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"Mysticism, properly understood, represents the Spiritual side of Life."—F. F.

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Alchemy and the Alchemists.

(Continued from page 36.)



THE Alchemists, in all their writings, had Man in view, regarding him as a microcosm, or miniature of the great world; or, as they are fond of quoting, as the Image of God, in the language of Moses.

My proposition is, that the *subject* of Alchemy was *Man*; while the *object* was the perfection of Man, which was supposed to centre in a certain unity with the Divine nature.

All of the Alchemists, so far as I have examined their writings, might place in the "fore-front" of their works a number of the most enlightening passages from Scripture, as indicating their doctrines and objects; among them the following, which I will recite at large, to save the trouble of a reference, and I will copy them with some general view to the order of the "great work," as the Alchemists call their Art.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

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

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

"I say unto thee, except a man be born again" ("from above," in the margin), "he cannot see the kingdom of God."

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

"Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold the kingdom of God is within you."

"I and my Father are one."

"... as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they [the

disciples] also may be one in us; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

"And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them [the people]; and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples."

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour."

"Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her."

"The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. . . . My son, let them not depart from thine eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion. So shall they be life unto thy soul and grace to thy neck."

"Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not: neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee."

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

"A wise man will hear and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels; to understand a proverb, and the interpretation, the words of the wise, and their dark sayings."

All of these sayings are perfectly congenial to the Alchemist, and exactly in harmony with his object.

But an important point must here be explained without reserve, it being necessary to a right understanding of the true position of the Alchemists; especially in what have been called the Dark Ages, when there was neither political nor religious toleration.

The Address to the Reader, in the English copy of Sandivogius, opens in this strain:—

"There is abundance of Knowledge, yet but little Truth known. The generality of our knowledge is but as castles in the air, or groundless fancies. I know but of two ways that are ordained for getting of Wisdom, viz., the Book of God and the Book of Nature; and these also, but as they are read with reason. Many look upon the former as a thing below them; upon the latter, as a ground of Atheism, and therefore neglect both. It is my judgment, that as to search the Scriptures is most necessary, so without reason it is impossible to understand them. Faith without reason is but simplicity. If I cannot understand by reason *how* a thing is, yet I will see *that* a thing is so, before I will believe it to be so. I will ground my believing of the Scripture upon Reason; I will improve my Reason by Philosophy. How shall we convince gainsayers of the truth of the Scriptures, but by principles of Reason?"

"When God made Man after his own Image, how was that? Was it not by making him a rational creature? Men therefore that lay aside reason, in the reading of sacred mysteries, do but *un-man* themselves, and become further involved in a labyrinth of errors. Hence it is that their Religion is degenerated into irrational notions."

"Now, to say that *pure* Philosophy is *true* Divinity, will haply seem a paradox [in 1650]; yet if any one should affirm it, he would not be heterodox.

"When Job had been a long time justifying himself against God—which I conceive was by reason of his ignorance of God and himself—God undertakes to convince him of his error by the principles of Nature; and this, to bring him to the knowledge of both; as may be seen at large, Job xxxviii.

"Can any one affirm that Hermes, Plato, Aristotle (though pure Naturalists), were not most deep Divines? Do not all grant that the two first chapters of *Genesis* are true Divinity? I dare affirm that they are the most deep and the truest Philosophy. Yea, they are the ground and sum of all Divinity and Philosophy; and if rightly understood, will teach thee more knowledge of *God*, and of *thyself*, than all the books in the world besides."

From such passages as the above, or those of a similar import, abundantly found in the works of the Alchemists, I cannot but say that they sought the Truth upon evidences drawn from the nature of things, and received it only for itself; and were influenced in its reception by neither tradition nor authority.

With the Alchemists in Christian countries, the doctrines of Christ were received as true in themselves, or in the nature of things, and *therefore* were believed to have been announced by Christ; but they were not regarded as true simply upon the ground that Christ announced them. With them, the "wisdom of the doctrine established the truth of Christianity, and not miracles." The Alchemists would have the lovers of their art test all doctrines by what they call "the possibility of Nature." Hence the test of doctrine was not with them a written record; and, consistently with this principle, no Alchemist urges his opinions upon authority, but always in the style of "My son, listen to my words;" but he adds, *Prove them*; or, he might say with St. Paul—one of the most zealous, bold, and independent reformers the world ever saw—"Prove all things, but hold fast that which is good."

Notwithstanding this high authority, he who accepts truth only because it may be proved, or proved to be "good," and disregards mere authority, is commonly stigmatised as an infidel.

The Alchemists, therefore, standing upon this ground, would have been persecuted had they published their opinions openly; for they lived, for the most part, at a period when it was supposed by those in authority that coercion and violence might be legitimately employed to *force* men into the established public faith, the imagined enemies of which, besides being held up to public abhorrence, were often burned at the stake. Allusions to this state of things frequently occur in the writings of the Alchemists, as in *The Open Way to the Shut Palace of the King*, where the author says: "I dare affirm that I do possess more riches than the whole known world is worth; but cannot make use thereof, because of the snares of knaves." The true explanation of this allusion to riches is in Matt. xvi. 26, for Eyrenæus proceeds: "I disdain, I loathe, I detest this idolizing of gold and silver, by the price whereof the pomp and vanities of the world are celebrated. Ah, filthy evil! ah, vain nothingness! Believe ye that I conceal these things out of envy? No, surely; for I protest to thee that I grieve from the very bottom of my soul, that we are driven as it were like outcasts from the face of the Lord throughout the earth. We travel through many nations, just like vagabonds, and dare not take upon ourselves the care of a family, neither do we possess any fixed habitation. And although we possess all things, yet can we use but a few. What, therefore, are we happy in, excepting speculation and

meditation only, wherein we meet with great satisfaction of mind? Many do believe (that are strangers to the Art) that, if they should enjoy it, they would do such and such things; so also even we did formerly believe, but being grown, more wary, by the hazard we have run, *we have chosen a more secret method*. For whosoever hath once escaped imminent peril of his life, he will (believe me) become more wise for the time to come." Yet he exclaims: "My heart murmureth things unheard of; my spirit beats in my breast for the good of all Israel. . . . Would to God that every ingenious man, in the whole earth, understood this science! . . . Then would virtue, naked as it is, be held in great honour, merely for its own amiable nature." But he adds: "*Our gold* is not to be bought for money, though you should offer a crown or a kingdom for it; for it is the gift of God."

As the intolerance of the Middle Ages is a familiar fact, known to every one, I have no disposition to dwell upon it; and have referred to it only to assign it as one cause of the esoteric writing of the Alchemists. They communicated with each other by symbols, writing of salt, sulphur, mercury, &c., and of the transmutation of metals, by which they saved their own heads, though they plunged hundreds and thousands of the "profane" into vain and useless efforts to find a *tangible* agent for turning the baser metals into gold. "Who is to blame," says one of them, "*the Art*, or those who seek it upon false principles?"

Another reason for their obscure mode of writing was of a higher order, and it was this: that, as most men were educated in religious tenets according to tradition, without understanding the true grounds of the doctrines imposed upon them, it was not considered safe to shake the hold of the tradition by proposing a new rule of conduct, not easily apprehended. In plain words, it was believed to be better for society that men should be held to their duty by hope and fear, than be exposed to injury by a misunderstood doctrine of freedom; for man is not free by denying the false, but by living in the truth. "The truth shall make you free," was the doctrine of Alchemy, as well as of the Gospel.

With the Alchemists, the ancient saying, KNOW THYSELF, inscribed upon the Temple of Apollo (attributed by some to Pythagoras, by others to the Egyptians), as an injunction, was the ground and sum of all wisdom. In this knowledge was found, as they believed, the knowledge of God; not that God is in man except as he is in all things, but the *knowledge of God* lies in the nature of man, and not in the nature of any other thing in the universe. He who looks for it elsewhere is on a journey away from the object he seeks, and shall be disappointed. This I regard as the opinion of the Alchemists.

I know of no one among that class of writers who has stated the ground of their proceedings more distinctly than Van Helmont, where he says:—

"Seeing that the Creator of all beings, before the foundation of the world, and before ever they were brought forth, had and contained the same in his Mind and Wisdom—even the little world [man, the microcosm] as well as the greater, according to the testimony of Scripture [here he quotes passages from Scripture]—must not then the world, the greater [the macrocosm] as well as the lesser, have their Creator, as their original and beginning, within themselves, so that neither the Creator nor his creature are separate from each other? . . . Seeing, then, that it cannot be said that perfection is attained, before the end hath reached its beginning, and the beginning united itself with the end, in order to a new birth and production, the question is, whether both the greater and the lesser world, in order to reach perfection, must not, in all their workings, aim at this, viz., that they may return to their beginning, to be united with it."

Again: "Seeing, then, that all the creatures of God, in order to their

melioration and glorification, stand in an endless revolution, in order to perfection, and yet must be known and comprehended; and seeing that a thing cannot be known otherwise than by its end and operation, or outworking, as a tree by its fruits; and that the lesser world is the end and comprisal of all creatures and works of God, and consequently an out-birth of the great world, wherein all other creatures are comprised; the question then is, Whether there can be any other way by which man may attain to a right knowledge of the great world, with and in all its parts, than *in and out of himself*; especially since in him, as in the end and abridgment of all things, the Beginning hath manifested itself—for the End is nothing but a Beginning wrought out, that is, displayed into act and manifested; so that the End is hid in the Beginning, as the Beginning is manifested in the End? And whether, as a consequence of this, both the worlds have not a great affinity, and perfect likeness, yea, and *unity one with the other*; and whether they must not be wrought out with one another, and thereby reach their highest perfection?"

(To be Continued in next Number.)

Jacob Boehme: His Life and Teaching, or Studies in Theosophy.

By the late Dr. Hans Lassen Martensen.

(Continued from page 45.)

LET me now try to suggest some way—dim and imperfect, I know—for understanding in what sense the Wisdom can be thought of as the *Mirror* of God, we must first dismiss all ideas of fixity; whenever Boehme speaks of "*looking-glasses*" he means the reflex objectivity of forms first imagined, as the ideas of Deity pass into the eternal substance of the Virgin Sophia. So we may suppose do our desires and resulting imaginations, energise and really *create* forms in the impalpable neurine of the brain, and that potential force becomes, so to speak, determined; a focus of action is posited, and by that centre magnetic attraction and all its creative consequences begins to act.

When I read in a paper of Mr. Mohini Chatterji (*Theosophist*, for June, 1885), this sentence "Eastern psychologists maintain that the physical body is merely the most condensed part of a vast nebulous mass which surrounds it as cometary matter surrounds its brightest part," and this quotation from Professor Hœkel in Mr. Romanes' interesting book "*On the Mental Evolution of Animals*:"—"The general conclusion has been reached that in man and in all other animals the sense organs arise in essentially the same way, viz., as parts of the external integument or epidermis. The external integument is the original general sense organ," . . . "and all special senses are differentiations of the general sense of touch," I began to see that the one law of differentiation of a universal potentiality was the beginning of all such life, effected from the highest to the lowest plane of creation by what Boehme calls "*a will to the substance*"; and that "the mirror of the Virgin-like Wisdom of God whence the Eternal Nature doth always arise from Eternity (*Epistle 5, par. 45*) has its earthly analogue in what our scientists term *protoplasm*. They can perceive *that* and descant upon it at large, but the *soul* life, *i.e.*, the *will*, "*the severation of a peculiar self-will*," with its desire causing life—causing the wheel of Nature to revolve ceaselessly in every newly-formed centre, *that* science can never detect; but to deny or to ignore its presence as some *Savans* do is to wrong their own reason. "*Will giveth life, and substantiality manifestation of life.*" Wheresoever we see substance, growing, or matter of

any sort, there we may be certain is a *will*, be it in a mollusc or a blade of grass.*

Now to apply this to the formation of the new creature in the human soul—it is an extremely hard task to put into words ideas so much beyond language, and I entreat for great indulgence when I try so clumsily to transfer my understanding of Boehme's to the mind of a reader. We must keep close to the central fact of man having been made in the likeness of God, and to every soul the unalienable right of free will being assured by reason of that likeness, however much obscured. The desire and *imagination* of man has consequently power to "compact itself into substance," and the life and teaching of Jesus Christ has been given us to fix the imagination on the highest ideal—the Divine Son of God, who, "*without Nature and creature, is the greatest meekness and humility.*"—(*Election, chap. 1, par. 57.*)

If we imagine after that example; if the will kindles the desire to follow it, and be of one spirit with our Lord Christ; we attract the heavenly substantiality which the universalised *spiritual* protoplasm, and *the Word and the Wisdom* generate in us. "Where our will is, there is our heart also; God is in us, and when we enter into His will then we put His Wisdom on to us, and in the *Wisdom Christ is a man.*"—(*Threefold Life, chap. 11, par. 73.* See also *Ibid, chap. 13, par. 24,* "The Word is *everywhere*, so is the substantiality (the body of the Word) though indeed without image; for the creature hath only the formation or image," with context.)

Why should the *phenomenal* difference of outside and inside soul life stand in the way of this conception? "Whatsoever can be thought to have a being anywhere in the creature, the same is likewise without the creature everywhere, for the creature is nothing else but an image and figure of the separable and various power and virtue of the Universal Being."—(*Clavis, par. 96.*)

"For all beings are but one only Being, which hath breathed forth itself out of itself, and hath severed and formized itself; and yet it proceedeth out of the same impressure, or formation, into a centre peculiarly distinct; that is, with each impressure and forming of the desire—where the severed, parted, and divided will doth impress and form itself into a peculiar particularity where a centre doth arise, and in the centre a *separator* or Creator of its own self, namely, a former of the *re-expressing* or re-spirating will."—(*6th Epistle, par. 65.*)

Boehme's own words have expressly dealt with this point. "In the creature is the newly-introduced substantiality, viz., Christ's heavenly flesh *creaturally*; but without, besides, or beyond the creature it is *uncreaturally*; for that very substantiality is the right, true, Divine Principle; it is as great as God's majesty; in all places, filling all in the Second Principle; and *that* in the body or *creature*, and *that* without the creature, is totally entirely *one* undivided, totally one power or virtue, might and glory, Paradise and pure element, wherein God's Eternal Wisdom dwelleth. As the sun shineth or enlighteneth in the whole world; and so now if there were not in the deep such a substance as the sun, then it would not receive the glance or lustre of the sun. Thus the corporeity of Christ is the fulness of the Heaven, in the Person *creaturally*, and without the creature living—in one Spirit and power or virtue, *not two.*"—(*Second Apology, Part 2, pars. 250-251.*) See also *Second Epistle, pars. 55 and 56.*

* There is yet a deeper cause than Will, but one that must arise in the unsearchable mind of God—*thought* which necessarily precedes both desire and will. Of course the thought of man or angel, and, for anything we know to the contrary, of lower orders of being also, sets the "Wheel of Nature" in motion on lower planes of existence.

Leaving a number of important points untouched for lack of space—and fear of lack of interest in the reader—I can only attempt to qualify one or two more of Martensen's assertions. For example, at page 312, where he says that no *localised* Heaven is admitted by Boehme to exist. This, however, we find in his first book, after saying the true Heaven is everywhere, he adds in the next paragraph—"but that there is assuredly a pure, glorious Heaven in all the three births or genitures aloft above the Deep of this world, in which God's Being, together with that of the Holy Angels, riseth up very purely, brightly, beauteously, and joyfully, is undeniable, and he is not born of God that denieth it."—(*Aurora*, chap. 19, pars. 26-27.)

Yet it must be owned that very few passages of like tenors, certainly none so decided, can be found in his writings. At page 318, after quoting what he calls many strange and baseless utterances on the subject of the salvation of heathens, Turks, and Jews, Martensen continues—"Boehme says in many places that heathens, Turks, and Jews, can be saved, even although they have not known the Christ who has come in the flesh, provided they have only stood in the *other* principle, in the Light principle, and have sought God with earnestness. God then considers them as children who know not what they say. "It does not depend on knowledge, but on the will." . . . "But if it be sufficient to stand in the Light principle (in the non-incarnated Logos), the question arises: why is the incarnation necessary? a necessity which Boehme, in accordance with his fundamental view, most vigorously maintains." One is tempted to meet this question by another; why attempt to pass judgment on a teacher whose lessons have been so hastily gone through that one of his most central doctrines has been missed? Martensen must have passed by unheeded all that Boehme has said with emphatic force about the *oneness* of the human race: here, for instance, in his treatise on the *Four Complexions*, chap. 3, par. 84, "all souls have a communion or sympathy with that *one soul* of Jesus Christ. They come all out of or from one original root, and are all together but as one tree with many branches. Therefore His breaking open that enclosure" (that iron gate which was fast shut in the soul of man), "and the grace or benefit thereby obtained is derived from Him into and upon all souls, even from Adam to the last man that shall be." And in his *19th Epistle*, pars. 16 and 17, "as the sin and wrath of Adam, being yet but *one*, pressed upon and into all; so likewise passed and pressed the motion of God's love in Christ's humanity, and out of Christ's humanity, through the whole humanity of all men. Christ is again become the heart in the human tree; the Divine sound which hath revealed itself in Christ's humanity effectually, that soundeth through Christ's humanity in the *Universal Human Tree*; and there is nothing wanting, or in the way, but that the twig which is on the tree will not draw the sap of the tree into itself."

"The Deity or the Word which moved itself in Mary and became man, that became man also in like manner *in all men* that had died from Adam to that time, who had given up and commended their Spirits into God, or into the *promised* Messiah. And it passed upon all those which were yet *to be born* out of the corrupted, perished Adam, who would but suffer that Word to waken them or arise in them; for the first man comprehendeth also the last. Adam is the stock, we all are his branches; but Christ is become our sap, virtue, and life."—*Incarnation*, Part 1, chap. 12, pars. 56 to 59.

Now in all he says of the salvation of heathen, Turks, and Jews, Boehme assumes as conditional just that drawing in of the sap, *i.e.*, the childlike obedience of the will to God, however ignorantly worshipped. See on this subject the effect of the incarnation on the patriarchs and saints before the coming of Christ, this significant saying in the *Third Apology*, Text 4, pars 48-49. "That very substantiality wherein God would become man was faded or disappeared

in Adam, when he died to the Kingdom of Heaven and Paradise. This faded or disappeared seed became, in its *principle, co-propagated*. And in this seed stood the limit of the covenant, out of which the Spirit of God in the saints manifested itself, and not through the faded or disappeared substance; but with Christ's becoming man on incarnation, *the substantial manifestation proceeded*, where God dwelleth within in the substance, as a life of the substance." Significant indeed, but to one new to Boehme's range of ideas so obscure, that something of a rough paraphrase may be serviceable. The "seed of the woman" was the dormant principle of the Wisdom; inasmuch as God had *inspoken* the promise regarding it, "*It shall bruise thy head*" (*Genesis iii., ver. 18.*) The *operative* Word of God was assured to Adam's race—what is to be understood by this as a seed's *principle* being propagated from one generation to another I make no pretence of understanding, but I perfectly understand by all analogies that until conditions of development are supplied no substantial manifestation can proceed. These conditions the Word and Wisdom combined brought to the human race when in Mary they *assumed the outward fleshly human substance*. Again, it is surely surprising that after reading his 4th and 5th Epistles any one summing up Boehme's doctrines as to the future, could render their meaning thus: "After the world has enjoyed a springtide in the 'thousand years' reign,' a season of peace upon earth during which all religious dissensions are to cease, and when Christ is to rule over the Church like a shepherd over his flock, the Philosopher's Stone, by which we shall be enabled to know all things, and to extract from the metals their spirit and heart, will be discovered, and the world will perish by fire." (*Page 328.*) I wish Martensen had given references to chapter and verse for this; only constructively can I find anything like a belief in the millenium; these two are, I believe, the nearest approach to it. In the *Forty Questions, Question 35, par. 38*, "Then he kindleth the Turba wherein the great fire burneth, which consumeth flesh and blood, also the stones and the elements, and then shall Babel drink her last draught. And after that Enoch hath peace a little time, and it is the golden year." And in *Mysterium Magnum, chap. 30, par. 36*, "Then is the time when Enoch and the children under his voice do lead a divine life, of which the first life of Enoch was a type; and then there is a blessed and golden year, till Enoch's last translation comes, and then the Turba is born (which, when it shall enkindle its fire) the floors shall be purged, for it is the end of all time." Both these passages are embedded in context so obscure that I could never feel sure that I understood their bearings; whereas in his Epistles, referred to above, he distinctly combats expectation of a thousand years' bliss on this earth. "*I have no knowledge,*" he says, "*of the thousand years' Sabbath; I know not sufficiently to ground it with Scripture.*" I may miss his meaning as well as Martensen, but all he says of the time of the Lily seems to me to belong to life in the *New Earth*.*

But on one very material point I must agree with Boehme's critic more than with himself. The whole of section 105 and 106 appears to me nearer what I suppose to be the truth regarding the fate of reprobate souls than Boehme's conception of it. He clearly declined to be considered illuminated by the spirit of God as to the times and seasons of this world's future. "I have no knowledge of it," he repeats, "seeing the Scripture doth not give clear evidence," and insists on his ignorance, "for the dark mysteries are no other way at all to be known save only in the Holy Ghost; we cannot make conclusions upon hidden things, unless we have the same in real knowledge, and *experimentally find in the*

* See also *Threefold Life of Man, chap. 3, pars. 50 and 51.*

illumination of God, that what we aver is the truth and will of God; and that *it is also agreeable to His Word, and grounded in the light of nature; for without the light of nature there is no understanding of divine mysteries.*" (4th Epistle, par. 13.) And that he had not this light of nature given him as regards the future on earth, he notices even in his first book, when saying that there the reader "will come to the true ground. It is true that from the beginning of the world it was *not so fully* revealed to any man, but seeing God will have it so, I submit to His will, and will see what He will do with it. *For His way which is before Him is for the most part hidden to me; but after him the spirit seeth even into the highest and profoundest depth.*"—(*Aurora*, chap. 9, pars. 90 and 91.)

I venture, therefore, to think—with all my deep and grateful reverence for Boehme—that as to the future of our race he is not to be referred to as a trustworthy seer: the little he says about it is instinct with the prejudices of his era, and he never appears to outsee them. It would probably have been dangerous for his contemporaries to have had admitted to its grosser mind, any such hope as that our generation is blessed with—a hope that can never lessen the terrors of the future for unrepentant sinners [because no effective imagination lays hold on endlessness of time], but which sees that their inevitable anguish is self-inflicted, and not imposed by a wrathful God as punishment, and hence must diminish as sin is purged; in fact, when the horrors of sin as such are better understood, such coarse torments as our ancestors imagined have necessarily lost credence, and we no longer mingle our thoughts of God as a Father who pities His children, knowing whereof they are made, with that of a vengeful executioner after death.

Martensen says very truly that Boehme's professed belief in the everlasting torments of the damned conflict with other parts of his doctrine. Not, so far as I have understood directly, but constructively, for instance, when he says: "Nothing subsisteth in Eternity unless it hath been from Eternity." (*Threefold Life*, chap. 6, par. 74.) How, then, should sin and its consequent misery?

From the 101st section to the end of his book, I am more in accord with the Bishop and with Oetinger, Hamburger, and Baader, whose opinions on this momentous subject he gives, than with Boehme's: he might have classed with these that of J. Michael Hahn, not a commentator, but in singular agreement with "Teutonicus" otherwise. Hahn's "larger hope" included the repentance and ultimate restoration of the fallen angel and his host,—a hope shared by *L. C. de St. Martin*, though not so positively announced.

Again, when at page 280 Martensen speaks of the locality of Heaven, I find his argument more convincing than all inferences from Boehme's of an opposite tendency. One passage here well deserves quoting—"Scripture tells us that there is a spiritual and Heavenly body, from which it follows that there must be for this appropriate space-relations. If Christ has a transfigured and glorified corporeity (which is an *articulus fidei stantis aut cadentis*), there must also be a region that corresponds with this. Now, although this region or these regions must, in comparison with our material region, be called spaceless, superspatial, yet absolute spacelessness cannot be attributed to them."

It is in the Bishop's *Envoi* that I find his wisest words. Naturally, as an ecclesiastic, his eagerness to edify is somewhat in advance of his readiness to learn; and in going through his book I am often tempted to apply to him Boehme's mild rebuke—"You bring the opinion of others" (of "Teutonicus") "into suspicion as if they had not written aright of the mystery; it were better that had been left out, seeing you have not understood their opinion." (*Epistle 4*, par. 91.) But in his last pages, when summing up the mistakes

of the Church in its attitude towards Theosophy, he speaks with weight of one of the most rooted errors of our own clergy—their antagonism, as a body, to all that is not theologically defensible and fixed. If in this respect the tide has begun to turn, we may yet have our pulpits filled by men who *can* bring forth treasures, *new* as well as old—who will lead the laity to spiritual depths and heights to which at present there are no “authorised” guides.

Let Martensen’s warning be quoted here, for words so unpalatably true are little likely to be cited elsewhere:—“With regard to Theology I make the general remark, that in my judgment—a judgment which has been greatly confirmed by these studies—Church Theology is not wise in assuming a hostile attitude towards Theosophy and in endeavouring to exclude it altogether (a course, however, which has not been adopted by *all* the representatives of theology). It is not wise in this course, because it hereby deprives itself of a most valuable leavening influence, a source of renewal and rejuvenescence, which Theology so greatly needs, exposed as it is to the danger of stagnating in barren and dreary scholasticism and cold and trivial criticism.”

“It must be obvious to every theologian who has a more than superficial acquaintance with Theosophy, that it has aroused and attracted attention to a circle of Scriptural conceptions which theology has disregarded, or to which it has devoted very slight pains, because it is not in possession of the categories which are requisite for their treatment. As one great instance, among many, may be mentioned the conception of the *Glory of God* and the *Uncreated Heaven*. No one will deny that these are fundamental conceptions in Holy Scripture, while in theology they are scarcely even accessory notions, and indeed are referred to in many theological systems as ‘dark points’ which it is best to avoid. And yet it will hardly be denied that it is the duty of the theologian to bring to light the fundamental conceptions of Scripture, and to offer some explanation of them.” “It is very illusory to suppose that scholasticism has any value of its own, when it lacks the emotion of the mystic or immediate intuition of that new and higher world of experience of the heavenly realities which Revelation unveils for us.” “And it must be regarded as a sign of retrogression, not of progress, that there should now be any who occupy a position in which they do nothing else but repristinate the old orthodox theology. It must undoubtedly be admitted as expedient that ecclesiastical tradition should be preserved, and ecclesiastical testimony maintained, in opposition to neo-rationalism and all its cognate systems. But in such circles there can be no real progress in the Christian apprehension of truth.”—(*Martensen, pages 339 and 340-41.*)

Thoughts on Genesis.

By F. M. Van Helmont.

Verse 2. “And the earth was empty and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the waters.”

Verse 2. “And the earth was *Tohu* and *Boku*, and darkness upon the face of the abyss, and the Spirit of *ÆLOHIM* moved upon the face of the waters.”

Explication.

Now the earth of this world, newly created by *Ælohim*, consisting of a collection or aggregation of hidden seeds, when conceived and brought forth by *Ælohim*, was yet invisible and inelaborate, though indeed contained and dispersed in the predominating or prevailing heaven: but not yet distinguished and compacted, nor as yet made up into earthly visible and formed creatures,

which afterwards upon the Fall received the complement of gross corporeity and earthliness.

And *darkness*, that is an obscure confusion of seeds, not yet brought forth, and far from perfection, was diffused, or spread over all the faces, *PROSOPA*, *Supposita*, "Subjects or Dark Spirits," which, after an unsearchable profundity, lay hid in that infinite and endless abyss; out of which, throughout all eternity, still new, and new seeds, as yet enclosed and shut up in those that are already brought forth, must be hatched and exalted to light and glory. And to the end that this eduction or forthcoming might be promoted, it was needful that, like as the darkness was diffused, so in opposition to it the Spirit of *Elohim*, that is *Jehovah* Himself, should be likewise diffused through all, who is a pure act, without passion; light, without darkness, and order without confusion; containing ruling, moving, and bringing forth all things, to the end He might help His creatures, in order to the dispelling of darkness, the introducing of light, the elaborating of seeds, and the re-exalting of those already fallen, or that shall fall hereafter. This Spirit, therefore, of Eternal Light, moving upon the faces, *PROSOPA*, or "Dark Spirits," contained in the waters, that is the female or passive part of things opposite to fire, did move, cherish, and impart to them heat and activity, to the end that things might become active, and strive to break forth to elaboration, that is, their completing and perfection.

Annotations.

Empty and void.—*Tohu and Bohu.* These words are fitly joined together, there being no difference between them, save only their initial letters, *T* and *B*, which are a transposition of the first and last letters of *Bereschit*, in which *B* is the head, beginning and fountain; *T*, the end and execution. But here, in *Tohu* and *Bohu*, by a contrary order, *T*, which is the execution, is set before, and *B*, the beginning, is put after, to denote the circle of nature turning round; like as in the 1st chapter, verse 1, it is said, *the Heaven and Earth*: but in the 2nd chapter verse 4 we read both *Heaven and Earth*; and by an inverse order, *Earth and Heaven*; which inverted repetition was not pitched upon without a mystery, *viz.*, that the execution and sending forth of the Spirit of Life, into the creatures, did therefore proceed from the supreme light, that they again, by the assistance thereof, might ascend to the light, life, source, and original. Thus we proceed from the beginning to the end, and from the end return again to the beginning. This world came forth from the former and spiritual world, and, after due elaboration, shall be exalted to it again. These words, *Tohu* and *Bohu*, are nowhere found apart in Holy Writ: and as they are in this text joined by *Moses*, so they are likewise by the prophet *Feremy*, and without doubt with reference to it, in his 4th chapter, verse 23, where the *Septuagint* renders both words by one only; *I saw the Earth, and behold Tohu and Bohu*, *OU DEN, nothing, emptiness*; but the same interpreters, in rendering this text of *Moses*, have expressed better, and more intelligibly, wherein this emptiness doth consist, not in that there was nothing there, for there was a vast variety of things, or seeds, in the earth; but indeed, because the earth was yet *AORATOS KAI ANASKEUASOS, invisible or inelaborate*. There were seeds, but not as yet visible or brought to light, and separated from their womb of darkness; and much less elaborated, or wrought out to perfection. For, as the Epistle to the *Hebrews* expresseth it, *visible things were made of things invisible*. In the creation of the world, the world itself, indeed, with the seeds enclosed in it, were brought forth, but the seeds themselves were not produced in the world, because the earth was yet invisible and inelaborate. We may take notice that the letters *O, H, V, Cholem, He, Vau*, common to both these words, will direct us to find out the force and meaning of them. For *Cholem* is a most high sound; *He* signifies *life* or *spirit*, as has

been said before ; but *Vau* is the lowest sound, declining, and, as it were, expiring, such as is the voice of dying men ; whence we understand that the Spirit descends from the highest to the lowest, that the creatures, with its assistance, by means of intervening deaths, might remount to life again ; which is accomplished when visible things are made of invisibles, and things elaborate (that is, wrought to perfection) of things confused.

And *Darkness*.—*Darkness* imports *confusion* ; but *light, order* ; for confusion causeth darkness, whereas order begets clarity or light. Hence it is that light, good, and love are one and the same ; and so, on the other hand, darkness, evil, and hatred. The Spirit of Light is from the Spirit of *Ælohim*, or a virtue begotten by Him in the things that are ; but the Spirit of Darkness is the principle of imperfection. Therefore the fight of *Michael* with the dragon, or prince of darkness, and his angels, is the perpetual conflict between the Spirits of Light and the Spirits of Darkness ; or, if you will, the world of flesh : and though *Michael* always remains conqueror at last, and that the darkness doth not increase, but lose ground, and is lessened continually, yet some of it still remains, as being necessary in a creature state, because otherwise the creatures would not be distinguished from God, or Jehovah, who is light without darkness. Besides, if light had nothing to resist or oppose it, there could be no reflection or refraction. Wherefore darkness is upon the faces of the abyss, or infinite deep ; that is, darkness is infinite, and is never taken away from the creature.

Upon the face, or rather faces, the Hebrew word being plural ; for the text is not so to be understood, as if the word face did signify only the surface, or outmost extremity, or top of a thing, and as if the darkness did lie upon the surface of the abyss, as a mist lies upon the surface of the earth, or of some lake, without piercing into the inmost parts of it. But the word being here in the plural, *faces*, hints to us that the darkness is everywhere hid throughout the abyss ; therefore we must conclude that the darkness did penetrate into the abyss, because darkness was upon the innumerable faces that lay hid in the abyss. Now faces are substances, or individual singular things, subsisting by themselves, even spirits or souls, and, as it were, persons, for the Greek word PROSOPOON signifies a *person* as well as a *face* ; and that because every *person*, or rather every *subject*, or *suppositum*, hath a kind of face whereby it is known and distinguished ; which faces, as long as they are masked in their seeds, are in the abyss of darkness.

Of the Abyss.—An *abyss* is a *deep*, whose fund, ground, or bottom is far off, that is, at a very great distance, or rather that hath none at all ; and therefore in the *German* tongue is rendered ABGRUNDT, that is, without ground or bottom. Wherefore by *abyss* here we are to understand infinity, which is without any bottom or end. Moreover, this abyss or infiniteness is everywhere, and that not only in God, but also in the creatures, for not the light only is infinite, but the darkness also, that so the light may have something to act upon, something that it may illuminate and elaborate, or work up to perfection. As often as any birth is brought forth out of its seed, there lie hid in it many other seeds, and future births, to be brought forth in due time, and so goes on to infinity ; and these seeds, whilst they lie hid, are said to be *in orco*, or in the abyss of darkness.

And the Spirit of the Lord.—*Ruach Ælohim*. The meaning of these words is variously rendered by interpreters ; some understand nothing else by it but the outward wind, which consists in a sensible motion of the air ; and, because the word *God* is added to it, they take it for a strong, vehement wind, according to the Hebrew phrase, which expresseth the greatness of things in this manner : Thus great and high mountains are called *mountains of God*, Psalm xxxvi. verse 7, and so the *cedars of God*, Psalm lxxx. verse 11. And, indeed, even

this outward wind or air which we draw into us is a kind of vehicle of the Divine Spirit, who, by means of respiration, imparts life and strength to living creatures. Experience likewise confirms that our digestion takes its virtue from respiration; for the more we draw in of air, the more can we digest; and when we have a mind to put our utmost strength to anything, we are wont to draw in our breath, and keep it in. But in this place the word *Ruach* cannot be understood of the palpable air, forasmuch as all things before the Fall were pure and heavenly; and therefore *Ruach Elohim* is to be understood in a much higher sense than according to the idiom of the *Hebrews*, who attribute great things to God. For the matter here treated of is the *Creation of the World*, where the Universal, Supreme, and Eternal Spirit in *Elohim* doth all, who also, in *Elohim*, determines Himself to certain creatures; whereas, in Himself, He is common to all, and indetermined. *Spirit*, therefore, is taken here for all that which is active, vegetating, vivifying, and uniting superiors with inferiors, heaven with earth, and the soul with the body. And though it be sometimes taken for the soul, yet it is often distinguished from it in Holy Writ; for our soul is properly our own, and elaborates our body, and is the next or proximate author of all the good and evil that befalls it. For every one is the hammerer or smith of his good fortune or otherwise: but our Spirit proceeds from the Spirit of God. Now the farther we depart from propriety or selfishness, so much the nearer we approach to God, and so much the more doth His Spirit act in us; for it is the property of good to give, not to receive; and to communicate its good things to others, not to appropriate, or take to itself, the good of others. Wherefore in the working and procuring of our own good we are excited, assisted, yea, and actuated by the Spirit of God. But the evil we hammer out for ourselves, as a fruit and effect of our propriety, selfishness, and separation from God. As for particular Spirits, they are those which actuate each thing separate by itself; and in this sense there are Spirits of Light, to wit, such as have already wrought up their body to perfection, and are also helpful to us in the exalting of our bodies. Opposite to these are the Spirits of Darkness, whose activity rather tends to death and corruption: and between the legions of both these Spirits and their princes, *Michael* and the *Dragon*, there is continual war, as before was hinted. Several Spirits of the Air, Waters, and Earth are joined together by means of the same common operation: and because it is the nature of Spirits to be operative, it may be said, that operation, *viz.*, such as is orderly, is always in conjunction with the rest; but if it be disorderly, then it produces resistance and violence. Moreover, the Spirits that are in things are distinguished into domestic and foreign; as for the latter, those Christ cast out, but the domestic He only composed them to rest, and restored them to their due order: accordingly He did not cast out the fever, but rebuked it, and the sea likewise. Now, that the Spirit of *Elohim* here signifies *Fehovah*, or the *ineffable One*, to wit, the universal light common to all, without any the least darkness or stunted propriety, shall be further declared in the sequel.

Moved.—*Hovered or fluttered, blew or breathed, cherished*, all which come much to one; for by its moving, and blowing, or breathing, He gave life, and by His cherishing imparted heat. An ancient *Syriac* interpreter is said to have rendered it thus, *The Spirit of God did cherish or keep warm the waters*; and that very well; for the water signifies the passive part of the world, and the fire the active; therefore the waters are to be cherished with heat; and, as a female, to be made fruitful by the male.

Upon the Waters.—The Hebrew text expresseth it, *upon the faces of the waters*, as before, *upon the faces of the abyss or deep*. Wherefore neither are we here to understand that the Spirit of *Elohim* did only move the surface of the waters, as the wind raiseth waves on the surface of the sea, but that it

penetrated to the inmost parts of it ; for all the faces in the waters, or Spirits hid in the water, received their activity and virtue from the Spirit of *Aelohim* : and accordingly we find by experience that the waters are full of life and living things. Moreover, the waters are here distinguished from the deep, because the deep consists only of darkness, that is, of Spirits locked up, and whose bodies are not yet elaborated or finished ; whereas the waters can be actuated by the fire or light : wherefore also mention is made of two-fold waters, *viz.*, the supercelestial, or waters above the Heaven, and the inferior, of which more presently. Hence also it appears how water is opposed to fire, *viz.*, as the passive is to that which is active ; and from the earth it is distinguished, forasmuch as in the water the fire is yet volatile and separable, whereas in the earth it is fixed, and accordingly by the action of fire upon water (when they begin to fix together) earth is produced.

Notes on the Mystics, &c.

BOEHME AND THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.

" I BELIEVE that Böhme is the first writer who has evolved from the letter of Scripture a consecutive spiritual sense, though this is carried by him no farther than the Book of Genesis. It is not so clear, nor so methodical, as the similar exposition by Swedenborg ; but it is probable that though less formally methodical, this does not, at least in the same degree, extend to its substance—to the ideas themselves. Nor is this the only point of junction between these two eminent seers (though, on the other hand, there are some in which there is a marked divergence). Böhme seems to have anticipated the Swedish seer in tracing the parallelism between the physical and the spiritual worlds and their correspondences. Both taught that in all things natural forms take their shape from, and are the sign or expression of their interior spiritual forms, their qualities inhering not in the natural but in the spiritual. These views, however, cannot be said to have originated with either Böhme or Swedenborg ; they (or at least views very similar to them) may be traced to Plato, and, perhaps, beyond. The doctrine of discrete degrees, however, is one drawn more clearly and sharply by Swedenborg than I believe by any previous writer. In his teaching of the Trinity there seems, again, to be a substantial agreement between the Swedish seer and the Teutonic philosopher. The opening of the creation to Böhme by the Divine light, so that he saw into the essences and properties of things, will remind many of the like experiences of George Fox, who, in his journal, describes how in vision the creation was opened to him, and the nature and virtues of all things were so revealed that he was in doubt whether he should not practice as a physician for the good of mankind. In this, and in teaching that there is a *one* language—a *spiritual* language (spoken, he believes, on the day of Pentecost), from which the earliest languages have proceeded ; and in many other things his statements agree with those made by the Seeress of Prevorst, and by many of the seers and mediums of our own time, and even with some of our modern churches among whom the gifts of the Spirit have been manifested. This language, Böhme held, could be known only by those who were spiritually enlightened." *

* The above observations are taken from an interesting article entitled "Spiritualism in Biography—Jacob Böhme," contributed by T. S. (Thomas Shorter) to the *Spiritual Magazine*, September, 1862. B. L. M.

The Fortunate Isle.

THE following little poem admirably "shadows" the life the adepts sought to reach :—

" There is an isle

Full, as they say, of good things ;—fruits and trees
 And pleasant verdure : a very masterpiece
 Of nature's ; where the men immortally
 Live, following all delights and pleasures. There
 Is not, nor ever hath been, Winter's cold'
 Or Summer's heat, the season still the same,—
 One gracious Spring, where all, e'en those worst used
 By fortune, are content. Earth willingly
 Pours out her blessing : the words ' thine ' and ' mine '
 Are not known 'mongst them : all is common, free
 From pain and jealous grudging. Reason rules,
 Not fantasy : every one knows well
 What he would ask of other ; every one
 What to command : thus every one hath that
 Which he doth ask ; what is commanded, does.
 This island hath the name of Fortunate :
 And, as they tell, is governed by a Queen
 Well spoken and discreet, and therewithal
 So beautiful, that, with one single beam
 Of her great beauty, all the country round
 Is rendered shining. When she sees arrive
 (As there are many so exceeding curious
 They have no fear of danger 'fore their eyes)
 Those who come suing to her, and aspire
 After the happiness which she to each
 Doth promise in her city, she doth make
 The strangers come together ; and forthwith,
 Ere she consenteth to retain them there,
 Sends for a certain season all to sleep.
 When they have slept so much as there is need,
 Then wake they them again, and summon them
 Into her presence. There avails them not
 Excuse or caution ; speech however bland,
 Or importunity of cries. Each bears
 That on his forehead written visibly,
 Whereof he hath been dreaming. They whose dreams
 Have been of birds and hounds, are straight dismissed ;
 And at her royal mandate led away,
 To dwell thenceforward with such beasts as these.
 He who hath dreamed of sconces broken, war,
 And turmoil, and sedition, glory won,
 And highest feats achieved, is, in like guise,
 An exile from her court ; whilst one whose brow
 Is pale, and dead, and withered, showing care
 Of pelf and riches, she no less denies
 To be his queen and mistress. None, in brief,
 Reserves she of the dreamers in her isle,
 Save, him, that, when awakened he returns,
 Betrayeth tokens that of her rare beauty
 His dreams have been. So great delight has she
 In being and in seeming beautiful,
 Such dreamer is right welcome to her isle.

" All this is held a fable : but who first
 Made and recited it hath, in this fable,
 Shadowed a Truth."*

* *Heriot de Borderie* (16th century), translated by Cary.

Notes, New Books, &c.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST.

ON the blank part of the last page of a copy of Behmen's "Three Principles" there has been written the following prayer by one of its former possessors, and which has been reproduced here in the conviction that many of the readers of *Light and Life* will say amen to this sigh from the depths of one who has long since, with "singular perfection," attained "the wonderful felicity" he desired, we doubt not:—

"Thomas Owen, his book, 21st March, 1671.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

"O my God, I bless Thy holy name for all Thy mercies, and especially for that mercy of mercies, my Redeemer, who hath led captivity captive, and given gifts unto men, as, if Thou wilt but help me to improve them, they will make me wise to all eternity. I count myself altogether unworthy of such royal privileges, and I cannot but admire Thy mercy and love manifested unto me. Almighty God, I beseech Thee help me to improve those gifts, so that I may with singular perfection attain unto wonderful felicity; and having that peace which passeth all understanding, I yield up myself to my Saviour in a humble and total resignation.

"And so let any of the four winds blow,
And still my pleasant fruit doth grow."

—Contributed by R. A.

We have just received from R. H. Fryar, Bath, "AUREUS, The Golden Tractate of Hermes Trismegistus," concerning the physical secret of the Philosopher's Stone, with Introductory Essay by J. Yarker, Esq. Motto on Title—"If that which thou seekest, thou findest not within thee, thou wilt never find it without thee."—Alipili. To all who know anything of these Bath reprints it is unnecessary to say much. We will give a part of the Introduction in next No. of this paper, and consider it best to let the book speak for itself.

From Mrs. Abby Morton Diaz, Belmont, Mass., U.S., "The Law of Perfection," and "Spirit as a Power."

For an interesting paper on Dr. John Fordage, a "profound and noted mystic," just received from Thomas M. Johnson, Osceola, U.S.A., see early number of *Light and Life*.

R. B. Murdoch, Eglinton Street, Glasgow, has just issued Part I. of William Law's "Spirit of Prayer." Cloth, 1s.

Kegan, Paul & Co., London, announce the "Temple of Humanity," by Rev. H. M. Grimley, M.A. We look for a book of genuine worth from the author of "Tremadoc Sermons."

Just ready—"Infoldings and Unfoldings of the Divine Genius in Nature and Man." Eight Sermons by J. Pulsford. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co. 1s. 6d. Reader, make haste and get it.

Will our readers try to make *Light and Life* more widely known—our monthly loss is very great. Making it a question of how long we can sustain the effort, it is simply a matter of fewer issues in the year. But just as we pen this, one good friend writes—"I will send you £4 in November to help in your work."

Many encouraging letters have been received since our issue of Boehme's Epistles. The few copies left we hope to get off very soon. It is issued as Vol. I. of The Reprint of Jacob Boehme's Works, with Introduction by Graduate (D.D.) of Glasgow University. 6s.—post free—to U.S. of America.

Can any reader say anything as to Peter John Faber, "a most Eminent and Learned Physician." His "Arcanum" was translated by W. Salmon, M.D., and printed in "Polygraphice," London, 1701.

Subscriptions for Year (for Great Britain and all countries in the Postal Union, 2s., post free; American Subscribers remitting One Dollar, Two Copies, post free) may now be sent to "LIGHT AND LIFE OFFICE," 100 West George Street, Glasgow.