life you have since lived; and though the physical resemblance may be strong at first, you, the real you, the soul, will in a few years so modify the expression of your features, alter the tones of your voice, your movements, and your choice of companions and amusements, that you will look as different as you are, despite the family likeness.

This cuts both ways. You may be the proverbial black sheep of a good family, or the white crow in a black family.

No matter how or where you are born, or what kind of bodies—physical, astral, or mental—you may have, you can modify these circumstances, these bodies, until by the time you are thirty years of age you would scarcely be recognised at first sight as the same person.

Many people have such beautiful natures that others scarcely notice their unlovely bodies; while some with beautiful bodies have such unlovely natures that others can scarcely notice the beautiful bodies because of the dislike they feel to the nature,

CHAPTER XXXVIII

LIFE IN THE NEW BODIES—(*Continued*)

There he recovereth the characteristics belonging to his former body, and with these he again laboureth for perfection.

Bhagavad-Gītā

To obtain a beautiful, healthy physical body, we must be careful to give the one we now wear plenty of exercise, fresh air, and rest. We must give it enough to eat and drink, but not too much, and the food must be pure, not coarse.

A good and beautiful astral body is, as you know, the result of good emotions and of restrained passions. A good, well-controlled astral body will help the physical body to keep calm, peaceful, and happy, so that the face will not become lined and old or faded-looking.

The great Masters and Adepts always look young, because they do not allow their emotions to run riot, and they have no passions to coarsen their astral bodies.

A good and refined mental body is gained by good, pure, and noble thoughts and by hard study; and it acts and reacts upon the astral and physical bodies, making them harmonious, and fitting their owner to fill a very high position in the world.

Thus we see that, in order to obtain and hold an honourable position in life, we must be fitted for it, and to be fit for it we must have the necessary vehicles or bodies.

No one can have a happy, peaceful life if he has a coarse, uncontrolled astral body. No one can fill a high position, where a strong intellect is needed, unless he has a good mental body and can control his thoughts; and, no matter how good his mental and astral bodies may be, a diseased physical body will hinder the expression of mental and emotional strength, and may altogether prevent his usefulness, may even give him a life of misery and inaction.

If we believe all this, we shall act upon it, and shall accept all that comes to us in a contented spirit, knowing it is in our power to alter it if we do not like it, and to increase it if it is to our liking. Life in our new bodies will then be a joy, as we shall know by the faults in them what we have yet to overcome in our natures which made them; and what we have learned will be shown by their perfections.

The will of man is part of the will of God. Your will is part of God's will; and when you know that, are quite sure of it, you can make your future bodies, your future lives, what you will. Children need not wait until they are men and women before using this knowledge, this power; for many children are old, wise souls in young, new bodies. The way they use and control their bodies is a clue to the age of the soul within.

CHAPTER XXXIX

LIFE IN THE NEW BODIES—(*Continued*)

Rejoice that man is hurled
From change to change unceasingly,
His soul's wings never furled.

ROBERT BROWNING

THERE is still something more to be considered when studying the possibilities and probabilities of a life in new bodies, and that is the *old* karma to be worked out in that life.

Away, far back in our early lives, when we were baby-souls full of young, strong passions that we did not try to control, we did many wild, cruel deeds, and harmed hundreds of our fellow-creatures; and now in another life, and with better bodies, we have the opportunity of paying back with kindness and gentleness, of helping where we hindered, and of loving where we hated.

The people to whom we owe this kindness, gentleness, help, and love are probably scattered all over the world. Some have gone beyond us in evolution, some are our equals, and some have fallen behind, partly because of the way we treated them in those by-gone days. And to many of these people we shall have to

pay back, personally—hand to hand, eye to eye, and heart to heart—all that we owe them; therefore many, many lives may be spent before we can meet them.

Now the Lords of karma know this; and when we are ready to come back to earth and begin our life in the new bodies we have earned, they look round to find that part of the world where we can meet most of the people we owe debts to, and, if our bodies suit, that is where we are born. But sometimes there are no parents there to suit us, that is, there are no people who can give us the kind of physical body we need. Then the Lords of karma may send us somewhere else, where perhaps we meet only one or two of our old companions. In that case we may spend most of that life in learning new lessons and making new karma, while paying off very little of the old. That is one reason for the great difference in the lives of the same person.

The whole life of the soul, your life, is like a great year, and every separate earth-life is like one day in it. Some days are good, some are bad; that is, some days are what we call happy, while others are miserable days.

The Lords of karma know everything we have done or said, thought or desired; nothing is lost or forgotten. Everything will come back to us in blessings or in curses. They know just how much we can bear and how much we can pay off; and for each life they choose out of our heaped-up karma a small portion that we can work out if we really try.

Thus, if we are careful in any one life to do our very best, learn all we can, and take all that comes as

being just what we have earned, and is best for us, we make that piled-up karma less, and make no new unpleasant karma, as we should do if we fretted and grumbled.

Sometimes we do something suddenly before we have time to think whether it is right or wrong. We cannot help doing it any more than we can help shutting our eyes when anything is thrown at them; the action is involuntary—without our will. Thus, when startled, we may strike out at that which startles us, and perhaps kill some one. We did not intend to kill or even hurt anyone, yet we have done it. Actions that are done suddenly like this—involuntary actions—are what we call ripe karma. We cannot prevent them. But if for one second you have time to think: "Is this right or wrong?" then the action that follows is not ripe karma, and the person acting has made new karma, good or bad, and will have to pay it off later on. There is very little ripe karma comes in any one life.

CHAPTER XL

THE POWER OF THOUGHT

Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. Use them as they will thee; for if thou sparest them, and they take root and grow, know well these thoughts will overpower and kill thee.

Voice of the Silence

IN our last chapter we studied some of the causes that govern each new life on earth, but none of these are so important, so far-reaching in their results, as thought. Man is a thinker. It is his power of thought that makes him a man, raises him above the brute. "As he (man) thinketh in his heart, so is he" (*Prov.* xxiii. 7). Not as he acteth, so is he, but as he thinketh.

The thoughts of a man are the expression of himself, of his real nature, and are more powerful than anything else in moulding his future.

By thought both desire and action are stimulated, curbed, or checked; for the mental or thought-body is, as you know, finer, higher, and more powerful than the astral or desire body, and is still higher above the physical body or body of action.

Our thoughts give us our human companions. Look at and study the people who are your companions, and

you will, to a great extent, find out what kind of thoughts you most encouraged in the past.

Have you friends or companions who love what is good, refined and beautiful? Then you have thought many refined, good, and beautiful thoughts. Are you in your daily work, or by what you call chance, thrown among people whose chief delight seems to be a coarse jest, and who see the worst meaning in every word and look? Then in the past you have encouraged and enjoyed just such thoughts, and now the people thinking them are drawn to you by the law of affinity, though you may have outgrown all liking for such things—may indeed hate them.

Let me give you an illustration of the magnetic power of thought. "Like draws to like." A well educated, refined boy or girl, man or woman, has been unjustly treated—slandered, robbed, or insulted—and is unable to clear his or her character or obtain justice. He or she is too controlled to rush at the enemy and strike a blow, or rage and storm and shout ugly names, but sits down instead, and, while outwardly calm, broods on revenge, hopes the enemy will suffer as he deserves, pictures him suffering, humiliated, found out, punished, and enjoys that unspoken, cruel picture.

Thoughts are *real things*, made of mental matter. They rush away from the brain of the thinker straight to the person they are aimed at, and make him much worse—more untruthful, more unjust, more vulgar and insulting. But that is not all. The man they reach is nearly full of his own bad thoughts, and there is no room for all the new ones just sent him; so, after

making him worse, they go off on their own accord, and float about, waiting for someone else who is angry to attract them. Ranging, ugly little red and black demons these angry, spiteful thoughts are. By and by they find someone who is not educated, whose mind is not controlled, and who has been badly treated, and into his mind they dart, and put the finishing touch to his rage. He hits out and kills someone. He will be punished for the murder on the physical plane. The body which struck the blow may be hanged or imprisoned for life, or killed by an avenger; but the cultured, educated person, who behaved well outwardly, yet sent out the cruel, revengeful thought, is most to blame, for the thought of a trained mind is much stronger than that of an uneducated, untrained one. Therefore the sender of that cruel thought will have to undo the wrong he or she has done to the murderer, so will meet him in a future earth-life.

The people we affect by our thoughts come back to us either as friends or foes. If they will not fit into one life they will into another; but come to us they will.

CHAPTER XLI

THE POWER OF THOUGHT—(*Continued*)

Have mastery o'er thy thoughts, O striver for perfection.

Voice of the Silence

NOW let us look at the other, the pleasant side of this picture and teaching of the power of thought, and see how we can turn it to account, use it in our daily life; for that is what we must do with the teachings of Theosophy if they are to benefit us. We must live them. If bad thoughts bring us bad companions, then good thoughts will bring us good companions; so it is all in our own hands. We have only to choose our thoughts to bring just the companions and friends we wish for.

What a joy the knowledge of this will be to many who have not yet heard it!—for there are many good people who are so busy all day that they have no time to visit, or to read, and who are too tired by night to study, or go to a meeting, or even to sit up and talk.

Well, if they take only a minute in the morning to choose a good thought for the day—a thought of the love of God or the good part in every human being, or of how they would help others if they had time—and keep on thinking that good thought over and over

again, making themselves think it, then, sooner or later, other people who think these thoughts will come into their lives and be their friends. They will not all wait till another life ; many will come now.

This is only a very small part of what thought can do. Remember, it is a real thing. God thought out every form in the world, and so that form appeared.

Our minds are part of the mind of God, and therefore our thought is creative, as God's thought is creative ; only, ours works on a very much smaller scale. God thinks a universe. We think small thought-forms, and help or hinder our fellow-creatures.

Many an invalid, unable to move from bed or chair without help, frets because he or she feels of no use in the world ; yet, if able to think clearly and strongly (as many such invalids can) they can do as much for others, can be as useful, as their strong, healthy friends.

Sustained thought, especially if the thinking is done at the same hour each day, often has more effect than a great deal of rushing about and apparently hard work. Many people think and say that the world's writers and thinkers do not work, because they do not do manual labour or conduct great businesses ; but that is a mistake. It is thought which prompts action.

The workers on the physical plane are simply putting into action their own thoughts and the thoughts of others who have more time to think, and who perhaps could not do the physical actions—the outward manifestation of the thought—at all ; and, on

the other hand, there are many workers who could never do the thinking part.

Theosophists must do both. The beauty of Theosophy is that it not only tells us to be good, but it tells us how to do it, and why we should do things. Every religion tells us to guard our thoughts, but many of them leave us to find out why. In another chapter we shall see how much more can be done by thought than by anything else, and why we are responsible for all the thoughts we send out.

CHAPTER XLII

THE POWER OF THOUGHT—(*Continued*)

Thoughts are things.

THAT thoughts are things has been well known to all students of the Mysteries from the early ages up to the present day, but it is very difficult to prove the truth of the statement to ordinary people.

The young folk belonging to the Theosophical Society are reaping very good karma in learning this and other teachings of the Mysteries and divine magic at such an early age and in so pleasant a form.

In olden days people were persecuted, hunted, and killed for speaking of these things; and to write even the little that this book contains would have been an act worthy of death. Now, books containing pictures of thought-forms are scattered broadcast all over the world by the Theosophical Society; and for a few shillings anyone can buy books on the subject showing not only coloured thought-forms, but coloured pictures of the whole aura of man; notably a book with many coloured illustrations of thought-forms, by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater. These books will make quite clear to you what is said of thought-forms in this and other chapters.

That thoughts really are things has been proved over and over again by men and women who have clairvoyant vision; that is, vision or sight which extends further than the normal sight of ordinary people. There are many clairvoyants to-day, and the number is steadily increasing, for several reasons. There is a widespread belief in clairvoyance now; so people who have it encourage and train it, instead of denying it and trying to crush it out, as most did a few centuries or even one century ago, when few believed it, and most of those who did thought it was an evil power and came from the devil.

Not only this: more and more people are putting themselves into training, to learn the secrets of their own nature and of the world in which they live, and the beings who live with us yet are invisible to us; and by degrees many of these students become clairvoyant, and can see thoughts, not only their own, but the thoughts of others, and they tell us that we also can learn to see them, if only we will take the trouble, as they did.

Here are some of the thoughts they have seen and have described, then drawn and painted for us. A thought of love is of a beautiful rose-pink colour, and takes many forms. That of a mother who sent it to her little child at a distance was like a round ring full of golden light, with two pretty pink wings attached, one on either side.

Another, sent in the same way, was a shaft of pink light, small at the base, and spreading out in rays, with a pretty pink figure, like a tiny fairy or angel,

at the end; and both thoughts went miles away in a flash to the children they were meant for.

As they touched the children they caused a happy smile and a loving thought of the mother far away. Loving thoughts always help both sender and receiver, even when neither know about the power of thought.

CHAPTER XLIII

THOUGHT-FORMS

Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

SHAKESPEARE

Our thoughts reach heaven.

YOUNG

THOUGHTS of devotion, of love to God, are of a beautiful blue colour. Their form depends partly upon the intensity of the thought which made them and partly upon the character of it. Saints who are always thinking of God, and who are full of love for Him and for all His creatures, make very beautiful thought-forms. The more varied the lines of thought that go to make one big thought, the more complex will its form be.

Some thoughts seen round the heads of thinkers, in their aura, are like stars, leaves, crosses, flowers, or geometrical figures of different kinds, and are coloured by the emotion felt by their creator.

Thoughts of anger are like scarlet daggers, or flashes, and are often accompanied by black rings and smoky clouds of Malice. Malice is always black.

Greedy thoughts have hooks on them like pothooks, with sharp points, or like claws spread out. How

careful we would be if we knew there was someone in the room who could see all these things! How ashamed some of us would be if we knew that other folk could see greedy claws stretching out at things from our heads, and red daggers of anger, and nasty brown clouds of selfishness! Yet there are people who can see all this in many auras.

The aura is egg-shaped, and extends like a luminous cloud for about eighteen inches around our bodies. It is very bright, beautifully coloured, and well defined in a developed person; but very murky, ugly, ragged at the edges, and full of heavy, dark, surging, mixed-looking colours in an undeveloped person.

Every thought that we encourage makes a shape in our aura, or a little cloud of colour, so that in time the thoughts we are constantly thinking will put a very great deal of their colour into our aura.

Some people who are loving have a great deal of rosy-pink in theirs; others who are very devotional have more blue; very intellectual people have much yellow and orange.

Sympathy shows as a beautiful pale green. Irritability is like a bad attack of prickly-heat, little red prickles on a green ground.

Fear shows an ugly, livid grey, all in a state of quiver. Great selfishness makes brown bars all round and round the aura till the selfish person seems to be in a great brown barrel, with thicker brown bars all round it.

A miser is in this state, so lives in his own atmosphere, and grows worse and worse. Good thoughts—

kind, loving, helpful thoughts—cannot get through such an aura; therefore the poor miser loves no one, and thinks no one loves him, though kind thoughts may be striking against his aura like rubber balls against a stone wall, and they are all repelled—all bounce off again.

CHAPTER XLIV

THOUGHT-FORMS—(*Continued*)

Love wants not speech ; from silence speech it builds ;
Kindness, like light, speaks in the air it gilds.

BULWER LYTTON

The mind can make a hell of heaven.

MILTON

A FIT of the blues—that is, a feeling of very great depression—shuts in the person who has it, in just the same way that a miser's greed shuts him in ; only, the colour is different. The man in the blues shuts himself into a smoky-grey barrel, with grey bars of mist—dirty-looking mist—round it, and there sits in misery, shutting out all happy, good thoughts, and blaming others for their want of sympathy.

Deceit makes strange, twisted, grey thought-forms in the aura ; and one thought chasing after another, as thoughts do in all our minds, keeps the colours flashing and changing, and the forms in them doing the same constantly, so that human beings look very different to clairvoyant sight from what they do to ordinary physical sight.

Now, if thoughts are always bombarding our auras and trying to get in, here is a chance to help everyone, and to help ourselves at the same time.

Every person has some good in him ; so if we keep on sending loving, good, helpful thoughts to the very worst, they are bound to get in some time. No one is always angry, or miserable, or greedy ; and some day the kind thought will get in and help the little bit of good that is already there, and the sender will have earned a friend for the future. He has made good karma.

Have you ever tried to picture to yourself the tremendous cloud of thought-forms that must be in the atmosphere of a big town, or hovering over even a small country district? If you have not yet tried it, try now ; then you will understand a little better how difficult it is for any person to do an action that all the other people in the town think a wrong one. The thoughts of other people are always striking against us, getting into our minds, and darting out again, leaving their traces. That is one reason why we find it so difficult to think for ourselves and to do what we think is right when other people think we are wrong.

Even good people are often very cruel to each other in this way. They see a fault, and brood over it, and keep thinking that the person will not, or cannot, overcome it, and so intensify the fault and hinder that one from overcoming it.

Many an unjustly accused person has suffered great misery from the thoughts of others who know nothing but that he or she is blamed for a certain fault, and keep on condemning the victim as if they knew it were true.

This being so, the opposite effect may also be reached by thought. We can, if we so wish, help everybody

we think about, by believing in the good that is in them, and picturing it steadily growing and influencing their lives. People—friends, enemies, and those who do not know us—may all be reached and helped in this way, and we may thus make hundreds of good friends for future lives.

CHAPTER XLV

ACTION AND MOTIVE

Do you wish the world were better ?
Let me tell you what to do :
Set a watch upon your *actions*,
Keep them always straight and true.
Rid your mind of selfish *motives* ;
Let your thoughts be clean and high ;
You can make a little Eden
Of the sphere you occupy.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

THE question: "Is it right or wise to do evil that good may come?" is one which troubles many good, earnest people. Let us see if we can find an answer to it in the workings of karma.

Everything works out on its own plane. Actions done on the physical plane bring physical plane results; that is, they make a difference in our circumstances, health, comfort, etc.

Actions done on the astral plane—that means the movement of desires, for desire can work only in astral matter—make a change in our emotions, feelings, and desires, thus giving us joy or sorrow, unrest or peace, pleasure or pain, no matter what position we occupy.

Thoughts are actions on the mental plane, just as desires are actions on the astral; and thoughts make pictures of desirable things, and set us to work to get them; or thoughts picture unpleasant things, and make us work to prevent their reaching us. Thus thoughts affect our will-power, alter our character, and make our motives; and character soon makes itself felt, and changes our surroundings.

Two people having the same salary, living in the same house, and working together every day at the same work, will, if they have different characters, make very different surroundings for themselves. Go to the rooms they live in, and you will not only see, but feel, the difference. Their friends will not be the same, their amusements will be different, and the difference in the mind that makes the character will alter their whole outlook upon the world. Even when seeing, hearing, or reading the same things, they will take different meanings out of them.

This difference in character will alter the effect upon them of everything they do, for it will give them different motives for doing the same things.

For instance, both may live solitary, studious evenings, studying the same subject; but if one studies to gain power over others, and so advance himself at their expense, while the other studies to gain knowledge that he may pass it on and be of use to others, the difference in motive will result in a great difference of surroundings.

The first will be recognised as a power to be dreaded, and will be surrounded by dislike, suspicion,

envy, and false friends who will fawn and flatter when they wish to conciliate, to over-reach, or to gain favour.

The second will be loved, will have numerous true friends; and though some will dislike, all will respect and trust him. Both will become learned and powerful; but one with all his learning and power is a bad man, the other is a good man; and only the good are really happy.

The second is steadily improving his character and making a karma of future happiness; the first is gradually narrowing his nature, so is deteriorating and making a future of misery.

Even when both take part in the same good work, one may reap happiness and another misery as a result, for this depends on motive. Many good people have been exceedingly cruel to those they love, by trying to force them into accepting a religion they could not accept. They have given them over to the rack, to imprisonment and death, believing that by torturing the body until the agony of it forced them to promise allegiance they had saved them from greater agony throughout eternity.

Such people will reap physical pain and religious persecution by and by; but their good motive—their real wish to save others—will result in added strength of character with which to meet their terrible physical karma.

Those who tortured and persecuted from a lust of power and love of cruelty will suffer both physical agony and the passionate rage and envy of selfish souls under the power of tyranny.

Some men give money to charities because they wish to be praised, others because they hope to gain social position by so doing; some do it purposely to ruin another, and others because they love to help and to see people happy. All these men will in the future have more money, because of their giving, but each will in himself reap joy or sorrow, according to his motive.

We can never know all the reasons other people have for their actions; therefore we have no right to judge them, and are only laying up trouble for ourselves in so doing. People who do wrong, knowing it is wrong, hoping thereby to bring about a result that they think is good, are injuring their characters and harming themselves; and, even if the good they expect does come, it cannot make up for that.

Thus actions that seem bad may be good, and actions that seem good may be bad. You can be rich on any line, if you give even from a bad motive; but you will not enjoy your riches unless your motive for giving was a good one. Most actions are done from mixed motives, and so bring mixed karma.

CHAPTER XLVI

FAIRIES, NATURE-SPIRITS, ETC.

From Oberon in Fairyland,
The king of ghosts and shadows there,
We fairies all at his command
Are sent to view the night sports here.

SHAKESPEARE

FOR many centuries it has been the fashion to speak of marvellous tales—tales we find it difficult or impossible to believe, or which we know to be untrue, as fairy stories; by this we mean that they may be very wonderful, entertaining, and beautiful, but that we do not believe them.

Nowadays it is fashionable to say that only ignorant, foolish, or superstitious people believe in fairies, ghosts, gnomes, sylphs, undines, salamanders, etc.; so when strange happenings take place, or queer, eerie feelings come over us and we feel a gentle little pat from an unseen hand, or a playful tug from an invisible playmate, it is considered quite the wise, common-sense thing to say that our nerves are out of order—that we are over-tired or ill, so are *imagining* things. Of course, there can be nothing here to tug or pat, else we would see it.

Now, it is just as foolish to talk like this, and to refuse to believe in things we cannot see, although we feel them, as it is to believe too much or to talk as if we believed things when we know quite well we do not.

Long ago, ages ago, people were wiser in this respect, though far behind us in intellect, morality, and commercial ability. In those days everyone believed in fairies, gnomes, and other nature-spirits, because everyone then saw them as plainly as we see dogs, cats, mice, and birds now.

Men and women had sight then which was more astral than physical. They could see ghosts and fairies better than they could see the hills, valleys, distant rivers and woods by which their towns, villages, or dwellings were surrounded; and things near at hand which we see very distinctly they frequently stumbled over.

To make up for this, they could see objects behind them as well as those in front, for they had three eyes—one at the back of the head as well as the two in front, which we all use now. Later on, in the middle of the fourth race, the third eye—the one at the back—was gradually drawn into the head, back into the brain from which it first came; and now it is only in trances, spiritual visions, etc., that human beings use it, and it is known not as an eye but as the *pineal gland*—part of the brain.

By and by, if we keep our bodies pure, and our minds pure and active, this eye will again act. Then nothing in the world will be hidden from us; but long before that we shall, if we try, by following the example

of those who can already do it, see fairies and nature-spirits everywhere, because this pineal gland will gradually wake up, and we shall learn to use it a little and so have astral and etheric sight.

The fairies have etheric bodies, so have gnomes and other nature-spirits, and ether is only very fine physical matter ; so a very little quickening of our vibrations—a fright, perhaps, or great joy—would enable some of us to see them.

I hope you will all read Mr. Leadbeater's new book about nature-spirits. It is very beautiful and wonderful, and it is all true ; and Theosophy will teach you how to find it all out for yourselves. You must not be discouraged if it takes you a long time. Things that last do not, as a rule, grow quickly ; and sooner or later, according to the work you do in this life and the amount you did in past lives, you will prove it all for yourselves.

CHAPTER XLVII

FAIRIES, NATURE-SPIRITS, ETC.—(*Continued*)

I'll fetch them, sir.
Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,
And ye that on the sand with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him,
When he comes back.

SHAKESPEARE

DID it ever strike you that the true natives or original inhabitants of a country are really these pretty or grotesque little nature-spirits who are seldom either believed in or seen by men? Well, those who can see them, and who have also studied them, tell us that it is so. But nature-spirits do not like human beings; so, directly a number of people congregate in a place, away go the fairies and other nature-spirits to find clean ground.

This is one reason why we so seldom even feel their presence. We like to live in towns and cities; and, even if we go into the country, we like to make up a picnic and go in a crowd. How the nature-spirits must hate it, when a hundred or so of us, with our big, coarse, physical bodies, and our, to them, dreadfully coarse food—flesh of dead animals and alcoholic drinks—rush into one of their beautiful glades, and romp

about till the whole atmosphere is full of our emanations! No wonder they fly at our approach!

Their bodies are of ether, so they cannot eat food such as ours. They live on the perfume of flowers and other things of a like nature. Some of them are like tiny, beautiful human beings in shape, but they will never be human; they belong to a different evolution from ours. They can pass into the earth at will, or live about it; so it is very easy for a fairy to hide, even if you did catch sight of it, for it can slip into the ground, and we cannot see through that.

Some nature-spirits live in rocks and stones, and are called "gnomes"; others in rivers, and are called "naiades". The "dryades" live in the woods and in trees. There are also nature-spirits in and on the ocean, in the air, and in the fire. Fire-fairies are called "salamanders".

All these creatures are real, and live joyous, happy lives in *our* world, as we call it; and the life of God evolves through their forms as truly as it does through ours. The life that is in birds, for instance, once lived in the bodies of different animalculæ, insects, and small reptiles, and by and by it will leave the bodies of birds and will take on the beautiful etheric bodies of the fairies.

It is delightful to think of the beautiful little songsters of our woods and fields enjoying life in perfect safety as fairies by and by, when all their troubles, through man's cruelty and the hunger of beasts of prey, are over.

Our own New Zealand nature-spirits—the most common of them—are of a “deeper blue (than sky-blue), shot with silver,” and wonderfully luminous.

Is it not wonderful how stories of fairies, etc., have always been written and read and loved, not only by children, but by older people, though professing to think them all nonsense? The reason is that those all-seeing Elder Brothers of ours—the Masters—knew that some day the knowledge of these things would come back into the world, so they kept it alive in a form we would accept until that time came. To-day, though few yet believe it, the thought is not new or strange, and so it is easier for Theosophy and the Ancient Wisdom under other names to bring it forward and again teach it as true.

If you want to know more about these beautiful beings who share the life of God with us, and who live all around us, though as yet unseen by most people, buy Mr. Leadbeater's book, *The Hidden Side of Things*.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE GOAL OF HUMANITY

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upwards in the night.

LONGFELLOW

OUR goal. What a number of different answers we should get if we asked, say, a hundred people what the goal of humanity is! We will naturally take the answer of Theosophy, which says: "DIVINITY". Our final aim is Divinity: the becoming perfected human beings first, then joining the ranks of the Elder Brothers of Humanity, members of the Great White Lodge of Adepts, to grow in knowledge, compassion, and power, till we are as gods and become one with God.

This is the future of humanity; *Godhead* the goal that lies far, far beyond us to-day; and the promise of the future is in ourselves, hidden away in the deepest recesses of our nature, in the tiny seed which is our real Self, the growing-point out of which comes all that we shall be, just as the great oak grows out from the tiny acorn.

All the wonderful truths of the Ancient Wisdom taught in the Theosophical Society and in its literature are as free to every one as to us. They are not our exclusive property; they are everywhere. The atmosphere is full of them, and it is only because we have been able to catch them, and, having caught them, have chosen them for ours and adopted them, that we have become Theosophists.

Mrs. Besant, in her *London Lectures*, 1907, tells us that this choice of ours is our only claim to them; and that, "however weakly we carry them out, none the less the choice has been made and registered in the books of Destiny". The "Recording Angels," the "Lipika," have written it down to our credit that we have so lived in the past as to be able now to join the pioneers of this spiritual wave which is changing the religion and the ideals of the twentieth century.

The movement is not ours—it is *Theirs*, the Masters of Wisdom; and we owe a debt, the greatness of which we cannot yet understand, to the two Masters who volunteered to start this latest spiritual impulse, to work in and through the Theosophical Society *and bear the karma of it*.

You young people of our Lotus classes know there is no accident, no chance, in all God's world. You have been born into, or brought into touch with, Theosophy because you have earned these teachings, and you are free to accept or reject them. No teacher of Theosophy will try to terrify you with thoughts or threats of hell, if you choose to reject them; but are you going to lose your opportunity, or

seize it? Do you wish to be one of those who are fit to be born into the next sub-race, the sixth, or are you content to go on incarnating in the then ever deteriorating bodies of the fifth?

Can you bear the thought of being left behind, of refusing to join the pioneers, to help the Masters in the glorious work of uplifting humanity? No, you cannot. You will bravely step forward, and, remembering that though the Theosophical Society is only one of the channels for the divine life, that is *the one chosen by the Masters of Wisdom* for this special purpose—the forming of a nucleus, a growing point for the next sub-race.

CHAPTER XLIX

THE GOAL OF HUMANITY—(*Continued*)

He who seeks the mind's improvement
Aids the world, in aiding mind!
Every great commanding movement
Serves not one but all mankind.

CHARLES SWAIN

He who would win the name of truly great
Must understand his own age and the next.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

Do you wish to be one of God's chosen people, chosen to be in the forward ranks of the next race of humanity? Then you must work for it; there is no favouritism. Only those who can do the work are chosen. It would be foolish and cruel to choose those who could not do it. They would not only fail, but would injure themselves in trying to succeed, just as surely as a man who could lift only 500 lb. weight would injure himself if he persisted in trying to lift 600 lb.

The Masters watch and help us, and as soon as we are fit for a work They give it to us. They need workers. They work and live for humanity, and in comparison with us They are omniscient—all-seeing

—so no one is overlooked. To be able to do a thing is to get it to do.

No matter which Master you love most, you can work for Him by loving and helping your brother-man, and learning to see and to love God in him.

As we grow wiser and our powers increase, we shall be more and more efficient helpers, and shall be put in more and more responsible positions; and just as the wisest, cleverest soldier is sometimes sent on a difficult and dangerous mission, disguised as a beggar, or even in the garb of an enemy, so many of the servants and ambassadors of the Holy Ones are disguised as very ordinary, humble folk, and are doing a great work in a quiet way. Still, *all* are not in humble positions, else they would be as conspicuous in them as are our kings and queens in their exalted position.

Some are in the high places of the earth, but wherever they are they have fitted themselves for their position by hard, unselfish work; by subduing their lower nature—controlling their passions, purifying their minds, bodies and desires, and by strengthening their wills until they were strong enough to be trusted, and brave enough to bear the trials and strain of a great work.

Unselfishness—selflessness—is always the mark of a great soul, and no one who has failed to conquer self—his lower self—can ever be trusted with the great secrets of Nature, the knowledge of Nature's hidden forces. A selfish man could never be a saviour of others. He is a dangerous enemy.

Begin now to conquer self, to make a will strong enough to sacrifice everything for that which is good.

and right. Be one of the pioneers of the new spiritual impulse, and so earn the right to be born into the foremost ranks of humanity in the future.

Live for others. Make yourself wise, good, and great, that you may be a worthy helper of those who have conquered death, those who sought "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and to whom "all things" are now added.

Make yourselves channels for the divine life. Make the Theosophical Society the recognised channel through which the spirit and life of the Masters shall flow for the helping of the world; and know that then nothing in heaven or earth can prevent you from one day taking your place among them. There are many, many grades of workers. They move up step by step. Be ready when the step above you is vacant, and climb to it.

Some day your place will be among the Great Ones. It *will* be, *must* be, your place some day.

It depends on yourself *when*. Begin NOW.