

LUCIFER.

REINCARNATION.

(Continued from p. 192.)

THE ascending stages of consciousness through which the Thinker passes as he reincarnates during his long cycle of lives in the three lower worlds, are clearly marked out, and the obvious necessity for many lives in which to experience them, if he is to evolve at all, may carry to the more thoughtful minds the clearest conviction of the truth of reincarnation.

The first of the stages is that in which all the experiences are sensational, the only contribution made by the mind consisting of the recognition that contact with some objects is followed by a sensation of pleasure, while contact with others is followed by a sensation of pain. These objects form mental pictures, and the pictures soon begin to act as a stimulus to seek the objects associated with pleasure, when those objects are not present, the germs of memory and of mental initiative thus making their appearance. This first rough division of the external world is followed by the more complex idea of the bearing of quantity on pleasure and pain, already referred to.

At this stage of evolution memory is very short-lived, or, in other words, mental images are very transitory. The idea of forecasting the future from the past, even to the most rudimentary extent, has not dawned on the infant Thinker, and his actions are guided from outside, by the impacts that reach him from the external world, or at furthest by the promptings of his appetites and passions, craving gratification. He will throw away anything for an immediate satisfaction, however necessary the thing may be for his future

well-being ; the need of the moment overpowers every other consideration. Numerous examples of human souls in this embryonic condition can be found in books of travel, and the necessity for many lives will be impressed on the mind of anyone who studies the mental condition of the least-evolved savages, and compares it with the mental condition of even average humanity among ourselves.

Needless to say that the moral capacity is no more evolved than the mental ; the idea of good and evil has not yet been conceived. Nor is it possible to convey to the quite undeveloped mind even an elementary notion of either good or bad. Good and pleasant are to it interchangeable terms, as in the well-known case of the Australian savage mentioned by Charles Darwin. Pressed by hunger, the man speared the nearest living creature that could serve as food, and this happened to be his wife ; a European remonstrated with him on the wickedness of his deed, but failed to make any impression ; for from the reproach that to eat his wife was very bad, he only deduced the inference that the stranger thought she had proved nasty or indigestible, and he put him right by smiling peacefully as he patted himself after his meal, and declaring in a satisfied way, " She is very good." Measure in thought the moral distance between that man and S. Francis of Assisi, and it will be seen that there must either be evolution of souls as there is evolution of bodies, or else in the realm of the soul there must be constant miracle, dislocated creations.

There are two paths along either of which man may gradually emerge from this embryonic mental condition. He may be directly ruled and controlled by men far more evolved than himself, or he may be left to grow slowly unaided. The latter case would imply the passage of uncounted millennia, for without example and without discipline, left to the changing impacts of external objects, and to friction with other men as undeveloped as himself, the inner energies could be but very slowly aroused. As a matter of fact, man has evolved by the road of direct precept and example and of enforced discipline. We have already seen that when the bulk of average humanity received the spark which brought the Thinker into being, there were some of the greater Sons of Mind who incarnated as Teachers, and that there was also a long succession of lesser

Sons of Mind, at various stages of evolution, who came into incarnation as the crest wave of the advancing tide of humanity. These ruled the less evolved, under the beneficent sway of the great Teachers, and the compelled obedience to elementary rules of right living—very elementary at first, in truth—much hastened the development of mental and moral faculties in the embryonic souls. Apart from all other records the gigantic remains of civilizations that have long since disappeared—evidencing great engineering skill, and intellectual conceptions far beyond anything possible to the mass of the then infant humanity—suffice to prove that there were present on earth men with minds that were capable of greatly planning and greatly executing.

Let us continue the early stage of the evolution of consciousness. Sensation was wholly lord of the mind, and the earliest mental efforts were stimulated by desire. This led the man, slowly and clumsily, to forecast, to plan. He began to recognize a definite association of certain mental images, and, when one appeared, to expect the appearance of the other that had invariably followed in its wake. He began to draw inferences, and even to initiate action on the faith of these inferences—a great advance. And he began also to hesitate now and again to follow the vehement promptings of desire, when he found, over and over again, that the gratification demanded was associated in his mind with the subsequent happening of suffering. This action was much quickened by the pressure upon him of verbally-expressed laws; he was forbidden to seize certain gratifications, and was told that suffering would follow disobedience. When he had seized the delight-giving object and found the suffering follow upon the pleasure, the fulfilled declaration made a far stronger impression on his mind than would have been made by the unexpected—and therefore to him fortuitous—happening of the same thing unforeshadowed. Thus conflict continually arose between memory and desire, and the mind grew more active by the conflict, and was stirred into livelier functioning. The conflict, in fact, marked the transition to the second great stage.

Here began to show itself the germ of will. Desire and will guide a man's actions, and will has even been defined as the desire which emerges triumphant from the contest of desires. But this is a crude and superficial view, explaining nothing. Desire is the

outgoing energy of the Thinker, determined in its direction by the attraction of external objects. Will is the out-going energy of the Thinker, determined in its direction by the conclusions drawn by the reason from past experiences, or by the direct intuition of the Thinker himself. Otherwise put: desire is guided from without, will from within. At the beginning of man's evolution, desire has complete sovereignty, and hurries him hither and thither; in the middle of his evolution, desire and will are in continual conflict, and victory lies sometimes with the one, sometimes with the other; at the end of his evolution desire has died, and will rules with unopposed, unchallenged sway. Until the Thinker is sufficiently developed to see directly, will is guided by him through the reason; and as the reason can only draw its conclusions from its stock of mental images—its experience—and that stock is limited, the will constantly commands mistaken actions. The suffering which flows from these mistaken actions increases the stock of mental images, and thus gives the reason an increased store from which to draw its conclusions. Thus progress is made and wisdom is born.

Desire often mixes itself up with will, so that what appears to be determined from within is really largely prompted by the cravings of the lower nature for objects which afford it gratification. Instead of an open conflict between the two, the lower subtly insinuates itself into the current of the higher and turns its course aside. Defeated in the open field, the desires of the personality thus conspire against their conqueror, and often win by guile what they failed to win by force. During the whole of this second great stage, in which the faculties of the lower mind are in full course of evolution, conflict is the normal condition, conflict between the rule of sensations and the rule of reason.

The problem to be solved in humanity is the putting an end to conflict while preserving the freedom of the will; to determine the will inevitably to the best, while yet leaving that best as a matter of choice. The best is to be chosen, but by a self-initiated volition, that shall come with all the certainty of a fore-ordained necessity. The certainty of a compelling law is to be obtained from countless wills, each one left free to determine its own course. The solution of that problem is simple when it is known, though the contradiction looks irreconcilable when first presented. Let man be left free

to choose his own actions, but let every action bring about an inevitable result ; let him run loose amid all objects of desire and seize whatever he will, but let him have all the results of his choice, be they delightful or grievous. Presently, he will freely reject the objects whose possession ultimately causes him pain ; he will no longer desire them, when he has experienced to the full that their possession ends in sorrow. Let him struggle to hold the pleasure and avoid the pain ; he will none the less be ground between the stones of law, and the lesson will be repeated any number of times found necessary ; reincarnation offers as many lives as are needed by the most sluggish learner. Slowly desire for an object that brings suffering in its train will die, and when the thing offers itself in all its attractive glamour it will be rejected, not by compulsion but by free choice. It is no longer desirable, it has lost its power. Thus with thing after thing ; choice more and more runs in harmony with law. "There are many roads of error ; the road of truth is one ;" when all the paths of error have been trodden, when all have been found to end in suffering, the choice to walk in the way of truth is unswerving, because based on knowledge. The lower kingdoms work harmoniously, compelled by law ; man's kingdom is a chaos of conflicting wills, fighting against, rebelling against, law ; presently there evolves from it a nobler unity, a harmonious choice of voluntary obedience—an obedience that, being voluntary, based on knowledge, and on memory of the results of disobedience, is stable and can be drawn aside by no temptation. Ignorant, inexperienced, man would always have been in danger of falling ; as a God, knowing good and evil by experience, his choice of the good is raised for ever beyond possibility of change.

Will in the domain of morality is generally entitled conscience, and it is subject to the same difficulties in this domain as in its other activities. So long as actions are in question which have been done over and over again, of which the consequences are familiar either to the reason or to the Thinker himself, the conscience speaks quickly and firmly. But when unfamiliar problems arise, as to the working out of which experience is silent, conscience cannot speak with certainty ; it has but a hesitating answer from the reason, which can draw only a doubtful inference, and the Thinker cannot speak, if his experience does not include the circumstances that have

now arisen. Hence conscience often decides wrongly ; that is, the will, failing clear direction from either the reason or the intuition, guides action amiss. Nor can we leave out of consideration the influences which play upon the mind from without, from the thought-forms of others, of friends, of the family, of the community, of the nation. These all surround and penetrate the mind with their own atmosphere, distorting the appearance of everything, and throwing all things out of proportion. Thus influenced, the reason often does not even judge calmly from its own experience, but draws false conclusions as it studies its materials through a distorting medium.

The evolution of moral faculties is very largely stimulated by the affections, animal and selfish as these are during the infancy of the Thinker. The laws of morality are laid down by the enlightened reason, discerning the laws by which Nature moves, and bringing human conduct into consonance with the divine Will. But the impulse to obey these laws, when no outer force compels, has its root in love, in that hidden divinity in man which seeks to pour itself out, to give itself to others. Morality begins in the infant Thinker when he is first moved by love to wife, to child, to friend, to do some action that serves the loved one without any thought of gain to himself thereby. It is the first conquest over the lower nature, the complete subjugation of which is the achievement of moral perfection. Hence the importance of never killing out, or striving to weaken, the affections, as is done in many of the lower kinds of occultism. However impure and gross the affections may be, they offer possibilities of moral evolution from which the cold-hearted and self-isolated have shut themselves out. It is an easier task to purify than to create love, and this is why "the sinners" have been said by great Teachers to be nearer the kingdom of heaven than the Pharisees and scribes.

The third great stage of consciousness sees the development of the higher intellectual powers ; the mind no longer dwells entirely on mental images obtained from sensations, no longer reasons on purely concrete objects, nor is concerned with the attributes which differentiate one from another. The Thinker, having learned to discriminate clearly between objects by dwelling upon their unlikenesses, now begins to group them together by some attribute which

appears in a number of objects otherwise dissimilar, and makes a link between them. He draws out, abstracts, this common attribute, and sets all objects that possess it apart from the rest which are without it; and in this way he evolves the power of recognizing identity amid diversity, a step towards the much later recognition of the One underlying the many. He thus classifies all that is around him, developing the synthetic faculty, and learning to construct as well as to analyze. Presently he takes another step, and conceives of the common property as an idea, apart from all the objects in which it appears, and thus constructs a higher kind of mental image than the image of a concrete object—the image of an idea that has no phenomenal existence in the worlds of form, but which exists on the higher levels of the mental plane, and affords material on which the Thinker himself can work. The lower mind reaches the abstract idea by reason, and in thus doing accomplishes its loftiest flight, touching the threshold of the formless world, and dimly seeing that which lies beyond. The Thinker sees these ideas, and lives among them habitually, and when the power of abstract reasoning is developed and exercised, the Thinker is becoming effective in his own world, and is beginning his life of active functioning in his own sphere. Such men care little for the life of the senses, care little for external observation, or for mental application to images of external objects; their powers are indrawn, and no longer rush outwards in the search for satisfaction. They dwell calmly within themselves, engrossed with the problems of philosophy, with the deeper aspects of life and thought, seeking to understand causes rather than troubling themselves with effects, and approaching nearer and nearer to the recognition of the One that underlies all the diversities of external Nature.

In the fourth stage of consciousness that One is seen, and with the transcending of the barriers set up by the intellect, the consciousness spreads out to embrace the world, seeing all things in itself and as parts of itself, and seeing itself as a ray of the LOGOS, and therefore as one with Him. Where is then the Thinker? He has become Consciousness, and while the spiritual soul can at will use any of his lower vehicles, he is no longer limited to their use, nor needs them for his full and conscious life. Then is compulsory reincarnation over, and the man has destroyed death—has verily achieved

immortality. Then has he become "a pillar in the temple of my God, and shall go out no more."

To complete this part of our study we need to understand the successive quickenings of the vehicles of consciousness, the bringing them one by one into activity as the harmonious instruments of the human soul.

We have seen that from the very beginning of his separate life, the Thinker has possessed coatings of mental, astral, etheric and dense physical matter. These form the media by which his life vibrates outwards, the bridge of consciousness, as we may call it, along which all impulses from the Thinker may reach the dense physical body, all impacts from the outer world may reach him. But this general use of the successive bodies as parts of a connected whole is a very different thing from the quickening of each in turn to serve as a distinct vehicle of consciousness, independently of those below it, and it is this quickening of the vehicles that we have now to consider.

The lowest vehicle, the dense physical body, is the first one to be brought into harmonious working order; the brain and the nervous system have to be elaborated and to be rendered delicately responsive to every thrill which is within their gamut of vibratory power. In the early stages, while the physical dense body is composed of the grosser kinds of matter, this gamut is extremely limited, and the physical organ of mind can respond only to the slowest vibrations sent down. It answers far more promptly, as is natural, to the impacts from the external world caused by objects similar in materials to itself. Its quickening as a vehicle of consciousness consists in its being made responsive to the vibrations that are initiated within, and the rapidity of this quickening depends on the co-operation of the lower nature with the higher, its loyal subordination of itself in the service of its inner ruler. When, after many, many life-periods, it dawns upon the lower nature that it exists for the sake of the soul, that all its value depends on the help which it can bring to the soul, that it can win immortality only by merging itself in the soul—then its evolution proceeds with giant strides. Before this, the evolution has been unconscious; at first, the gratification of the lower nature was the object of life, and while this was a necessary preliminary for calling out the energies of the Thinker,

it did nothing directly to render the body a vehicle of consciousness; the direct working upon it begins when the life of the man establishes its centre in the mental body, and when thought begins to dominate sensation. The exercise of the mental powers works on the brain and the nervous system, and the coarser materials are gradually expelled to make room for the finer, which can vibrate in unison with the thought vibrations sent to them. The brain becomes finer in constitution, and increases by ever more complicated convolutions the amount of surface available for the coating of nervous matter adapted to respond to thought vibrations. The nervous system becomes more delicately balanced, more sensitive, more alive to every thrill of mental activity. And when the recognition of its function as an instrument of the soul, spoken of above, has come, then active co-operation in performing this function sets in. The personality begins deliberately to discipline itself, and to set the permanent interests of the immortal individual above its own transient gratifications. It yields up the time that might be spent in the pursuit of lower pleasures to the evolution of mental powers; day by day time is set apart for serious study; the brain is gladly surrendered to receive impacts from within instead of from without, is trained to answer to consecutive thinking, and is taught to refrain from throwing up its own useless disjointed images, made by past impressions. It is taught to remain at rest when it is not wanted by its master—to answer, not to initiate vibrations.* Further, some discretion and discrimination will be used as to the food-stuffs which supply physical materials to the brain. The use of the coarser kinds, such as animal flesh and blood and alcohol, will be discontinued, and pure food will build up a pure body. Gradually the lower vibrations will find no materials capable of responding to them, and the physical body will thus become more and more entirely a vehicle of consciousness, delicately responsive to all the thrills of thought, and keenly sensitive to the vibrations sent outwards by the Thinker. The etheric double so closely follows the constitution of the dense body that it is not necessary to study separately its purification and quickening; it does not normally serve as a separate

* One of the signs that this is being accomplished is the cessation of the confused jumble of fragmentary images which are set up during sleep by the independent activity of the physical brains. When the brain is coming under control this kind of dream is very seldom experienced.

vehicle of consciousness, but works synchronously with its dense partner, and when separated from it either by accident or by death, it responds very feebly to the vibrations initiated within. Its function in truth is not to serve as a vehicle of mental consciousness, but as a vehicle of Prâna, of specialized life-force, and its dislocation from the denser particles to which it conveys the life-currents is therefore disturbing and mischievous.

The astral body is the second vehicle of consciousness to be vivified. When it is thoroughly organized, the consciousness which has hitherto worked within it, imprisoned by it, when in sleep it has left the physical body and is drifting about in the astral world, begins not only to receive the impressions through it of astral objects that form the so-called dream-consciousness, but also to perceive astral objects by its senses—that is, it begins to relate the impressions received to the objects which give rise to those impressions. These perceptions are at first confused, just as are the perceptions at first made by the mind through a new physical baby-body, and they have to be corrected by experience in the one case as in the other. The Thinker has gradually to discover the new powers which he can use through this subtler vehicle, and by which he can control the astral elements, and defend himself against astral dangers. He is not left alone to face this new world unaided, but is taught and helped—and, until he can guard himself, protected—by those who are more experienced than he is in the ways of the astral world. Gradually the new vehicle of consciousness comes completely under his control, and life on the astral plane is as natural and as familiar as life on the physical.

ANNIE BESANT.

(To be concluded.)

AMONG THE GNOSTICS OF THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES.

(Continued from p. 218.)

MARCION *(continued)*.

ENOUGH has now been said to give the reader a general idea of the Marcionite position, a very strong one it must be admitted, both because of its simplicity and also because it formulated the protest of long slumbering discontent. It is, however, difficult to formulate anything like a clear system of cosmogony or christology from the onslaughts of the best known hæresiologists on Marcionite doctrines. It has even been doubted whether Marcion should be classed as a Gnostic, but this point is set at rest by the work of Eznik (Eznig or Esnig), an Armenian bishop, who flourished about 450 A.D. In his treatise, *The Destruction of False Doctrines*, he devotes the fourth and last book to the Marcionites, who seem to have been even at that late date a most flourishing body. Although it is doubted whether the ideas there described are precisely the same as the original system of Marcion, it is evident that the Marcionite tradition was of a distinctly Gnostic tendency, and that Marcion owed more to his predecessors in Gnosticism than was usually supposed prior to the first translation of Eznik's treatise (into French) in 1833.

It will be sufficient here to shorten Salmon's summary of this curious Marcionite myth, calling the reader's attention to the similarity of parts of its structure to the system of Justinus.

There were three Heavens; in the highest was the Good God; in the intermediate the God of the Law; in the lowest, his Angels. Beneath lay Hyle or root-matter. The world was the joint product of the God of the Law and Hyle. The Creative Power perceiving that the world was very good, desired to make man to inhabit it. So Hyle gave him his body and the Creative Power the breath of

life, his spirit. And Adam and Eve lived in innocence in Paradise, and did not beget children. And the God of the Law desired to take Adam from Hyle and make him serve him alone. So taking him aside, he said, "Adam, I am God and beside me there is no other; if thou worshippest any other God thou shalt die the death." And Adam on hearing of death was afraid, and withdrew himself from Hyle. Now Hyle had been wont to serve Adam; but when she found that he withdrew from her, in revenge she filled the world with idolatry so that men ceased to adore the Lord of Creation. Then was the Creator wrath, and as men died he cast them into Hell, from Adam onwards.

But at length the Good God looked down from Heaven and saw the miseries which man suffered through Hyle and the Creator. And he took compassion on them and sent them down his Son to deliver them saying: "Go down, take on thee the form of a servant [? a body], and make thyself like the sons of the Law. Heal their wounds, give sight to their blind, bring their dead to life, perform without reward the greatest miracles of healing: then will the God of the Law be jealous and instigate his servants to crucify thee. Then go down to Hell [Hades, Kâmaloka], which will open her mouth to receive thee, supposing thee to be one of the dead. Then liberate the captives thou shalt find there, and bring them up to me."

And thus the souls were freed from Hell and carried up to the Father. Whereupon the God of the Law was enraged, and rent his clothes and tore the curtain of his palace, and darkened the sun and veiled the world in darkness. Then the Christ descended a second time, but now in the glory of his divinity, to plead with the God of the Law. And the God of the Law was compelled to acknowledge that he had done wrong in thinking that there was no higher power than himself. And the Christ said unto him: "I have a controversy with thee, but I will take no other judge between us but thy own law. Is it not written in thy law that whoso killeth another shall himself be killed; that whoso sheddeth innocent blood shall have his own blood shed? Let me, then, kill thee and shed thy blood, for I am innocent and thou hast shed my blood."

And then he went on to recount the benefits he had bestowed on the children of the Creator, and how he had in return been crucified.

And the God of the Law could find no defence, and confessed and said, "I was ignorant, I thought thee but a man, and did not know thee to be a god, take the revenge that is thy due."

And the Christ thereupon left him and betook himself to Paul and revealed the path of truth.

The Marcionites were the most rigid of ascetics, abstaining from marriage, flesh and wine, the latter being excluded from their Eucharist. They also rejoiced beyond all other sects in the number of their martyrs. The Marcionites have also given us the most ancient dated Christian inscription. It was discovered over the doorway of a house in a Syrian village and formerly marked the site of a Marcionite meeting-house or church, which curiously enough was called a synagogue. The date is Oct. 1, A.D. 318, and the most remarkable point about it is that the church was dedicated to "The Lord and Saviour Jesus, the Good,"—Chrêstos not Christos. In early times there seems to have been much confusion between the two titles. Christos is the Greek for the Hebrew Messiah, Anointed, and was the title used by those who believed that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. This was denied, not only by the Marcionites, but also by many of their Gnostic predecessors and successors. The title Chrêstos was used of one perfected, the holy one, the saint; no doubt in later days the orthodox who subsequently had the sole editing of the texts in pure ignorance changed Chrêstos into Christos wherever it occurred, so that instead of finding the promise of perfection in the religious history of all the nations, they limited it to the Jewish tradition alone, and struck a fatal blow to the universalism of history and doctrine.

There was naturally a number of sub-schools of the Marcion school, and in its ranks were a number of distinguished teachers, of whom, however, we have only space to refer to Apelles.

APELLES.

We owe our most reliable information on this Gnostic to a certain Rhodon, who opposed his views some time in the reign of Commodus (180-193 A.D.); an excerpt from this lost "refutation" has fortunately been preserved for us by Eusebius. At this time Apelles was a very old man and refused the controversy, saying that all sincere believers would ultimately be saved, whatever their theo-

logy might be, a most enlightened doctrine and worthy of the best in Gnosticism. As Hort says, "the picture which Rhodon unwittingly furnishes of his [Apelles'] old age is pleasant to look upon. We see a man unwearied in the pursuit of truth, diffident and tolerant, resting in beliefs which he could not reconcile [?], but studious to maintain the moral character of theology."

Apelles seems to have taken up a less exclusive position than Marcion, though his book of Reasonings, directed against the Mosaic theology, seems to have been drastic enough, and he is further said by Eusebius to have written a "multitude of books" of the same nature. He was, however, especially taken to task for his belief in the clairvoyant faculty of a certain Philumene whom he came across in his old age. Her visions were recorded in a book called *The Manifestations*, by which Apelles set great store. Strangely enough the man who pours on his head the greatest abuse for this, accompanied with the usual charges of immorality, is Tertullian who, in his own treatise *On the Soul*, following out his own Montanist convictions, confesses his full belief in the prophetic power of a certain voyante of his own congregation, in a most entertaining and naïve fashion! Rhodon, on the contrary, who knew Apelles personally at Alexandria, says that the old gentleman thought himself protected from such slanderous insinuations, by his age and well-known character.

Philumene seems to have enjoyed certain psychic faculties, and also to have been a "medium" for physical phenomena. She belonged to the class of holy women or "virgins," who were numerous enough in the early Church, though it is exceedingly doubtful whether any of them were trained, except perhaps in the most advanced Gnostic circles.

There is an entertaining account of Philumene in a curious fragment of an anonymous author, which was printed in the early editions of Augustine's work *On Heresies*, in the section devoted to the Severians. The following is Hort's rendering of the passage:

"He [Apelles] moreover used to say that a certain girl named Philumene was divinely inspired to predict future events. He used to refer to her his dreams, and the perturbations (aestus) of his mind, and to forewarn himself secretly by her divinations or presages." [Here some words appear to be missing.] "The same phantom (phan-

tasmate), he said, shewed itself to the same Philumene in the form of a boy. This seeming boy sometimes declared himself to be Christ, sometimes Paul. By questioning this phantom she used to supply the answers which she pronounced to her hearers (*ea respondere quae . . . diceret*). He added that she was accustomed to perform some wonders, of which the following was the chief: she used to make a large loaf enter a glass vase (*ampullam*) with a very small mouth, and to take it out (*levare*) uninjured with the tips of her fingers; and was content with that food alone, as if it had been given her from above (*divinitus*)."

All of which is very monkish, and very spiritualistic, and quite in keeping with the records of phenomenalism.

We should, however, remember that this account is not from the side of the Gnostics, but from an unfriendly source. We shall perhaps never know whether Apelles had a knowledge of the sources of the phenomena he witnessed, or like the vast majority of that time, as indeed of all times, ignorantly assumed that the fact of psychic powers proved the truth of theological doctrines.

THE BASILIDIAN SYSTEM.

Let us now return to the earlier years of the second century and devote our attention to Basilides and his followers ("them of Basilides") who elaborated perhaps the most abstruse and consistent system of the Gnosis, the outlines of which are plainly recoverable from the garbled fragments which Patristic polemics have left us.

Of the life of this great doctor of the Gnosis we know nothing beyond the fact that he taught at Alexandria. His date is entirely conjectural; he is, however, generally supposed to have been immediately prior to Valentinus. If, therefore, we say that he flourished somewhere about B.C. 130-140, it should be understood that a margin of ten years or so either way has to be allowed for. Of his nationality again we know nothing. But whether he was Greek, or Egyptian, or Syrian, he was steeped in Hellenic culture, and learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians. He was also well versed in the Hebrew scriptures as set forth in the Greek version of the Seventy. The Gospel teachings were his delight, and he wrote no less than twenty-four books of commentaries on them, although he does not appear to have used the subsequently canonical versions. He also quotes from several of the Pauline Letters.

Of the writings of Basilides the most important was the commentary already referred to; it was the first commentary on the Gospels written by a Christian philosopher, and in this, as in all other departments of theology, the Gnostics led the way. Basilides is further said to have written a Gospel himself, and to have claimed to be the disciple of a certain Glaucias who was an "interpreter of Peter." There is also mention of certain Traditions of Matthias, as held in great honour by their school. These purported to be teachings given to Matthias in secret by Jesus after the "resurrection." It is therefore to be supposed that the Gospel of Basilides was not a new historical setting of the Sayings of the Lord, but an exposition of that "knowledge of supermundane things," which was the definition he gave to the Gospel. In other words, Basilides wrote a commentary on the Sayings of the Lord, which were in general circulation in many different collections and recensions, with or without the so-called various historical settings, and also his own elaboration of certain inner instructions which had been handed down by a secret tradition. Whether or not this inner Gospel formed part of the twenty-four books of his Exegetica is doubtful; most critics, however, are in favour of this view. In any case, it is to be supposed that his commentary aimed at explaining the public Sayings and Parables by the light of this secret Gospel.

Basilides is also said to have written certain Odes, but of these no fragment has reached us.

Our main sources of information are three in number and consist of the very fragmentary quotations (i) of Hippolytus in his later work, *The Philosophumena*, (ii) of Clement of Alexandria in his *Miscellanies*, and (iii) presumably in the first place (either of the lost *Syntagma* of Justin or) of the lost work of Agrippa Castor, who is said by Eusebius to have written a refutation of the views of Basilides in the reign of Hadrian (c. 133 A.D.), and whose very unsatisfactory and inaccurate data were copied by Irenæus, and the epitomators of the earlier, smaller, and now lost work of Hippolytus.

Turning to the great work of Hippolytus we come upon the most valuable information extant for the reconstruction of this most highly metaphysical system. The Church father had evidently before him a treatise of Basilides, but whether it was the *Exegetica* or not, is by no means clear; what is certain, however, is that it set

forth the real Gospel, or "knowledge of supermundane things," as Basilides understood it, and we can only regret that we have not the original text of the Gnostic doctor himself before us instead of a most faulty copy of the text of the Church father's refutation, whose method is of the most provoking. Hippolytus muddles up his own glosses and criticisms with mutilated quotations, imperfectly summarizes important passages which treat of conceptions requiring the greatest subtlety and nicety of language, and in other respects does scant justice to a thinker whose faith in Christianity was so great, that so far from confining it to the narrow limits of a dogmatic theology, as the poor opinion of their faith forced the Patristic writers to do, he would have it that the Gospel was also a universal philosophy explanatory of the whole world-drama.

Let us then raise our thoughts to those sublime heights to which the genius of Basilides soared so many centuries ago, when faith in the universal possibilities of the Glad Tidings was really living. And first we must rise to that stupendous intuition of Deity which transcends even Being, and which to the narrow minds of earth seems pure nothingness, instead of being that which beggars all fulness. Beyond time, beyond space, beyond consciousness, beyond Being itself—

"There was when naught was; nay, even that 'naught' was not aught of things that are [even in the world of reality]. But nakedly, conjecture and mental quibbling apart, there was absolutely not even the One [the ruler of the world of reality]. And when I use the term 'was,' I do not mean to say that it was [that is to say, in any state of being]; but merely to give some suggestion of what I wish to indicate, I use the expression 'there was absolutely naught.' For that 'naught' is not simply the so-called ineffable; it is beyond that. For that which is *really* ineffable is not named ineffable, but is superior to every name that is used.

"The names [we use] are not sufficient even for the [manifested] universe [which is outside the world of real being], so diversified is it; they fall short."

Much less, then, he continues to argue, can we find appropriate names for the beings of the world of reality and their operations, and far more impossible, therefore, is it to give names to That which transcends even reality. Thus we see that Basilides soared beyond

even the ideal world of Plato, and ascended to the untranscendable intuition of the Orient—the That which cannot be named, to be worshipped in silence alone.

We next come to the inception of the germ of universality in this state beyond being, a discrete stage, so to speak, beyond the unmanifested or noumenal world even.

Hippolytus summarizes this condition of non-being which transcends all being as follows, from the original treatise.

“Naught was, neither matter, nor substance, nor voidness of substance, nor simplicity, nor impossibility of composition, nor inconceptibility, nor imperceptibility, neither man, nor angel, nor god, in fine neither anything at all for which man has ever found a name, nor any operation which falls within the range either of his perception or conception. Such, or rather far more removed from the power of man’s comprehension, was the state of non-being, when [if we can speak of ‘when’ in a state beyond time and space] the Deity beyond being, without thinking, or feeling, or determining, or choosing, or being compelled, or desiring, willed to create universality.

“When I use the term ‘will,’” writes Basilides, “I do so merely to suggest the idea of an operation transcending all volition, thought or sensible action. And this universality also was not [our] dimensional and differentiable universe which subsequently came into existence and was separated [from other universes], but the Seed of all universes.”

This is evidently the same concept as the *mûlaprakṛiti* of Indian philosophy, and the most admirable statement of the dogma of the creation out of nothing which has been put forward by any Christian philosopher.

“This universal Seed contained everything in itself, potentially, in some such fashion as the grain of mustard seed contains the whole simultaneously in the minutest point, roots, stem, branches, leaves, and the innumerable germs that come from the seeds of the plant, and which in their turn produce still other and other plants in manifold series.

“Thus the Divinity beyond being created universality beyond being from elements beyond being, positing and causing to subsist a single something”—which poverty of language compels us to call a

Seed, but which was really the potentiality of potentialities, seeing that it was "containing in itself the entire all-seed-potency of the universe." From such a "Seed," which is everywhere and nowhere, and which treasures in its bosom everything that was or is or is to be, all things must come into manifestation in their "proper natures and cycles" and times at the will of the Deity beyond all. How this is brought about is by no means clear. Basilides seems to have had some idea of a "supplementary development" (*κατὰ προσθήκην αὐξανόμενα*) which, however, is beyond definition; one thing is clear, that he entirely repudiated every idea of emanation, projection or pullulation (*προβολή*).

"For of what sort of emanation is there need, or of what sort of matter must we make supposition, in order that God should make the universe, like as a spider weaves its webs [from itself], or mortal man takes brass or timber or other matter out of which to make something? But 'He spake and it was,' and this is what is the meaning of the saying of Moses, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' Whence then was the light? From naught. For it is not written whence, but only from the voice of the Speaker of the word. And He who spake the word, was not, and that which was, was not. For the Seed of the universe, the word that was spoken, 'Let there be light,' was from the state beyond being. And this was what was spoken in the Gospels, 'It was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' Man both deriveth his 'principles' from that Seed and is also enlightened by it." This primordial Light and Life is the source of all things.

The next stage deals with the outcome, first fruits, highest product, or sublimest consummation, of universal potentiality, which Basilides calls the Sonship.

"In the absolute Seed there was a triple Sonship, in every way consubstantial with the God beyond being, coming into being from the state beyond being. Of this triply divided Sonship, one aspect was the subtlest of the subtle, one less subtle, and one still stood in need of purification. The subtlest nature of the Sonship instantly and immediately, together with the depositing of the Seed of universality by the God beyond being, burst forth, rose aloft, and hastened from below upward, 'like wing or thought,' as Homer sings, and was with Him beyond being [*πρὸς τὸν οὐκ ὄντα*—'with,' the

very same word as the mysterious preposition in the Prologue of the fourth canonical Gospel.] For every nature striveth after Him because of His transcendency of all beauty and loveliness, but some in one way and others in another.

“The less subtle nature of the Sonship, on the other hand, still remained within the universal Seed, for though it would imitate the higher and ascend, it could not, seeing that it fell short of the degree of subtlety of the first Sonship which had ascended through it [the second], and so it remained behind. The less subtle Sonship, accordingly had to find for itself as it were wings on which to soar, . . . and these wings are the Holy Spirit.” . . .

Just as a bird cannot fly without wings, and the wings cannot soar without the bird, so the second Sonship and the Holy Spirit are complementary the one to the other, and confer mutual benefits on one another.

We here see that Basilides is dealing with the second aspect of the Logos, the positive-negative state; we also perceive the anticipation of the ground of the great controversies which subsequently arose hundreds of years later, such as the Arian, and the “Filioque.” But if we enquire whence was the Holy Spirit, Basilides will tell us, from the universal Seed, from which all things came forth under the will of Deity.

“The second Sonship, then, borne aloft by the Spirit, as by a wing, bears aloft the wing, that is the Spirit; but on drawing nigh to the first Sonship and the God beyond being, who createth from the state beyond being, it could no longer keep the Spirit with it, for it [the Spirit] was not of the same substance with it, nor had it a nature like unto that of the Sonship. But just as a pure and dry atmosphere is unnatural and harmful to fish, so to the Holy Spirit was that state of the Sonship together with the God beyond being—that state more ineffable than every ineffable and transcending every name.

“The Sonship, therefore, left it [the Spirit] behind near that Blessed Space which can neither be conceived of nor characterized by any word, yet not entirely deserted nor yet divorced from the Sonship. But even as the sweetest smelling unguent poured into a vessel, though the vessel be emptied of it with the greatest possible care, nevertheless some scent of the unguent still remains and is left

behind; the vessel retains the scent of the unguent, though it no longer holds the unguent itself; in such a way has the Holy Spirit remained emptied and divorced from the Sonship, yet at the same time retaining in itself as it were the power of the unguent, the savour of the Sonship. And this is the saying, 'Like the unguent on the head which ran down unto Aaron's beard'—the savour of the Holy Spirit permeating from above and below even as far as the formlessness [crude matter] and our state of existence, whence the [remaining] Sonship received its first impulse to ascend, borne aloft as it were on the wings of an eagle. For all things hasten from below upward, from worse to better, nor is anything in the better condition so bereft of intelligence as to plunge downward. But as yet this third Sonship still remains in the great conglomeration of the seed-mixture, conferring and receiving benefits," in a manner that will receive subsequent explanation.

The Holy Spirit, which in reality permeates everything, but phenomenally separates the sensible universe from the noumenal, constitutes what Basilides terms the Limitary Spirit, midway between things cosmic and supercosmic. This Firmament is far beyond the visible heaven whose locus is the moon's track.

"After this, from the universal Seed and conglomeration of seed-mixture there burst forth and came into existence the Great Ruler, the head of the sensible universe, a beauty and magnitude and potency that nought can destroy." This is the demiurge; but let no mortal think that he can comprehend so great a being, "for he is more ineffable than ineffables, more potent than potencies, wiser than the wise, superior to every excellence that one can name.

"Coming into existence he raised himself aloft, and soared upward, and was borne above in all his entirety as far as the Great Firmament. There he remained because he thought there was none above him, and so he became the most potent power of the universe," save only the third Sonship which yet remained in the seed-mixture. His limit, therefore, was his own ignorance of the supercosmic spaces, although his wisdom was the greatest of all in the cosmic realms.

"Thus thinking himself lord, and ruler, and a wise master-builder, he betook himself to the creation of the creatures of the universe,"

This is the supercelestial or ætherial creation, which is beyond the moon; our still lower world and its "atmosphere" terminating at the visible heaven, or lower firmament, its periphery, marked by the moon. Beyond lay the ætherial realms which apparently no mortal eye has seen, but only the reflection of their inhabitants, the stars, in the surface of the sublunary waters of space.

The ætherial creation of the Great Ruler proceeds on the theory of similarity and analogy.

"First of all the Great Ruler, thinking it not right that he should be alone, made for himself, and brought into existence from the universal Seed, a Son far better and wiser than himself. For all this had been predetermined by the God beyond being when he deposited the universal Seed.

"And the Great Ruler on beholding his Son was struck with wonder and love and amazement at his marvellously great beauty, and he caused him to sit at his right hand." And this space where is the throne of the Great Ruler they called the Ogdoad. "And the Great Demiurgos, the Wise one, fabricated the whole ætherial creation with his own hand; but it was his Son, who was wiser still, who infused energy into him and suggested to him ideas."

That is to say, that the Great Ruler made the creatures of the ætherial spaces, and these evolved souls, or rather were ensouled. And thus it is that the son is, as it were, greater than the father, and sits on his right hand, or above him; the right hand in Gnostic symbolism signifying a higher condition. They mutually confer benefits also, one giving the body and the other the mind or soul. All ætherial spaces then, as far as the moon, are provided for and managed by the son or soul of the Great Ruler, the consummation or perfection of his evolution or creation.

"Next, there arose a second Ruler from the universal Seed, far inferior to the first, but greater than all below him, except the Sonship which still remained in the Seed." This was the Ruler of the sublunary spaces, from the moon to the earth. This Ruler is called effable, because men can speak of him with understanding, and the space over which he rules is named the Hebdomad. And the second Ruler also "brought forth a Son far greater than himself from the universal Seed, in like manner to the first," and the lower creation was ordered in the same manner as the higher,

As to the earth, the conglomeration of the seed-mixture is still in our own stage or space, and the things that come to pass in this state of existence "come to pass according to nature, as having been primarily uttered by Him who hath planned the fitting time and form and manner of utterance of the things that were to be uttered. Of things here on the earth, then, there is no special chief or manager or creator, for sufficient for them is that plan which the God beyond being laid down when he deposited the universal Seed."

That is to say, that the earth-stage is the moment between the past and future, the turning-point of all choice, the field of new karma; here all things verily are in the hand of God alone, in the highest sense. Thus does Basilides avoid the difficulties both of fate and free-will absolute.

G. R. S. MEAD.

To be continued.)

THE WORLD'S FAIRY LORE.

THOSE who have not turned their attention to the beliefs of the peasantry, and to the nursery tales told to the children of gentle and simple alike, are probably little aware of the most salient facts concerning them. That there are such things as folk-lore tales, they know. Their knowledge stops there.

A minority of people know that there are at least forty-two variants of the child's story of "Cinderella." Those who are vaguely aware of the wide diffusion of fairy legend, have never regarded these tales as being proper subjects for serious study and grave dispute.

Nevertheless, the members of the English Folk-lore Society devote considerable attention to these legends; and the folk-lore literature is both wide and erudite.

Mr. E. S. Hartland, in his *Science of Fairy Tales*, demonstrates what careful criticism and comparison will do towards the elucidation of the myth.

G. W. Cox in his *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, and Professor A. D. Gubernatis in his exhaustive works on kindred subjects, see in nearly all these tales the personification of the powers of nature by a savage people.

These authorities hold that primitive man, noting natural phenomena of varied kinds, wove romances concerning them, and translated these every-day occurrences, through the medium of his own consciousness, into the fairy tale.

It would be presumptuous in me to dispute with such authorities. I would only point out one or two possible clues to the underlying meaning of the myths. In doing this I would use the light of such teaching as we, as students of theosophic philosophy, have received and understood.

Let us consider,

1. The universal diffusion of these tales.
2. Are some of the touches in the stories compatible with the traits pointed out by Mr. Hartland as characteristic of the savage?
3. What are the characteristics of the undeveloped person, as regards fancy and imagination?
4. What points in these tales are to be attributed directly to half-forgotten and distorted occult teaching concerning the laws of nature?

We find these tales in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, in France, Germany, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Greece, Austria and Poland. We find them also among the gypsies. Variants of the same stories are found in Lapland, Swabia, Bulgaria and Lithuania—they are in the Rabbinical books, in the Arthurian legends, in New Zealand, Australia, and North and South America; among the Maoris, the Esquimaux, and in the West Indies. The Bretons have their variants. The Chinese and Japanese are among the band. All over India and Africa are found such stories. The tales of the Punjaub present most interesting features. They are in Persia. They are in Pomerania, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Italy and Transylvania. They were told in Ancient Rome. They were told by Gervase of Tilbury in the thirteenth century.

One of these tales is repeated, with very little variation, in modern Cornwall, namely the story of "Cherry of Zennor" a tale which carries a very sound moral lesson.

These legends often inculcate a useful moral. One of the exceptions is very curious. I refer to the tale of *The Clever Thief*. This story is told by Herodotus, under the title of *Rhampsinitus*. It is traced to Egypt by Professor Maspero (*Contes Populaires de l'Égypte ancienne*), who states the name to be a Greek form of Ram-sio-si-nit, or Ramses, the son of Nit. The story also appears in Cyprus, in India, in Tibet, and in Ireland, under the title of *The Shifty Lord*. The tale is given in Mr. Ralston's translation of A. von Schiefner's volume of *Tibetan Folk Tales from the Bkah Hgyur*.

The author of *The Mythology of Aryan Nations* gives an interesting explanation of this story. Only, in my humble judgment, the conclusion at which he arrives raises a fresh difficulty. By reason of its comparative subtlety of thought, it seems to be an unlikely key with which to unlock the wisdom of a savage.

Always assuming, as do these commentators, that the extremely primitive man was responsible for the primal thought enshrined in the tales, it becomes necessary to make that thought excessively simple. If the savage was responsible only for the form and the auxiliary thought, the local colouring and scenic effects, then the matter becomes very different.

The following is a quotation from the *Mythology of Aryan Nations*: "There is scarcely an important feature in it (*i.e.*, modern fairy mythology) which has not its parallel in the so-called classical mythology of Greece and Rome." Mr. Baring Gould remarks, in his book on *Were-wolves*: "When a form of superstition is prevalent everywhere, and in all ages, it must rest upon a foundation of fact." This seems to be reasonable. For the observable laws of nature, which hold good in all lands, would surely give rise to a consonance of legend. Only, where shall we find these competent observers to set forth the germ-truth, to be dressed and re-dressed by the tale-tellers of all ages?

Shall we seek such an one among simple semi-savages, hunting, eating, drinking, sleeping, and living a rudimentary life of the senses alone? How shall we explain the universality of legend?

When a tale is incorporated with the very genius of a people, it is rarely imparted from without. Its germ is sown in infant days. It grows with the growth of the nation. It is distorted as social life and human nature are distorted and warped by pressure from without, and pressure from within. It takes local colouring from their customs. Like a ray of light shining through tinted glass, it takes the hue of their thoughts.

The customs of the various nations have not been borne round the world by travellers, to be grafted in all lands. It is surprising to note how the varied English counties and French departments keep their distinctive customs, dishes and patois. Why should mere romances be so carried about the world in days when locomotion was slow and difficult?

Then as to the evolution of the myth. In days when there was no printing press, the tale-teller was yet in request. Mr. Hartland's view calls up a picture of the savage community gathered round the camp fire in the primeval forest. From such a group steps forth the romancist—the novelist in embryo—the man endowed with a livelier

fancy than his fellows, with a picture-making trick at least, if not with the desire of diving down amid the motives and emotions of his fellow savages, and showing them the why and wherefore of their deeds.

Perhaps this picture is not an utterly untrue one. Mr. Hartland bids us observe that in these savage stories the animals are endowed with human motives and emotions; that the primitive tale-teller was quite unaware of the gulf dividing the animal from the human kingdoms. His beasts and birds, his gnomes and elves, have like passions with himself. Says Mr. Baring Gould: "Our forefathers failed to detect the line of demarcation between instinct and reason." Perhaps it would not be too much to say that their sons have not yet learnt to draw the said line very accurately.

All these experienced critics ascribe the myth to the bewilderment caused by meteorological phenomena, and to the fact that the savage endows all things with the same emotions as those experienced by himself. The belief in metempsychosis is also ascribed by Mr. Baring Gould to the latter cause.

Now I do not presume to say that these distinguished students of folk-lore are wrong. But let us see whether we can discover any points in the undeveloped person, and in these tales, which formed the theory of the one having been solely responsible for the other. I will take my second and my third points together.

What are the imaginative qualities of the exceedingly undeveloped person? To this I answer—either very slight or altogether nil. Anyone who has observed such people must have been struck by their lack of imagination. They may be exceedingly receptive. Impress them with an imaginary terror, and those with any sensitiveness of the nervous system will readily believe, and be greatly alarmed. Animals are often receptive of such impressions. Let any rider suffer him or herself to be frightened, and see how readily that impression will communicate itself to the horse. It is not necessary to shrink back, nor to manifest terror, in order to tell a savage animal that it is feared. But neither the animal nor the savage are capable of the play of imagination, much less of the subtle allegorical thought that lies at the back of these myths. They are coloured by the impressions and stamped with the customs of those who have handed them down through the centuries. But they were

adapted by more developed minds for the charming and impressing of an infant race.

Take the innumerable tales of celestial brides. Sometimes the story is of a celestial bridegroom. All these tales have their masculine and feminine variants; but the germ idea is the same. The Swan maiden myth is in all lands. It is in Persia, Sweden, Transylvania, Russia, Pomerania, Syria, Burmah, the Celebes Islands, India and Wales. It is found among the Samoyeds and the Passamaquoddies. The tales vary, the myth is the same. In almost all these stories the number seven plays a part; as, for example, there are seven islands to which the bride is caught away.

In every case the bridegroom wins his bride—usually her garment makes a magnetic link whereby he holds her—and is parted from her. Usually this parting comes about through his mother. In Guiana the Swan maiden bride bears her husband above the skies. He, desiring to see his mother, is banished thence. He is finally borne back again, and is there slain by a young warrior, *like himself*, which is his son. In some variants the bride is occasionally metamorphosed into a serpent. At such times the bridegroom is forbidden to enter her presence. In other versions he is forbidden to gaze upon her when she is unclothed. Generally it is the mother who persuades her son to break this taboo. In yet another version, the heavenly bride instructs her earthly bridegroom to tend the child of their union. It is his dislike of this task which causes her to take the child, and leave him.

Mr. Hartland comments upon this, saying that in savage tribes the mother is the owner of the child. Paternal rights are not recognized, nor paternal duties enforced, any more than they are in the animal kingdom, for in the majority of cases the father does not care for the young. We have an indication of this state of affairs in the bridegroom's scorn at being requested to care for his child.

But there is no indication that the celestial bride's request was unreasonable. Moreover, if this be so, and the savage only recorded what he saw—which, if he alone created the tale, is most probable—why do we find this singular and often malicious part played by the mother?

The natural tendency of the savage is to materialize and anthropomorphize all that he sees. The present day European savage

ascribes his own motives to every person with whom he comes into contact. He does not spiritualize nor allegorize. He crudely notes the more obvious parts of those things which he sees. The savage mother would not invariably act in opposition to the interests of her child. Mr. Hartland says that the savage imputes his own motives, his own sensations, to the beasts. It may be so; but whence then come touches to which the savage is a stranger? When the rudimentary human creature hears the thunder, he believes his deity to be shouting in anger, as he himself shouts. He dowers his god with hatred, favouritism, rage; he manifests his own passion by shouts or blows; so his god does the like. But that is not imagination, it is the lack of such a faculty. Whence then this conception of the mother as the temptress? Whence this motive of the bride, caught up above the skies, as to some enchanted island, and won again by the bridegroom after struggles in which water plays an almost invariable part, and in which the fighting of monsters coming forth from the sea is often a feature? Lastly, what is the meaning of that variant in which we have the scorn of the child, and the final slaying of the husband by the young warrior above the skies?

Let us view this story in the light of theosophic teaching.

It becomes the Cupid and Psyche myth, save that the bride is celestial, and the bridegroom earthly. Let this bride stand for Divine Wisdom, or for spiritual *âtmic* force. The earthly bridegroom is the personality, and the "mother" stands for matter—*Kâma*, the temptress, sometimes blindly, sometimes wilfully malignant, according to the amount of will and mentality put into the action.

She urges her son to break the taboo with regard to his celestial bride—in other words, to profane the Divine Wisdom for unworthy ends, and from selfish motives. She it is who parts the bride and bridegroom. The seas and wilderness traversed by the bridegroom may well stand for the astral plane, which he must conquer ere he regains his bride.

Now, as to the child. What is indeed the result of the union of spirit and matter—of heaven and earth? Is it not the permanent individuality, the forming of the causal body of man? Is it not the part of the earthly personality to "tend" this "child"? Is not scorn of that task the cause of the parting of the personality from the presence of the spiritual "Bride"? And when the difficulties

are surmounted, would not this "child" who is "like the father," finally "slay" him "above the skies"? In other words, the personality would be merged in the glorified individuality, the finally perfected fruit of the union between heaven and earth.

But if we should accept this theory, what becomes of the primitive instincts of savage man? For a savage could not invent this allegory; it argues knowledge.

Mr. Hartland reckons among savage beliefs the following:

"That man consists of body and spirit." "That the spirit leaves the body in sleep." "That the universe swarms with beings embodied and disembodied"—a savage belief which I have heard seriously canvassed by no less a scientist than Professor Oliver Lodge. "That everything in the world has a spirit."

Now I venture to say that these beliefs are not natural to an unassisted savage. It is notorious that the undeveloped gain almost all their impressions from without, and are in the main materialistic. None of these authorities would be prepared to admit that a rudimentary race might pass through a psychic stage on the downward arc of evolution. The savage, as we know him, is materialistic. But if the savage tribe be the remnant of a simple race, now dying out, and once directly instructed by those who knew the workings of nature's laws, then it is easy to see how these deep conceptions sprang into existence, and were handed down, couched in a romantic form, and now greatly distorted.

In the *Mythologies of the Aryan Nations* it is stated that all these legends are solar myths and allegories of the forces of nature. As, for example, that in the curious story of the *Master Thief*, the thief is the air. If this be true, then the man who gave that myth was not a savage, not a crude thinker, though he gave it in a form suitable for such persons.

With all diffidence I would put forward my own theory on the point, which is that he was an Egyptian of great knowledge of the workings of Nature's laws, for the allegory is most ingenious and beautifully worked out. Professor Maspero, in pointing out the Egyptian origin, combats the objections of commentators by asserting (a) that temples in Egypt did possess hiding-places as described; (b) that Egyptians could wear beards if it pleased them; (c) that the soldiers who guarded the corpse would belong to a Lybian-tribe called Mation, and would be bearded.

Again, in Cox's *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, it is stated that Grimm's tale of "The Nix of the Mill Pond" is a myth of the gradual lengthening of the days after the winter Solstice; and that the Priapas Myth (Priapas, son of Dionysos, Adonis, Hermes or Pan and Aphrodite, or the Maid Chianê) denotes simply the relations of the water with the wind or sun. But again, grant that this be true; such a tale is not the work of a savage.

"It is difficult," says Mr. Baring Gould, "to unlearn all that we know respecting meteorological phenomena."

I question whether the originator of the world's nursery tales had much to *unlearn* respecting the forces of nature. It is this knowledge behind the tales which gives them their charm and their influence over the minds of many. There is something there for which one may dive down. Their quaint sweetness, and the insight they give into the thought and customs of the people, are minor attractions.

I remember well when I was but eight years old coming across a fanciful tale in which the author had seen fit to include two words from that sacred sentence of the East *Om mani padme hûm*. I can recall most distinctly the inexplicable fascination those words had for me. I felt their power and meaning, and now I know that it must have been because of that meaning that they stirred me as the rest of the tale did not, charming though it was.

And so, in a lesser degree, with these fairy myths. Behind them lies a meaning; and the thought of those who knew that meaning yet cleaves to them and gives them life. And so, distorted, mingled with much folly, they live through the centuries.

They are still full of interest for the student; especially such tales as treat of the exterior soul, with its wrappings, and the distinctive characteristics of the Indian tales. These subjects, and the methods whereby local custom and racial influences have coloured them, I hope to take up upon some future occasion.

IVY HOOPER.

THE PHÆDO OF PLATO.

(Continued from p. 233.)

THESE three vehicles are appropriated in the first place to the mundane soul, whose body is the entire universe. In this connection they are all perpetual, as subsisting continually and without diminution according to their totality in the universe, although with constant generation and corruption of parts. Further, they are ascribed to every total nature, which subsists as a world within the world; and here also they subsist perpetually in relation to the wholeness of the nature from which they are suspended. Of such a nature is the planet which we now inhabit. And as the mundane elements in their totality constitute the three vehicles of the universal soul, so all the elements within the terrestrial sphere constitute those of the earth-soul. Under every total soul subsisting as a part of the universe, is arranged a multitude of partial souls, whose vehicles are formed from the elements which in their entirety form the vehicles of that total soul. Now, with respect to ourselves, seeing that this planet is in itself a kind of lesser universe, comprising parts corresponding to all the parts of the cosmos, it is perhaps unnecessary to separate our mundane existence from that of the planet. In this case, we must regard the ætherial or luciform vehicle of our planet as being, to us, the "kindred star" to which Plato alludes in the *Timæus*, and in which our souls energize in their ætherial vehicles. The aerial body of the earth-planet will then correspond to the upper earth of the *Phædo*, which is situated "at the summit of the air," *i.e.*, beyond the sphere of our gross elements; and here also we shall dwell in our aerial vehicles, just as in our terrestrial bodies we inhabit the gross body of the earth. For that he does not intend the ætherial vehicle by the upper earth, is perhaps to be inferred from his mention

of the elements which are there, and from the fact that its inhabitants are not represented as immortal, although far longer lived than we.*

It is right, however, to interpret our text also in a wider sense. For by the many hollow places, into which the dregs of the pure earth continually flow, Plato clearly intimates the lowest plane of material existence, and by the upper earth the higher regions of the aerial plane, the state of souls who are purified from the grosser stains of earth, although not yet liberated from the irrational and mortal nature. His description of this upper earth, with its trees and minerals, and wondrous colours, and the excellent temperament of its seasons, indicates its correspondence on a higher plane with the earth which we inhabit; since these correspondences exist upon every plane, according to the Hermetic saying, "That which is below is as that which is above, and that above as that below, that the marvel of one thing may be accomplished." The statement that this pure earth, surveyed from above, appears like a ball covered with twelve skins, contains, according to Proclus,† an allusion to the figure of the dodecahedron. It will be remembered that in the *Timæus* the four material elements are said to be generated from triangles. The regular dodecahedron is a solid figure bounded by twelve equal and regular pentagons, and is, of all solid figures containing angles, the nearest in resemblance to a sphere. But the sphere is a symbol of intellectual wholeness, and the dodecahedron, therefore, as applied to the earth, is an emblem at once of its intellectual source and its material condition.

"This [upper] earth too," says Socrates, "contains many other animals and men, some of whom inhabit its middle parts; others dwell about the air, as we do about the sea; and others reside in islands which the air flows round, and which are situated not far from the continent." By these various abodes we are to understand the various degrees of materiality existing in the aerial plane, since there, as here, lives vary in degrees of purity, the highest approaching more nearly to the celestial state, the lowest to the terrestrial. And

* He says also, that "what air is to us, that æther is to the inhabitants of this pure earth," implying thereby that as our present vehicles are not aerial, neither are theirs ætherial. Proclus moreover observes: "that he (Plato) also knew another man, viz., the soul which uses the middle [or aerial] vehicle, is evident from the *Phædo*, where he says that men dwell on the summit of the earth, who live for a much longer time than the men who are here." (*On the Timæus*, vol. ii. p. 426.)

† *On the Timæus*, vol. ii. p. 290.

when he speaks of the beautiful colours with which this upper earth is adorned, so combined that "one particular various form of the earth continually presents itself to the view;" and again, of the pure stones and metals and other things which are there, "diffused everywhere throughout the earth;" he seems to indicate the nature of the senses on the aerial plane, which are not separate as with us, but united in one common sense, diffused through every part of the vehicle.

But the highest form of life on the aerial plane is perhaps intimated by a residence in "islands which the air flows round," and these islands are the same with the Islands of the Blessed, mentioned by Plato in the *Gorgias*. For it is there said that "the man who has passed through life in a just and holy manner, when he dies, departing to the Islands of the Blessed, shall dwell in all felicity, removed from evil."* Furthermore, these islands are identical with the Elysian Fields, and it will be interesting to compare Virgil's description of Elysium with Plato's of the upper earth :

"So, all being done, the Goddess' gift well paid in manner meet,
They come into a joyous land, and greensward fair and sweet
Amid the happiness of groves, the blessèd dwelling-place.
Therein a more abundant heaven clothes all the meadows' face
With purple light, and their own sun and their own stars they
have."†

So also Plato asserts of the dwellers upon the upper earth, that "the sun and moon and stars are seen by them such as they really are, and in every other respect their felicity is of a correspondent nature." But the expression "such as they really are" must be taken relatively, since he is not here speaking of intelligible essences, and refers to the purity of their manifestation on this plane; as Virgil's "*solemque suum, sua sidera, nôrunt*" implies that upon every plane the manifestation is peculiar and appropriate thereto.

Again, these inhabitants of the upper earth "have groves and temples of the Gods, in which the Gods dwell in reality; and likewise oracles and divinations, and sensible perceptions of the Gods, and such-like associations with them." We may assume in the first

* Taylor's *Plato*, vol. iv. p. 450.

† *Æneid*, Book vi. William Morris's translation.

place from these statements that souls which have risen to the aerial plane perceive more clearly than those which are still plunged in the mire of gross matter the divine nature which is present in everything. But by a sensible perception of the Gods is meant, of course, a sensible perception of the vehicles which they employ, since these only are cognizable by sense. In the *Timæus* Plato divides the mundane deities into two orders—"such as visibly revolve, and such as become visible when they please." The former are the Gods of the starry spheres and of the planets, of whom we have already spoken. The latter are the sublunary Gods, who proceed, as powers of the supermundane deities, into the universe, and preside over all that is subject to the law of generation and corruption; for the term "sublunary" must here be referred rather to a state than to a place, since the moon is regarded as the cause of generation and corruption, and the monad of the sublunary Gods. But by the Gods to whom he assigns a location in groves and temples, and sensible communications with mortals, I think it probable that Plato signifies dæmons who energize in aerial as well as in ætherial vehicles. "For every mundane God," says Proclus, "is the leader of a certain dæmonic order, to which he proximately imparts his power; viz., if he is a demiurgic God, he imparts a demiurgic power; if immutable, an undefiled power; if telesurgic, a perfective power. And about each of the divinities there is an innumerable multitude of dæmons, which are dignified with the same appellations as their leading Gods. Hence they rejoice when they are called by the names of Zeus, Apollo, Hermes, etc., as expressing the idiom or peculiarity of their proper deities. And from these mortal natures also participate of divine influxions."*

So much, then, for the upper parts of the earth. But there is more yet to be said about the lower parts, the cavities into which flow the dregs of earth, and one of which we now inhabit. For whereas it is said that of these cavities some are deeper and others less deep than this place of our abode, by these are signified states of the soul more or less profoundly plunged in the darkness of matter and the material life. And whereas they are said to be connected by rivers flowing underground, by this is denoted the material condition common to them all; since, as earth is a symbol

* Taylor's *Plato*, vol. i. p. 18 note.

of the material nature, and water of generation, the subterranean rivers clearly symbolize the nature of generation on the lowest material plane. By the rivers of fire is perhaps intimated a passionate and violent nature, and by those of mud a nature more grossly sensual and bestial. And by the continual oscillation upwards and downwards is meant the unstable and fluctuating character of material life.

The gulf into which the rivers discharge themselves is denominated Tartarus, and is described as a mighty chasm, perforated through the whole earth. By this is signified the lowest depth of the material condition, the very bottomless pit; for, in the words of Proclus, "to matter there is neither bound, nor bottom, nor a seat, as being infinite, unstable and indefinite."* Into this chasm the rivers flow, and from thence they flow again upwards; for this is the centre or lowest point of the universe, whence the progression is again upwards towards the circumference. And it is bottomless also for this reason, that the bottom of Tartarus, could it be supposed to exist, would be absolute evil, which is equivalent to absolute nothingness; for evil, in so far as it has an existence, exists only by a certain participation of good. The air which accompanies the rivers in their course denotes the irrational nature, and its vehicle, the aerial body, by which the soul descends into terrestrial life. By the longer and shorter courses of the rivers about the earth we may perhaps understand the varying periods of our incarnations; and lastly, the places of their influx into Tartarus are deeper than those of their efflux, inasmuch as the soul which descends is in a worse condition than the ascending soul, though the ascent be from the pit itself.

That the rivers are many and various accords with the manifold variety of material life, but the four great rivers which are distinguished by name sum up in themselves the powers of all the rest. For these rivers correspond with the four elements, which have again their correspondences as elements on every plane of existence. The first river is Ocean, which encompasses the whole earth; and this corresponds with the element of water, and symbolizes a life conversant with generation and corruption. But the second river which flows in a contrary direction to the first, is called Acheron, the

* *On the Timæus*, vol. i. p. 324.

River of Woe; it corresponds with the element of air, and is a symbol of death, which separates the aerial body from its earthly shell. The third is Pyriphlegethon, the River of Flaming Fire, and it symbolizes in Tartarus the passion which burns and consumes, being as it were, a kind of inverted reflection of its higher correspondences, the celestial fire which is life, and the super-celestial which is love.* Cocytus, the River of Wailing, is the fourth and last of the Tartarean streams, and the place whereinto its waters are discharged is denominated Styx, the Abhorred. Cocytus corresponds with the element of earth, and signifies the lowest depth of all, a nature sunk in the very mire of sense, too gross and sluggish for the flames of Phlegethon, which is therefore said to run in a contrary course. By the dark-blue colour of Styx is denoted the darkness of matter, and it is interesting in connection with our interpretation to note that in the Greek the word is used to signify extreme cold. So, too, in Dante's "Inferno," the name of Cocytus is given to the frozen lake which forms the ninth and lowest circle of Hell.

The Acherusian marsh, into which the waters of Acheron flow, is the place (*i.e.*, state) of purgation, where souls which have passed a middle kind of life, neither excellently good nor eminently bad, dwell after death in their aerial vehicles; "till being purified, and having suffered punishment for any injuries they may have committed, they are enlarged; and each receives the reward of his beneficence, according to his deserts." This state of purgation is symbolized by a marsh, because souls departing from their earthly bodies are still for the most part clogged and weighted by the moisture of the lower life, and need a process of purgation before they are fitted to ascend to the pure regions of the upper earth. But more sinful souls are cast into Tartarus, and rising again from thence, are purged in the floods of Pyriphlegethon and Cocytus, until they, too, are received into the Acherusian marsh and "find an end to their maladies." As to Plato's assertion that souls incurably evil are *never* discharged from Tartarus, and the similar statement which occurs in the Gorgias, it is best to believe, with Olympiodorus, that he does not intend an eternity of punishment, but a state

* *Elementaris [ignis] urit, cœlestis vivificat, supercœlestis amat.—Pico della Mirandola.*

enduring throughout an entire mundane period, *i.e.*, a period of which the beginning and end are marked by the conjunction of the revolutions of the seven planets with the inerratic sphere. But souls which have lived "most excellently with respect to piety," are restored to the abodes of the upper earth, whence they descend to this terrestrial plane; since the ascent is made by the same media as the descent. "And among these," says Socrates, "those who are sufficiently purified by philosophy shall live without bodies through the whole of the succeeding time, and shall arrive at habitations yet more beautiful than these, which it is neither easy to describe, nor is the present time sufficient for such an undertaking."

It is possible that by these habitations yet more beautiful, where the soul abides without body, Plato intimates the celestial and ætherial state of which we have spoken; since the aerial vehicle may be regarded as the first body, accurately speaking, of the soul—*i.e.*, its first material vehicle; and, indeed, in one passage of his Commentary on the *Timæus*, Proclus himself thus defines it. This ætherial state is the highest mundane condition of the soul, which is then "co-arranged with the mundane powers of its God," and rules the world in conjunction with deity. But there is a yet higher state, when the soul is reunited with its intellectual source. Taylor has here the following note: "Those who have lived a holy and guiltless life, without philosophy, will after death dwell on the summit of the earth; and their bodies will consequently consist of the most attenuated air. Those who have philosophized politically, says Olympiodorus, will live in the heavens with luciform [*i.e.*, ætherial] bodies. And those that are perfectly purified will be restored to the supermundane place, without bodies." We may add that as the planes of being interpenetrate each other, so also do the states which they represent; that in so far as the soul philosophizes politically, it is necessarily connected with mundane concerns, and that the perfection of this state is attained when the soul's connection with the world has become, like that of the Gods, wholly guardian and providential. It is in this respect said to dwell in its ætherial vehicle. But in so far as the soul philosophizes cathartically, it elevates itself above the nature of body; and in so far as it philosophizes theoretically and paradigmatically it is raised into the region of pure intellect, and to intelligible essence.

There is a passage in Virgil's *Æneid* (vi. 735-751) respecting the life after death, which may be profitably compared in detail with this portion of the *Phædo*. I translate, therefore, as closely as possible.

"But even when with the last light life has departed from them, not yet does all evil, nor all the plagues of body, totally forsake the unhappy souls; and many evils, long engrained, must needs grow and adhere within them in wondrous ways. Therefore are they plagued with punishments, and pay the penalties of their former sins. Some are exposed, suspended, to the empty winds; of others the stain of guilt is washed away beneath a mighty flood, or burned out with fire. We suffer each his own Manes [*i.e.*, Karma]: thence are we sent through wide Elysium, and few in number we possess the joyful fields; until the long course of time, when the cycle is accomplished, has removed the engrained ill, and left the unmixed ætherial sense, and the flame of pure air. All these souls, when for a thousand years they have turned the wheel of time, a God calls forth in a great company to the river Lethe; that, nought remembering, they may revisit the vaulted world above [*i.e.*, this earth], and may become again desirous of returning into bodies."

My task is now ended, for the remaining portion of the *Phædo* needs no comment. I will say only that the manner of Socrates' death is an argument for immortality at least as powerful as any of those which preceded it. For, as Mr. Rolleston excellently observes: 'Unless the soul is in some sense immortal, Socrates and all martyrs who have preceded and followed him were the victims of a miserable delusion. Man has been cheated by the deepest instincts of his heart, and it is a fundamental belief with Plato that the universe does not cheat.'* In the last words of the philosopher his faith shines clearly forth. "Crito," he said, "we owe a cock to Æsculapius. Discharge this debt, therefore, for me, and do not neglect it." To Æsculapius the Healer it was the ancient wont to sacrifice a cock upon recovery from sickness; and thus to Socrates, consistent to the end, death presented itself no otherwise than as a happy recovery from the malady of earthly life.

W. C. WARD.

* *Selections from Plato*, Introduction, p. xxii.

A LINK IN THE CHAIN.

OUR teacher Madame Blavatsky used often to say that more than one attempt had been made by the Great White Lodge in times past to spread the truths in Their keeping among the nations of the West, but that none of these attempts had achieved any great measure of success, and hence that the present effort, taking the form of our own Theosophical movement, had been forced as it were to begin afresh, starting from zero. Now although various students in our ranks have pointed with more or less convincing force to the many similarities, points of contact, nay even to actual identities discoverable between our own Theosophical teachings and those of earlier mystics here in Europe, none of us, so far as I am aware, had succeeded in definitely proving any direct and traceable line of connection, on the physical plane, between the West and East, any definite mystic organization in the East along these lines. But in the course of some literary researches concerning the famous Cagliostro upon which she is engaged, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley has had the good fortune to come across a curious little book which seems to supply at least one link in the chain, and to show that this direct connection may be actually traceable—at least in the second half of last century—with far more clearness and certainty than any of us had suspected. At her request I have undertaken the task of writing a short article for LUCIFER giving some account of the book in question, and calling attention to what at present seem the most salient points in it which bear upon the question before us.

It must be premised that towards the close of last century, say from 1770 to the outbreak of the French Revolution and even later, there is abundant evidence to show the existence of a great, almost feverish activity among the various Masonic, quasi-Masonic, Rosicrucian and other secret organizations with which the continent, especially Germany, Austria, Italy and France, was then honey-combed. All sorts and kinds of such societies sprang up, mushroom-

like, on every side, and naturally enough, as the public interest in such matters was almost at fever heat, quantities of "revelations," "exposures" and controversial literature of all kinds poured forth from the press. The Jesuits seem to have taken an active hand in the game,—or at all events were credited with so doing—and as these various organizations did not escape from coming into mutual conflict, one of the very commonest accusations which each side hurled at the other was that of "Jesuitism," of being secretly influenced, guided and controlled by the ubiquitous Jesuits to the end of distorting and destroying Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, or whatever it might be. And along with this charge of being "Jesuits in disguise" went naturally enough that of bad citizenship, of holding principles and teaching doctrines incompatible with decent conduct as the members of a civilized state, and especially antagonistic to the principles of Christianity—as then understood.

The booklet with which we are here concerned belongs more or less to this class of polemical literature, as its title, which runs as follows, shows: "Abfertigung an den ungenannten Verfasser der verbreiteten sogenannten: Authentische Nachricht von den Ritter- und Brüder-Eingeweihten aus Asien; von Hans Heinrich, Freiherrn von Ecker und Eckhoffen." * I have given the title-page at length in its somewhat cumbrous old German because it is almost impossible to convey in English any idea of its flavour. In substance it may be best rendered in rather slangy English thus: "A settler for the anonymous author of the so-called, widely circulated, pamphlet: Authentic information concerning the Initiated Knights and Brothers from Asia, etc."

In his preface the Freiherr explains that as his name and address are given in the pamphlet in question, and he is directly and personally challenged by name, he feels it impossible to pass it by with the contemptuous silence it deserves, and therefore once and for all he will answer the challenge, after which neither he nor his associates will deign to take any further notice of anonymous attacks. He then proceeds to reprint his anonymous antagonist's pamphlet in full—it contains some twenty small octavo pages of preface and general matter *plus* thirty-two pages of lengthy extracts from what

* Hamburg. Auf Kosten des Verfassers, 1788.

purport to be the statutes and instructions of the "Brothers from Asia," with notes and comments by the anonymous writer. These are followed by the Freiherr's reply, which extends to about sixty pages. In this reply the Freiherr states that he is a member of the order in question, gives an account of how he came to join it, and, what is most important for our purpose, admits that the statutes and instructions as printed in his adversary's pamphlet are on the whole authentic and correct, though erroneous on some points; while he asserts also that the extracts are deliberately chosen and arranged in a wrong manner, so as to place the order in question in as false a light as possible. This, however, is of small importance for our immediate purpose, as it is some of the points in the statutes which the Freiherr admits without question which seem to have an interest for us as members of the Theosophical Society. It must, however, be borne in mind that this organization rested upon a specific masonic basis, and required the degree of Master-mason as a prior qualification for its membership. The term "Brother," therefore, used in its statutes most probably means "Brother Mason."

Its first articles run thus :

"1. Every Brother, of whatsoever religion, social status or system, is admissible to the order, provided only he be a noble-thinking, right-living and true man of honour. This chiefly because the welfare and happiness of men, which is the only object of our system, cannot be dependent upon the religion in which a man is born, nor the social position in which he is brought up.

"2. Every such Brother must be duly legitimated as Knight and Master-mason in some regular, ordinary Melchisedec or St. John's Lodge of Freemasons.

"3. By the name Melchisedec Lodge we mean such Masonic Lodges as admit to membership Jews, Turks, Persians, Armenians, Copts, and so on, of whom there are many in Italy, Holland, England, Portugal and Spain. For the order is designed for the whole of Europe for the great cause of Unity. The St. John's Lodges, as is known, consist only of Christians."

There seems to be a curious identity between the keynote struck in these basic statutes and that which has so long been the essential basis of our own movement. Granting that this "Order of the Brothers from Asia" was restricted to Freemasons, yet univer-

salinity, unlimited by race, religion or station, is so emphatically the keynote struck that we can hardly wonder at the indignant astonishment which the anonymous attacker displays in a footnote to these articles, where he points out that the first, fundamental law of every regular, working Lodge of Freemasons of all kinds is that *only* Christians can be admitted to membership. To this in his reply the Freiherr retorts that there *are*, as a matter of fact, Masonic Lodges in all the countries named, as well as Lodges in Europe, notably in Spain, which do admit to their membership non-Christians of all kinds, and he reminds his opponent of the sentence which he himself quotes elsewhere from the Book of Constitutions of English Masonry, which runs: "But since Masonry is to be found among all peoples, even those of other religions, etc." In addition the Freiherr gives several names of well-known Jews who, remaining non-Christians, have been admitted to membership in regular Masonic Lodges.

These points to us of interest, like some of those which will follow, as helping to establish an identity of origin between the impulse which worked in and through this order of the "Brothers from Asia," and that which inspires our own Society. For it by no means follows that because an order calls itself the "Brothers from Asia," it is therefore connected with the Great Lodge; although when once an identity of teaching, of spirit and purpose, of keynote, has been established by other evidence, then the name itself becomes of real significance. So we will pass on to some other points bearing upon this question.

With regard to the knowledge in the possession of the order the statutes say:

"(6). In respect to the knowledge in its possession, the order has only the following declaration to make.

"(a). That the order possesses no other secrets than the true moral and physical explanations of the hieroglyphics of the most venerable order of Knights and Brother Freemasons, because the order as such is concerned with no other truths than these. (b). That the order itself is nothing more than a brotherly union of all honourable and separated children of men, who are striving with one accord to achieve the perfecting of man in his natural condition and the discovery of all healing things and natural secrets, towards

the attaining whereof the order will also impart instruction to each man gratis, according to his individual nature."

When we remember, as Madame Blavatsky so often said, and as any Mason can verify for himself, that the symbols and hieroglyphics of Freemasonry, *fully* understood, contain the whole of the Secret Doctrine and our modern Theosophy in the form of glyph and symbol, it seems clear that the teaching to be imparted in this order was identical with what we now study as the Wisdom Religion or Theosophy, and that the programme outlined in clause (b) was nothing less than what we should call the preparation for the Path, for even the alchemists considered the perfecting of man as the *Magnum Opus*, the crown of Occult teaching and knowledge. That this is the correct view of the meaning of the clause is proved by the Freiherr's explanations in reply to a footnote upon it by his opponent, in which the latter tries to make out that what is meant is the making of gold. This the Freiherr indignantly repudiates, alluding to a secret initiation which is *not* miraculous, but giving no more detailed explanation. Still a careful consideration of all that he says in reply to his opponent about the order, the demands which it makes upon its members, the teaching which it gives, especially the constant insistence upon the ethical and moral side of development, show an identity of purpose, spirit and teaching between our own theosophical movement and this last-century order, so strong as to convince me that the two movements owe their inception and inspiration to one and the same source.

It will therefore be of interest to us to piece together one or two other points in relation to this order of the "Brothers from Asia," which can be gathered from the Freiherr's reply.

In the first place he tells us that the Asiatic Brothers do exist, that he himself has the honour of belonging to them, and that they possess the full and final explanations of all and each of the symbols and hieroglyphics in the three grades of regular Freemasonry. But, he says, the Asiatic Brothers are not Rosicrucians, nor would the Rosicrucians recognize them as a branch of their society.

He further remarks that the symbols in Masonry have also a physical meaning, and that those who know this meaning are among the greatest and most learned searchers into nature's secrets. Why then do not they publish their knowledge to the world?

Just, he replies, because they *are* secrets—a not very enlightening reply.

In relation to Masonry he lays stress upon the point that, whatever people in general may think, the fact remains that there *are* secrets in and concerning good—ethical good—which Masonry teaches, though not perhaps in all their fulness.

Regarding the history of the Asiatic Brothers, the Freiherr gives some particulars which are not without interest, as it may lead perhaps to the discovery of further and fuller sources of information. He first points out that the truths and teachings which are veiled under the symbols of Freemasonry must be older than these symbols, and hence, since it is precisely these truths themselves which the Asiatic Brothers have in their keeping, this knowledge must be older than Freemasonry itself, although, as in the case of the latter, its custodians have not always formed a definite and outwardly organized body such as the present order of the Asiatic Brothers. But, he says, even that order dates back to the earliest antiquity in the East, whence, as he points out, Freemasonry itself came originally. He then goes on to say that he has himself seen documentary evidence proving that in A.D. 1510, 1638, 1752, and 1755, definite attempts were made to organize a branch of the order in Europe, and he mentions several names in connection with these efforts, *e.g.*, Odorat the Scot, Hans Wihren of Hall on the Inn and others. These attempts to transplant the Eastern Wisdom and its teachings into Europe were unsuccessful, one at least of them being abandoned for a curious reason. It had been proposed to form a sort of inner school in Freemasonry with classes and divisions, to give people definite teaching and instruction before they actually entered the Asiatic Order, in return for certain definite payments or instruction fees. But this proposal, which came from the European side, was rejected by the Asiatic Brothers on account of the money payments it involved, as among them no such payments were customary or even permissible. And then the Freiherr continues in a passage which seems worth translating textually :

“Such a transplanting of this most ancient knowledge of the East into European soil was naturally bound to involve all the greater difficulties the more the progress made in other branches of science and the differing character of the periods and nationalities

concerned, had to be taken into account. Still, it seemed to us unpardonable, in view of the various catastrophes to which Masonry had been exposed in Europe, and in view of the crises in which it was actually involved, not to admit at least some worthy men in our hemisphere to a share in these true and complete explanations of Masonry. Whoever is at all acquainted with the many efforts made by Freemasons to attain this goal, will regard this matter with quite other eyes than the rest of the public, and therefore cannot blame this purely unselfish wish of ours."

And later on he gives us to understand that the mother-order in Asia consists of *seven* Lodges—a curious coincidence, at the least—while in conclusion I cannot do better than quote textually what he describes as the main and chief content of its laws :

" Art. 7. The chief content of all laws is, however : Honesty, brotherly love, loyalty, pity and compassion towards all in need, silence, self-denial, obedience, humility and modesty, prudence and watchfulness over heart and life, forgiveness of enemies, in short, the highest possible perfecting of oneself in one's station and calling, whether as ruler or subject, master or servant, alien or citizen in the state, father or husband, brother or son, friend, companion or neighbour ; in short, every brother of our order shall honour God, the King, and the State, shall be a true friend of his brethren, a benefactor of humanity, a noble-minded seeker after truth—in one word, an honourable man in the fullest sense of the term."

If we compare this declaration with Madame Blavatsky's famous definition of the true Theosophy, the identity of spirit and inspiration is more than striking, and leaves little room for doubt that in this curious little book Mrs. Cooper-Oakley has discovered one of the links which go to form the great chain that unites the direct action of the Great Lodge upon the world in centuries that are passed, with the present movement in which we have the privilege of sharing.

BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY.

THE ÂKÂSHIC RECORDS.

ALTHOUGH it is well-known in Theosophical circles what is meant when we speak of âkâshic records, the word is in truth somewhat of a misnomer, for though the records are undoubtedly read from the âkâsha, yet it is not to it that they really belong. Still worse is the alternative title, "records of the astral light," which has sometimes been employed, for these records lie far beyond the astral plane, and all that can be obtained on it are only broken glimpses of a kind of double reflection of them, as will presently be explained.

Like so many others of our Theosophical terms, the word âkâsha has been very loosely used. In some of our earlier books it was considered as synonymous with astral light, and in others employed to signify any kind of invisible matter, from mûlaprakṛiti down to the physical ether. In later books its use has been restricted to the matter of the devachanic plane, and it is in that sense that the records may be spoken of as âkâshic, for although they are not originally made on that plane any more than on the astral, yet it is there that we first come definitely into contact with them and find it possible to do reliable work with them.

This subject of the âkâshic records is by no means an easy one to deal with, for it is one of that numerous class which requires for its perfect comprehension faculties of a far higher order than any which humanity has yet evolved. The real solution of its problems lies on planes far beyond any that we can possibly know at present, and any view that we take of it must necessarily be of the most imperfect character, since we cannot but look at it from below instead of from above. The idea which we form of it must therefore be only partial, yet it need not mislead us unless we allow ourselves to think of the tiny fragment which is all that we can see as though it were the perfect whole. If we are careful that such conceptions as we may form shall be accurate as far as they go, we shall have

nothing to unlearn, though much to add, when in the course of our further progress we gradually acquire the higher wisdom. Be it understood then at the commencement that a thorough grasp of our subject is an impossibility at the present stage of our evolution, and that many points will arise as to which no exact explanation is yet obtainable, though it may often be possible to suggest analogies and to indicate the lines along which an explanation must lie.

Let us then try to carry back our thoughts to the beginning of this solar system to which we belong. We are all familiar with the ordinary astronomical theory of its origin—that which is commonly called the nebular hypothesis—according to which it first came into existence as a gigantic glowing nebula, of a diameter far exceeding that of the orbit of even the outermost of the planets, and then, as in the course of countless ages that enormous sphere gradually cooled and contracted, the system as we know it was formed. Occult science accepts that theory, in its broad outline, as correctly representing the purely physical side of the evolution of our system, but it would add that if we confine our attention to this physical side only we shall have a very incomplete and incoherent idea of what really happened. It would postulate, to begin with, that the exalted Being who undertakes the formation of a system (whom we sometimes call the Logos of the system) first of all forms in His mind a complete conception of the whole of it with all its successive chains. By the very act of forming that conception He calls the whole into simultaneous objective existence on the plane of His thought—a plane of course far above all those of which we know anything—from which the various globes descend when required into whatever state of further objectivity may be respectively destined for them. Unless we constantly bear in mind this fact of the real existence of the whole system from the very beginning on a higher plane, we shall be perpetually misunderstanding the physical evolution which we see taking place down here.

But occultism has more than this to teach us on the subject. It tells us not only that all this wonderful system to which we belong is called into existence by the Logos, both on lower and on higher planes, but also that its relation to Him is closer even than that, for it is absolutely a part of Him—a partial expression of Him upon the physical plane—and that the movement and energy of the

whole system is *His* energy, and is all carried on within the limits of His aura. Stupendous as this conception is, it will yet not be wholly unthinkable to those of us who have made any study of the subject of the aura.

We are familiar with the idea that as a person progresses on the upward path his causal body, which is the determining limit of his aura, distinctly increases in size as well as in luminosity and purity of colour. Many of us know from experience that the aura of a pupil who has already made considerable advance on the Path is very much larger than that of one who is but just setting his foot upon its first step, while in the case of an Adept the proportional increase is far greater still. We read in quite exoteric Oriental scriptures of the immense extension of the aura of the Buddha; I think that three miles is mentioned on one occasion as its limit, but whatever the exact measurement may be, it is obvious that we have here another record of this fact of the extremely rapid growth of the causal body as man passes on his upward way. There can be little doubt that the rate of this growth would itself increase in geometrical progression, so that it need not surprise us to hear of an Adept on a still higher level whose aura is capable of including the entire world at once; and from this we may gradually lead our minds up to the conception that there is a Being so exalted as to comprehend within Himself the whole of our solar system. And we should remember that, enormous as this seems to us, it is but as the tiniest drop in the vast ocean of space.

So of the Logos, who has in Him all the capacities and qualities with which we can possibly endow the highest God we can imagine, it is literally true, as was said of old, that "of him and through him, and to him are all things," and "in him we live and move and have our being."

Now if this be so, it is clear that whatever happens within our system happens absolutely within the consciousness of its Logos, and so we at once see that the true record must be His memory; and furthermore, it is obvious that on whatever plane that wondrous memory exists, it cannot but be far above anything that we know, and consequently whatever records we may find ourselves able to read must be only a reflection of that great dominant fact, mirrored in the denser media of the lower planes.

On the astral plane it is at once evident that this is so—that what we are dealing with is only a reflection of a reflection, and an exceedingly imperfect one, for such records as can be reached there are fragmentary in the extreme, and often seriously distorted. We know how universally water is used as a symbol of the astral light, and in this particular case it is a remarkably apt one. From the surface of still water we may get a clear reflection of the surrounding objects, just as from a mirror; but at the best it is only a reflection—a representation in two dimensions of three-dimensional objects, and therefore differing in all its qualities, except colour, from that which it represents; and in addition to this, it is always reversed. But let the surface of the water be ruffled by the wind, and what do we find then? A reflection still, certainly, but so broken up and distorted as to be quite useless or even misleading as a guide to the shape and real appearance of the objects reflected. Here and there for a moment we might happen to get a clear reflection of some minute part of the scene—of a single leaf from a tree, for example; but it would need long labour and considerable knowledge of natural laws to build up anything like a true conception of the object reflected by putting together even a large number of such isolated fragments of an image of it.

Now in the astral plane we can never have anything approaching to what we have imaged as a still surface, but on the contrary we have always to deal with one in rapid and bewildering motion; judge, therefore, how little we can depend upon getting a clear and definite reflection. Thus a clairvoyant who possesses the faculty of astral sight only can never rely upon any picture of the past that comes before him as being accurate and perfect; here and there some part of it *may* be so, but he has no means of knowing which it is. If he is under the care of a competent teacher he may, by long and careful training, be shown how to distinguish between reliable and unreliable impressions, and to construct from the broken reflections some kind of image of the object reflected; but usually long before he has mastered those difficulties he will have developed the devachanic sight which renders such labour unnecessary.

On the devachanic plane conditions are very different. There the record is full and accurate, and it would be impossible to make any mistake in the reading. That is to say, if three clairvoyants

possessing the powers of the devachanic plane agreed to examine a certain record there, what would be presented to their vision would be absolutely the same reflection in each case, and each would acquire a correct impression from it in reading it. It does not however follow that when they all compared notes later on the physical plane their reports would agree exactly. It is well known that if three people who witness an occurrence down here on the physical plane set to work to describe it afterwards, their accounts will differ considerably, for each will have noticed especially those items which most appealed to him, and will insensibly have made them the prominent features of the event, sometimes ignoring other points which were in reality much more important.

Now in the case of an observation on the devachanic plane this personal equation would not appreciably affect the impressions received, for since each would thoroughly grasp the entire subject it would be impossible for him to see its parts out of due proportion; but, except in the case of carefully trained and experienced persons, this factor does come into play in transferring the impressions to the lower planes. It is in the nature of things impossible that any account given down here of a devachanic vision or experience can be complete, since nine-tenths of what is seen and felt there could not be expressed by physical words at all; and since all expression must therefore be partial there is obviously some possibility of selection as to the part expressed. It is for this reason that in all our Theosophical investigations of recent years so much stress has been laid upon the constant checking and verifying of clairvoyant testimony, nothing which rests upon the vision of one person only having been allowed to appear in our later books.

But even when the possibility of error from this factor of personal equation has been reduced to a minimum by a careful system of counterchecking, there still remains the very serious difficulty which is inherent in the operation of bringing down impressions from a higher plane to a lower one. This is something analogous to the difficulty experienced by a painter in his endeavour to reproduce a three-dimensional landscape on a flat surface—that is, practically in two dimensions. Just as the artist needs long and careful training of eye and hand before he can produce a satisfactory representation of nature, so does the clairvoyant need long and careful

training before he can describe accurately on a lower plane what he sees on a higher one; and the probability of getting an exact description from an untrained person is about equal to that of getting a perfectly-finished landscape from one who has never learnt how to draw.

It must be remembered, too, that the most perfect picture is in reality infinitely far from being a reproduction of the scene which it represents, for hardly a single line or angle in it can ever be the same as those in the object copied. It is simply a very ingenious attempt to make upon one only of our five senses, by means of lines and colours on a flat surface, an impression similar to that which would have been made if we had actually had before us the scene depicted. Except by a suggestion dependent entirely on our own previous experience, it can convey to us nothing of the roar of the sea, of the scent of the flowers, of the taste of the fruit, or of the softness or hardness of the surface drawn.

Of exactly similar nature, though greater in degree, are the difficulties experienced by a clairvoyant in his attempt to describe upon the physical plane what he has seen upon the astral; and they are furthermore greatly enhanced by the fact that, instead of having merely to recall to the minds of his hearers conceptions with which they are already familiar, as the artist does when he paints men or animals, fields or trees, he has to endeavour by the very imperfect means at his disposal to suggest to them conceptions which in most cases are absolutely new to them. Small wonder then that, however vivid and striking his descriptions may seem to his audience, he himself should constantly be impressed with their total inadequacy, and should feel that his best efforts have entirely failed to convey any idea of what he really sees. And we must remember that in the case of the report given down here of a record read on the devachanic plane, this difficult operation of transference from the higher to the lower has taken place not once but twice, since the memory has been brought through the intervening astral plane. Even in a case where the investigator has the advantage of having developed his devachanic faculties so that he has the use of them while awake in the physical body, he is still hampered by the absolute incapacity of physical language to express what he sees.

Try for a moment to realize what is called the fourth dimension.

It is easy enough to think of our own three dimensions—to image in our minds the length, breadth and height of any object; and we see that each of these three dimensions is expressed by a line at right angles to both of the others. The idea of the fourth dimension is that it might be possible to draw a fourth line at right angles to all three of those already existing. Now the ordinary mind cannot grasp this idea in the least, though some few who have made a special study of the subject have gradually come to be able to realize one or two very simple four-dimensional figures. Still, no words that they can use on this plane can bring any image of these figures before the minds of others, and if any reader who has not specially trained himself along that line will make the effort to visualize such a shape he will find it quite impossible. Now to express such a form clearly in physical words would be, in effect, to describe accurately a single object on the astral plane; but in examining the records on the devachanic plane we should have to face the additional difficulties of a fifth dimension! So that the impossibility of fully explaining these records will be obvious to even the most superficial observation.

We have spoken of the records as the memory of the Logos, yet they are very much more than a memory in any ordinary sense of the word. Hopeless as it may be to imagine how these images appear from His point of view, we yet know that as we rise higher and higher we must be drawing nearer to the true memory—must be seeing more nearly as He sees; so that great interest attaches to the experience of the clairvoyant with reference to these records when he stands upon the buddhic plane—the highest which his consciousness can reach until he attains the level of the Arhats. Here time and space no longer limit him; he no longer needs, as in the devachanic plane, to pass a series of events in review, for past, present and future are all alike simultaneously present to him, meaningless as that sounds down here. Indeed, infinitely below the consciousness of the Logos as even that exalted plane is, it is yet abundantly clear from what we see there that to Him the record must be far more than what we call a memory, for all that has happened in the past and all that will happen in the future *is happening now* before His eyes just as are the events of what we call the present time. Utterly incredible, wildly incomprehensible, of

course, to our limited understanding ; yet absolutely true for all that.

Naturally we could not expect to understand at our present stage of knowledge how so marvellous a result is produced, and to attempt an explanation would only be to involve ourselves in a mist of words from which we should gain no real information. Yet a line of thought recurs to my mind which perhaps suggests the direction in which it is possible that that explanation may lie : and whatever helps us to realize that so astounding a statement may after all not be wholly impossible will be of assistance in broadening our minds.

Some thirty years ago I remember reading a very curious little book called, I think, *The Stars and the Earth*, the object of which was to endeavour to show how it was scientifically possible that to the mind of God the past and the present might be absolutely simultaneous. Its arguments struck me at the time as decidedly ingenious, and I will proceed to summarize them, as I think they will be found somewhat suggestive in connection with the subject which we have been considering.

When we see anything, whether it be the book which we hold in our hands or a star millions of miles away, we do so by means of a vibration in the ether, commonly called a ray of light, which passes from the object seen to our eyes. Now the speed with which this vibration passes is so great—about 186,000 miles in a second—that when we are considering any object in our own world we may regard it as practically instantaneous. When, however, we come to deal with interplanetary distances we have to take the speed of light into consideration, for an appreciable period is occupied in traversing these vast spaces. For example, it takes eight minutes and a quarter for light to travel to us from the sun, so that when we look at the solar orb we see it by means of a ray of light which left it more than eight minutes ago. From this follows a very curious result. The ray of light by which we see the sun can obviously report to us only the state of affairs which existed in that luminary when it started on its journey, and would not be in the least affected by anything that happened there after it left ; so that we really see the sun not as he *is*, but as he was eight minutes ago. That is to say that if anything important took place in the sun—

the formation of a new sun-spot, for instance—an astronomer who was watching the orb through his telescope at the time would be quite unaware of the incident while it was happening, since the ray of light bearing the news would not reach him until more than eight minutes later.

The difference is more striking when we consider the fixed stars, because in their case the distances are so enormously greater. The pole star, for example, is so far off that light, travelling at the inconceivable speed above mentioned, takes a little more than fifty years to reach our eyes ; and from that follows the strange but inevitable inference that we see the pole star not as and where it is at this moment, but as and where it was fifty years ago. Nay, if to-morrow some cosmic catastrophe were to shatter the pole star into fragments, we should still see it peacefully shining in the sky all the rest of our lives ; our children would grow up to middle age and gather their children about them in turn before the news of that tremendous accident reached any human eye. In the same way there are other stars so far distant that light takes thousands of years to travel from them to us, and with reference to their condition our information is therefore thousands of years behind time.

Now carry the argument a step farther. Suppose that we were able to place a man at the distance of 186,000 miles from the earth, and yet to endow him with the wonderful faculty of being able from that distance to see what was happening here as clearly as though he were still close beside us. It is evident that a man so placed would see everything a second after the time when it really happened, and so at the present moment he would be seeing what happened a second ago. Double the distance, and he would be two seconds behind time, and so on ; remove him to the distance of the sun (still allowing him to preserve the same mysterious power of sight) and he would look down and watch you doing not what you *are* doing now, but what you *were* doing eight minutes and a quarter ago. Carry him away to the pole star, and he would see passing before his eyes the events of fifty years ago ; he would be watching the childish gambols of those who at the very same moment were really middle-aged men. Marvellous as this may sound, it is literally and scientifically true, and cannot be denied.

My little book went on to argue logically enough that God,

being almighty, must possess the wonderful power of sight which we have been postulating for our observer ; and further, that being omnipresent, He must be at each of the stations which we mentioned, and also at every intermediate point, not successively but simultaneously. Granting these premises, the inevitable deduction follows that everything which has ever happened from the very beginning of the world *must* be at this very moment taking place before the eye of God—not a mere memory of it, but the actual occurrence itself being now under His observation.

All this is materialistic enough, and on the plane of purely physical science, and we may therefore be assured that it is *not* the way in which the memory of the Logos acts ; yet, as I have said before, it is not without its use, since it gives us a glimpse of some possibilities which otherwise might not occur to us. But even if in a dim sort of way we feel ourselves able to grasp the idea that the whole of the past may be simultaneously and actively present in a sufficiently exalted consciousness, we are confronted by a far greater difficulty when we endeavour to realize how all the future may also be comprehended in that consciousness. If we could believe in the Mohammedan doctrine of kismet, or the Calvinistic theory of predestination, the conception would be easy enough, but knowing as we do that there is no truth in either of these we must look round for some more acceptable hypothesis.

There may still be some people who deny the possibility of prevision, but such denial simply shows their ignorance of the evidence on the subject. The large number of authenticated cases leaves no room for doubt as to the fact, but many of them are of such a nature as to render a reasonable explanation by no means easy to find. It is evident that the ego possesses a certain amount of previsional faculty, and if the events foreseen were always of great importance one might suppose that an extraordinary stimulus had enabled him for that occasion only to make a clear impression upon his lower personality of what he saw. No doubt that is the explanation of many of the cases in which death or grave disaster is foreseen, but there are a large number of instances on record to which it does not seem to apply, since the events foretold are frequently exceedingly trivial and unimportant.

A well-known story of second-sight in Scotland will illustrate

what I mean. A man who had no belief in the occult was forewarned by a highland seer of the approaching death of a neighbour. The prophecy was given with considerable wealth of detail, including a full description of the funeral, with the names of the four pall-bearers and others who would be present. The auditor seems to have laughed at the whole story and promptly forgotten it, but the death of his neighbour at the time foretold recalled the warning to his mind, and he determined to falsify part of the prediction at any rate by being one of the pall-bearers himself. He succeeded in getting matters arranged as he wished, but just as the funeral was about to start he was called away from his post by some small matter which detained him only a minute or two. As he came hurrying back he saw with surprise that the procession had started without him, and that the prediction had been exactly fulfilled, for the four pall-bearers were those who had been indicated in the vision.

Now here is a very trifling matter, which could have been of no possible importance to anybody, definitely foreseen months beforehand; and although a man makes a determined effort to alter the arrangement indicated he fails entirely to affect it in the least. Certainly this looks very much like predestination, even down to the smallest detail, and it is only when we examine this question from higher planes that we are able to see our way to escape that theory. Of course, as I said before about another branch of the subject, a full explanation eludes us as yet, and obviously must do so until our knowledge is infinitely greater than it is now; the most that we can hope to do now is to indicate the line along which an explanation may be found.

There is no doubt whatever that, just as what is happening now is the result of causes set in motion in the past, so what will happen in the future will be the result of causes already in operation. Even down here we can calculate that if certain actions are performed certain results will follow, but our reckoning is constantly liable to be disturbed by the interference of factors which we have not been able to take into account. But if we raise our consciousness to the devachanic plane we can see very much farther into the results of our actions. We can trace, for example, the effect of a casual word, not only upon the person to whom it was addressed, but through him on many others as it is passed on in widening circles, until it

seems to have affected the whole country ; and one glimpse of such a vision is far more efficient than any number of moral precepts in impressing upon us the necessity of extreme circumspection in thought, word and deed. Not only can we from that plane see thus fully the result of every action, but we can also see where and in what way the results of other actions apparently quite unconnected with it will interfere with and modify it. In fact, it may be said that the results of all causes at present in action are clearly visible—that the future as it would be if no entirely new causes should arise lies open before our gaze.

New causes of course do arise, because man's will is free ; but in the case of all ordinary people the use which they will make of their freedom can be calculated beforehand with considerable accuracy. The average man has so little real will that he is very much the creature of circumstances ; his previous karma places him amid certain surroundings, and their influence upon him is so very much the most important factor in his life-story that his future course may be predicted with almost mathematical certainty. With the developed man the case is different ; for him also the main events of life are arranged by his past karma, but the way in which he will allow them to affect him, the methods by which he will deal with them and perhaps triumph over them—these are all his own, and they cannot be foreseen on the devachanic plane except as probabilities.

Looking down on man's life in this way from above, it seems as though his free will could be exercised only at certain crises in his career. He arrives at a point in his life where there are obviously two or three alternative courses open before him ; he is absolutely free to choose which of them he pleases, and although some one who knew his nature thoroughly well might feel almost certain what his choice would be, such knowledge on his friend's part is in no sense a compelling force. But when he *has* chosen, he has to go through with it and take the consequences ; having entered upon a particular path he may, in many cases, be forced to go on for a very long way before he has any opportunity to turn aside. His position is somewhat like that of the driver of a train ; when he comes to a junction he may have the points set either this way or that, and so can pass on to whichever line he pleases, but when he *has* passed on to

one of them he is compelled to run on along the line which he has selected until he reaches another set of points, where again an opportunity of choice is offered to him.

Now in looking down from the devachanic plane these points of new departure would be clearly visible, and all the results of each choice would lie open before us, certain to be worked out even to the smallest detail. The only point which would remain uncertain would be the all-important one as to which choice the man would make. We should, in fact, have not one but several futures mapped out before our eyes, without necessarily being able to determine which of them would materialize itself into accomplished fact. In most instances we should see so strong a probability that we should not hesitate to come to a decision, but the case which I have described is certainly theoretically possible. Still, even this much knowledge would enable us to do with safety a good deal of prediction ; and it is not difficult for us to imagine that a far higher power than ours might always be able to foresee which way every choice would go, and consequently to prophesy with absolute certainty.

On the buddhic plane, however, no such elaborate process of conscious calculation seems to be necessary, for, as I said before, in some manner which down here is totally inexplicable, the past, the present, and the future, appear there all to be existing simultaneously. One can only accept this apparent fact, and suppose that its cause lies in a faculty of the plane which would be quite incomprehensible to our physical brains. At any rate, the evidence undoubtedly shows that, whether from the calm certainty of this plane, or the rapid reasoning of the one below it, occasional pictures of futurity are reflected even into astral levels, and are sometimes observed and recorded more or less correctly, just as are the pictures of the past.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

(To be continued.)

A GLIMPSE INTO KÂMA-LOKA.

FROM A STORY IN PLUTARCH.

[THE following story is taken from the *Morals of Plutarch*, and will be found in Chap. xxii. of the Treatise "On those who are punished by the Deity late." A certain Thespesius of Soli, a town on the sea-coast of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, apparently died from the effects of a severe fall, and was buried. After three days, however, he recovered consciousness and escaped from his tomb. After this unpleasant experience, Thespesius became an entirely changed person; from being a man of very shady character indeed, he became an example of virtue. The following is the account which he gave to his intimate friends of the extraordinary experiences he passed through while out of the body. The translation is Shilleto's.]

He told his friends that when his soul left the body the change he first underwent was as if he were a pilot thrown violently into the sea out of a ship. Then raising himself up a little, he thought he recovered the power of breathing again altogether, and looked round him in every direction, as if one eye of the soul was open, but saw none of the things he had ever seen before, but stars enormous in size and at immense distance from one another, sending forth a wonderful and intense brightness of colour, so that the soul was borne along and moved about everywhere quickly and easily, like a ship in fair weather. But omitting most of the sights he saw, he said that the souls of the dead mounted into the air, which yielded to them and formed fiery bubbles, and then, when each bubble quickly broke they assumed human forms, light in weight, but with different kinds of motion, for some leapt about with wonderful agility and darted straight upwards, while others like spindles flitted round all together in a circle, some in an upward direction, some in a downward, with mixed and confused motion, hardly stopping at all, or only after a very long time. As to most of these, he was ignorant who they

were, but he saw two or three that he knew, and tried to approach them and talk with them, but they would not listen to him, and did not seem to be in their right minds, but out of their senses and distraught, avoiding every sight and touch, and at first they turned round and round alone, but afterwards meeting many other souls whirling round and in the same condition as themselves, they moved about promiscuously with no particular object in view, and uttered inarticulate sounds like yells mixed with wailing and terror.

Other souls in the upper part of the air seemed joyful, and frequently approached one another in a friendly way, and avoided those troubled souls, and seemed to mark their displeasure by keeping themselves to themselves, and their joy and delight by extension and expansion. At last he said he saw the soul of a relation whom he thought he knew but was not quite sure, as he died when he was a boy, which came up to him and said to him, "Welcome, Thespesius." And he wondering and saying that his name was not Thespesius, but Aridenus, the soul replied, "That was your old name, but henceforth it will be Thespesius. For assuredly you are not dead, but by the will of the gods are come here with your intellect, for the rest of your soul you have left in the body like an anchor; and as a proof of what I say, both now and hereafter notice that the souls of the dead have no shadow and do not move their eyelids." Thespesius, on hearing these words, pulled himself somewhat more together again, and began to use his reason, and looking more closely he noticed that an indistinct and shadow-like line was suspended over him, while the others shone all around and were transparent, but were not all alike, for some were like full moon at its brightest, throwing out one smooth, even and continuous colour; others had spots or bright marks here and there, while others were quite variegated and strange to sight with black spots like snakes, while others again had thin scratches. Then the kinsman of Thespesius (for there is nothing to prevent our calling the soul by the name of the person) pointed out everything, and told him that Adrastea, the daughter of Necessity and Zeus, was placed in the highest position to punish all crimes, and no criminal was either so great or so small as to be able to escape her either by fraud or violence. But as there were three kinds of punishment, each had its own officer and administering functionary.

“ For speedy vengeance undertakes the punishment of those that are to be corrected at once in the body and through their bodies, and she mildly passes by many offences that only need expiation ; but if the cure of vice demands further pains, then the deity hands over such criminals after death to Justice, and those whom Justice rejects as altogether incurable, Erinnys (the third and fiercest of Adrastea’s officers) pursues as they are fleeing and wandering about in various directions, and with pitiless severity utterly undoes them all, and thrusts them down to a place not to be seen or spoken about.

“ And, of all these punishments, that which is administered in this life of vengeance is most like those in use among the barbarians. For as among the Persians they pluck off and scourge the garments and tiaras of those that are to be punished, while the offenders weep and beg them to cease, so most punishments by fine or bodily chastisement have no sharp touch, nor do they reach vice itself, but are only for show and sentiment. And whoever goes from this world to that incorrigible and impure, Justice takes him aside, naked as he is in soul, and unable to veil or hide or conceal his villainy, but descried all round and in all points by everybody, and shows him first to his good parents, if such they were, to let them see what a wretch he is, and how unworthy of his ancestors ; but if they were wicked too, seeing them punished and himself being seen by them, he is chastised for a long time till he is purged of each of his bad propensities by sufferings and pains which as much exceed in magnitude and intensity all sufferings in the flesh as what is real is more vivid than a dream.

“ Observe also,” he continued, “ the different and various colours of the souls. That dark, dirty brown colour is the pigment of illiberality and covetousness, and the blood-red the sign of cruelty and savageness, and when the blue is there, sensuality and love of pleasure are not easily eradicated, and that violet and livid colour marks malice and envy, like the dark liquid ejected by the cuttle fish. For as, during life, vice produces these colours by the soul being acted upon by passions and reacting upon the body, so here it is the end of purification and correction when they are toned down, and the soul becomes altogether bright and one colour.

“ And some of these souls, by being again and again corrected, recover their proper disposition and condition, while others again by

their violent ignorance and excessive love of pleasure are carried into the bodies of animals; for one, by weakness of reasoning power and slowness of contemplation, is impelled by the practical element in him to generation, while another, lacking an instrument to satisfy his licentiousness, desires to gratify his passions immediately, and to get that gratification through the medium of the body, for here there is no real fruition, but only an imperfect shadow and dream of incomplete pleasure."

After he had said this, Thespesius' kinsman hurried him at great speed through immense space, as it seemed to him, though he travelled as easily and straight as if he were carried on the wings of the sun's rays. At last he came to an extensive and bottomless abyss, where his strength left him, as he found was the case with the other souls there; for keeping together and making swoops, like birds, they flitted all round the abyss, but did not venture to pass over it. To internal view it resembled the caverns of Bacchus, being beautiful throughout with trees and green foliage and flowers of all kinds, and it breathed a soft and gentle air, laden with scents marvellously pleasant, and producing the effect that wine does on those who are toppers; for the souls were elevated by its fragrance, and gay and blithe with one another, and the whole spot was full of mirth and laughter, and such songs as emanate from gaiety and enjoyment.

And Thespesius' kinsman told him that this was the way Dionysus went up to heaven by, and by which he afterwards took Semele, and it was called the place of oblivion. But he would not let Thespesius stay there, much as he wished, but forcibly dragged him away, instructing and telling him that the intellect was melted and moistened by pleasure, and that the irrational and corporeal element being watered and made flesh stirs up the memory of the body, from which comes yearning and strange desire for generation, so called from being an inclination to the earth, when the soul is weighed down with moisture. Next Thespesius travelled as far in another direction, and seemed to see a great crater into which several rivers emptied themselves, one whiter than the foam of the sea or shore, another like the purple of the rainbow, and others of various hues, whose brightness was apparent at some distance, but when he got nearer the air became thinner and the colours grew dim, and the

crater lost all its gay colours but white. And he saw three genii sitting together in a triangular position, mixing the rivers together in certain proportions. Then the guide of Thespesius' soul told him that Orpheus got as far as here, when he came in quest of the soul of his wife, and from not exactly remembering what he had seen spread a false report among mankind that the oracle at Delphi was common to Apollo and Night, though Apollo had no communion with Night: but this, pursued the guide, is an oracle common to Night and the Moon, that utters forth its oracular knowledge in no particular part of the world, nor has it any particular seat, but wanders about everywhere in men's dreams and visions. Hence, as you see, dreams receive and disseminate a mixture of simple truth with deceit and error. But the oracle of Apollo you do not know, nor can you see it, for the earthiness of the soul does not suffer it to soar upwards, but keeps it down in dependence on the body. And taking him nearer, his guide tried to show him the light from the tripod, which, as he said, shone as far as Parnassus through the bosom of Themis, but though he desired to see it he could not for its brightness, but as he passed by he heard the shrill voice of a woman speaking in verse several things, among others, he thought, telling the time of his death.

That, said the genius, was the voice of the Sibyl, who sang about the future as she was being borne about in the orb of the moon. Though desirous then to hear more, he was conveyed into another direction by the violent motion of the moon, as if he had been in the eddies of a whirlpool, so that he heard very little more, only a prophecy about Mount Vesuvius and that Dicæarchia [Puteoli] would be destroyed by fire, and a short piece about the Emperor then reigning [Vespasian] that "though he was good he would lose his empire through sickness."

After this Thespesius and his guide turned to see those that were undergoing punishment. And at first they saw only distressing and pitiable sights, but after that Thespesius, little expecting it, found himself among his friends and acquaintances and kinsfolk who were being punished, and undergoing dreadful sufferings and hideous and bitter tortures, and who wept and wailed to him.

And at last he descried his father coming up out of a certain gulf covered with marks and scars, stretching out his hands, and

not allowed to keep silence, but compelled by those that presided over his torture to confess that he had been an accursed wretch and poisoned some strangers that had gold, and during his life-time had escaped the detection of everybody, but had been found out here, and his guilt brought home to him, for which he had already suffered much and was being dragged on to suffer more.

So great was his consternation and fear that he did not dare to intercede or beg for his father's release, but wishing to turn and flee he could no longer see his gentle and kind guide, but he was thrust forward by some persons horrible to look at, as if some dire necessity compelled him to go through with the business; and he saw that the shades of those that had been notorious criminals and punished in their life-time were not so severely tortured here or like the others, but had an incomplete though toilsome punishment for their irrational passions.

Whereas those who, under the mask and show of virtue, had lived all their lives in undetected vice, were forced by their torturers with labour and pain to turn their souls inside out, unnaturally wriggling and writhing about, like the sea-scolopendras who, when they have swallowed the crook, turn themselves inside out; but some of them their torturers flayed and crimped so as to show their various inward vices, which were only skinned over, which were deep in their soul, the principal part of man. And he said he saw other souls, like snakes, two or three or even more twined together, devouring one another in malignity and malevolence for what they had suffered or done in life.

He said also that there were several lakes running parallel, one of boiling gold, another most cold of lead, another hard of iron, and several demons were standing by like smiths, who lowered down and drew up by turns, with instruments, the souls of those whose criminality lay in insatiable cupidity.

For when they were red-hot and transparent through their bath in the lake of gold, the demons thrust them into the lake of lead and dipped them in that; and when they had got congealed in it and hard as hail, they dipped them into the lake of iron, and there they became wonderfully black, and broken and crushed by the hardness of the iron, and changed their appearance, and after that they were dipped again in the lake of gold, after suffering, he said, dread-

ful agony in all these changes of torment. But he said those souls that when they seemed to have escaped justice were arrested again, suffered most piteously of all, and these were those whose crimes had been visited on their children or descendants. For whenever one of these latter happened to come up he fell into a rage and cried out, and showed the marks of what he had suffered, and upbraided and pursued the soul of the parent, who wished to fly and hide himself, but could not. For quickly did the ministers of torture pursue them and hurry them back again to justice, wailing all the while on account of their fore-knowledge of what their punishment would be.

Last of all he saw the souls of those that were to come into the world a second time, forcibly moulded and transformed into various kinds of animals by artificers appointed for the very purpose, with instruments and blows, who broke off all the limbs of some and only wrenched off some of others, and polished others down, or annihilated them altogether, to fit them for other habits and modes of life.

Among them he saw the soul of Nero tortured in other ways, and pierced with red-hot nails.

And the artificers having taken it in hand and converted it into the semblance of a Pindaric viper, which gets its way to life by gnawing through its mother's womb, a great light, he said, suddenly shone, and a voice came out of the light, ordering them to change it into something milder, so they devised of it the animal that croaks about lakes and marshes ; for he had been punished sufficiently for his crimes, and now deserved some favour at the hands of the gods, for he had freed Greece, the noblest nation of his subjects and the best-beloved of the gods.

So much did Thespesius behold, but as he intended to return a horrible dread came upon him. For a woman, marvellous in appearance and size, took hold of him and said to him, "Come here, that you may the better remember everything you have seen." And she was about to strike him with a red-hot iron pin, such as the encaustic painters use, when another woman prevented her, and he was suddenly sucked up, as through a pipe, by a strange and violent wind, lit upon his own body, and woke up and found that he was close to his tomb.

AUTHORITY.

“It is false that equality is a natural law. Nature has made nothing equal. Its sovereign law is subordination and dependence.”
—VAUSENARQUES.

Thus wrote a mystic philosopher of the last century. His conclusion is worth our attention and study, both from the point of view of the individual and as students of doctrines which are, to a large extent, based upon the authority of teachers. I propose briefly to discuss the question of the reality of authority as a law of the universe, to indicate its working in human life and social organization, and suggest the value of its due recognition as an aid to individual development.

That law or authority governs the universe is a proposition that hardly any thoughtful man disputes. There may be difference as to terms, one speaking of the Law of God, another of the Laws of Nature, but on the fact that law exists there is no disagreement. The recognition of this truth—very dimly, of course—must have been coeval with the dawning of human self-consciousness. Infant humanity coming into collision with it on the very first out-going after sensation, learnt the reality and inexorable character of natural law, just as on the microcosmic scale, the human infant repeats in every incarnation the experience of the race. Up to the point of the development of self-consciousness the One Life moves in unconscious obedience to the law, manifesting in the elemental, mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms ever in accordance with the pressure of the evolutionary force behind it; moving downwards towards richest diversity of form, and anon upwards towards harmony of vibration. But at the awakening point of our evolution there comes consciousness of the existence of authority—that is, the something outside of ourselves with which we more or less frequently come into collision. This is the eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, and acts of disobedience—not necessarily

wilful disobedience—bring us into conflict with universal law and so make us aware of its existence. If we had been always in harmony with it we should not recognize it as authority but as our own will, and since we profess to believe that the whole purpose of our being here is to achieve *conscious* union with the Divine, and as we know that the less cannot include the greater but the greater must include the less, we must realize eventually, whether we do now or not, that we have consciously to bring our wills into harmony with the supreme will, so that, retaining the lesson—individuality—which disobedience has taught us, we may achieve perfection—harmony—which conscious obedience has to bestow.

It is important in any discussion of the subject to recognize the universality of law at the outset. We exist by virtue of it, we cannot escape from it. It governs our coming hither and our going hence independent of our conscious will. A man cannot even fling himself suddenly out of the universe and say, "I will cease to be;" only by untold ages of Titanic force and fury can he dash himself to pieces by repeated collisions with the on-rolling car of evolution. The law alters not, and only by making ourselves vibrate in harmony with it can we ever achieve. It is, therefore, useless to argue, as some have done, that the *idea* of authority is repulsive to us, or that "revolt against authority is the one thing common to every step in human progress." In such a statement there is mental confusion between the idea of authority *per se* and its degradation or abuse in specific cases, between the light and dark aspects, the good and evil in the world. Such writers fail to see how utterly and entirely we are bound by the bonds of authority in our daily thought. For how few of us is it possible to verify the statements we habitually accept on the authority of others. Our system of education is to a large extent the imposition upon many minds of statements more or less unverifiable by those who are expected to give them credence; and our social system, our daily lives, are regulated largely in accordance with statements made on "authority." We meet frequently with the phrase, "independent or original thinker!" There is no such anomaly in Nature. We are all bound together by indissoluble chains, more closely on the mind plane than on the physical. A thinker is dependent on the thoughts of all who have gone before him, on all who have recorded the *facts* on which his thinking is based, on the

spirit of the age, and perhaps, above all, on the waves of spiritual light which flood the higher planes of mind, and of these grand harmonies he may nobly have fitted himself to be the transmitter to his day and generation.

We cannot but see in much that passes current for the "heaven-born instinct of freedom" and love of liberty, something which often degenerates into insolent disregard of all authority but self-will, and is near akin to a fatal tendency to constitute oneself an authority for other people. Possibly we are all too apt to repeat in pride "Behold I know," and to forget to preface our statements with the humbler "Thus have I heard," but an instinctive dislike to authority because it is authority, without regard to condition or circumstance, seems to indicate simply a degree of remoteness from harmony with the universal Divine Law; and that, I take it, is the first thing to overcome in beginning the path of liberation. The need for humility has been taught by the Masters of Wisdom, "Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"; "Be humble, if thou would'st attain to wisdom. Be humbler still when wisdom thou hast mastered." If we at all realize that the rung we occupy on the ladder of evolution is still very low down, and that if there are millions of entities below us to whom we seem perchance as gods, so there are myriads above us to whom we are as gnats or worms, we gain a more level-headed idea of our true position. And if, still further, we can realize that within the limits of the human kingdom itself there are many grades and stages of development, we may haply clear our minds of much cant about liberty, equality, and fraternity. It is too often the case that:

Envy wears the mask of love, and, laughing sober fact to scorn,
Cries to weakest and to strongest, "Ye are equals, equal born."
Equal born? O yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat,
Charm us, orator, till the lion look no larger than the cat.

Surely it is but a little soul that can conceive of none greater than itself, can realize no more kingly being to whom it owes allegiance. Carlyle, in his *Heroes and Hero-worship*, has in his own trenchant way given expression to this truth.

"And now, sure enough, the cry is everywhere for Liberty and Equality, Independence and so forth; instead of *kings*, Ballot-boxes and Electoral Suffrages; it seems made out that any Hero-sovereign,

or loyal obedience of men to a man, in things temporal or things spiritual, has passed away for ever from the world. I should despair of the world altogether, if so. One of my deepest convictions is that it is not so. Without sovereigns, true sovereigns, temporal and spiritual, I see nothing possible but an anarchy, the hatefulest of things. . . . Hero-worship never dies nor can die. Loyalty and sovereignty are everlasting in the world ; and there is this in them, that they are grounded not on garnitures and semblances, but on realities and sincerities. All this of Liberty and Equality, Electoral Suffrages, Independence and so forth, we will take, therefore, to be temporary phenomenon, by no means a final one."

Now, if it be admitted that the scheme of evolution is a graded scheme, wherein it is the right and duty of the higher to guide, direct, control, and help the lower from top to bottom of the evolutionary scale, then the sooner we realize this practically in our lives the more rapidly and perfectly we shall fit ourselves into our niche of the universe, and be prepared to ascend to the next degree. As it is, we commonly assume the rights of governance over the less developed creatures, be they men or animals, and disregard our obligations to those above us, forgetting that before we can govern wisely we must learn how to obey, and that an effective army is composed, not of captains and commanders alone, but of disciplined rank and file. "We cannot all be Masters." I venture to think that it is because of this neglect of true discipline that we manage our share of the governing so badly. We give our brethren in the animal world every reason to regard us as devils, rather than gods, and our civilized (?) treatment of what we term "native" races will not bear reflection. In the general "muddlement" towards which we have gradually drifted down the ages, as we have moved further and further away from the divinely organized social life in which the infancy of our race was passed, the functions of the Brâhman and the Kshatriya have come to be exercised by the Sudra and the outcast, and the results are such as would naturally follow when authority is assumed by egos whose experience is limited to the lower standards of the world's great school. Revolt and anarchy are but the natural outcome ; "sad enough embroilments for us all," says Carlyle, but we "must welcome them as the penalty of sins that are past, the pledge of inestimable benefits that are coming."

It is precisely this confusion of functions that has led to the innumerable instances of the abuse of authority with which history and daily experience furnish us, and is thus responsible for the narrow and mistaken, though not unnatural, view which so many liberty-loving people have taken of authority in itself.

There's naught so vile that on the earth doth live,
But to the earth some special good doth give ;
Nor aught so good, but strain'd from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.

I hold that to our own shortcoming are due the ever-recurring examples of misapplied authority—to our want of discipline, our lack of knowledge how to obey. Did we more fully recognize our own particular function and sphere we should grasp the idea that we are a section of a double-linked chain, whereof the one side is service, the other authority ; and if we are for ever overstraining the side of authority on the link below us, and hanging back from the side of service on the link above, we bid fair to weaken our own section of the chain and throw the whole out of gear.

It may be contended that in practice abuse of authority creeps in on both sides, a too great complaisance or credulity on the one hand, an overweening self-assertiveness on the other. Both in reality have their roots in ignorance—lack of experience—and since the *sincerity* with which the belief is held, or the self-appointed mission fulfilled, is after all the real measure of the soul's possibility of progress, it may be questioned whether the evils as between individuals are so great as we in our short-sighted way of judging are apt to infer. Where the reverence is given to the *man* because he is sincerely believed to be a greater than oneself, and not to the holder of an office, there the soul is not cramped by its idol, poor though that idol be in other eyes. Doubt, insincerity, are the real death-knells of worship.

When we consider the abuse of authority, where communities are affected, civil and religious history alike point to it as setting back the clock of human progress, and show that revolt from *such* authority has been the natural and legitimate swing of the pendulum, but none the less it has to be admitted that all great movements for the uplifting of humanity have begun in authority. Whose authority? That of the great teacher or teachers who

established them. It could not be otherwise. They depended for their initiation upon him who taught—taught as one having authority and not as the scribes—because he was the one who *knew*, and without whom the movement would not have been. “Knowledge,” says the copybook maxim, “is power.” It certainly confers authority of a very real kind, and though, in the case of the teacher, there may be no compulsion to accept either the teaching or the authority, to accept the first is virtually an acceptance of the second, and the fact plays an important part in all great movements. Important in early stages because strength and cohesion are gained, important also because of a possible danger to be guarded against in later stages of all purely human societies, namely that of deferring in all affairs to what one may call the authority of the specialist. In other words, conferring upon the man whose knowledge in one or two departments is superb the authority or prestige due to the greater being whose knowledge is superb in all. Still later, creeps in the greater evil of deferring to the authority not of knowledge but of office merely, and then “lest one good custom should corrupt the world” the old order changeth and revolt brings forth a new order of progression. But ever, we must remember, under the guidance or command of a *new* teacher or commander, a leading spirit whose authority, beginning in love and free will, may or may not eventually become the source of another despotism.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his latest volume of Synthetic Philosophy, says that “ancient forms of dissent habitually stand for the authority of the Past over the Present,” a statement which the history of religion appears amply to justify. They have arisen in the effort of some one or more thinkers to reinstate the purer teachings of the past, which we may well believe have been ever fundamentally the same, drawn from the one source of spiritual light and knowledge which is common to all sections of the human race, but “with revelations fitted to their growth and shape of mind.”

It is in the very nature of humanity in the mass to need leaders and guides, just as it is in the nature of sheep; but the leaders, to be worthy of honour, must themselves serve and follow. What? The law whose authority is supreme, the law embodied in intelligences higher than their own, to whom they in turn owe conscious, or even perhaps unconscious allegiance, and by whom they are in turn

directed and helped. So, if we would be distinguished from the mass, the way is open ; not by raising the standard of revolt against all authority, but by learning to know the law, and working with and within the law, the law itself places us on the high platform we desire. "Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."

Before leaving this general aspect of the question, it may be well to allude to one form of authority which can hardly be left untouched—the authority of organization. We are all bound by it who live in communities; born and nurtured in it, we realize comparatively seldom how complete and binding it is, and even when not of the most ideal kind we submit to it, as to the rest of our environment, and "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's". Whether our particular "Cæsar" be a monarchy, an oligarchy, or "the will of the people," matters not, it is authority as affecting the individual. Within the big authority of the common-weal we build up the lesser authority of the municipality, and not content with that we are always voluntarily combining ourselves into leagues, guilds, associations, societies and the like, for the furtherance of definite objects. These voluntary combinations are invariably guided by some definite conceptions formulated in rules and bye-laws which have authority for the individual because they are the outcome of the sense or will of the majority, and the individual takes the obligation of them upon himself. Singularly enough, it is perhaps this particular form of authority which gives most occasion for strife, and apparently, in exact ratio to the non-necessity there is for him to submit to it and remain within the organization which imposes objectionable conditions, is the vigour of a man's determination to upset the authority to which he is opposed. This tendency, which is constantly recognizable in all sorts of organized bodies, is of course merely an illustration of what was stated earlier in this paper, that the instinct of revolt was near akin to a fatal inclination to constitute oneself an authority for others.

EDITH WARD.

(To be continued.)

THEOSOPHICAL ACTIVITIES.

EUROPEAN SECTION.

MRS. COOPER-OAKLEY, who has recently visited Italy, found a promising centre of work in the new Rome Lodge. The Rome Lodge is fortunate in having Signor Calvari for its secretary. The work that he has done has been quite invaluable for Theosophy in Rome. At present the members are devoting their energies to translating the most important works into Italian. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley was at the library every day from five to seven, in order to meet those members who were desirous of studying seriously. Mrs. Lloyd has proved a most devoted and untiring Librarian and President, combining the two duties with unfailing energy and good-will.

The Rome Lodge is fortunate also in having two old members of the society in the Conte and Contessa Frenfaulli-Cibo, whose assistance and sympathy have been of much service to Mrs. Lloyd. After working with the members in Rome, Mrs. Oakley went to Florence, and there in conjunction with Mr. and Mrs. Hope, whose guest she was, a meeting was held to which the Spiritualists in Florence were invited. This meeting proved very successful. On leaving Florence *en route* for Nice, Mrs. Oakley stopped a few hours at Genoa to see some members there.

At Nice, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley found a group of fifteen students under the guidance of Mrs. Terrell. A new lodge will shortly be formed there. Accompanied by Mrs. Terrell and Mons. de Castro, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley went to Toulon to see Dr. Pascal. At Toulon three days were spent full of work, interviews and meetings, with a flying visit to Marseilles. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley then went to Paris, where again interviews and meetings filled every hour that was available. She lectured at the Ananta Lodge on "The Book of Life," and left for London on May 19th.

The Thirteenth Conference of the North of England Federation was held at Harrogate on May 8th, Mr. Keightley taking the chair. After the usual general business, Mr. Keightley spoke on "Individuality and Unity," and in the evening Miss Shaw read a paper on "The Use and Abuse of Prayer."

Mr. Keightley visited most of the Northern Branches of the Section, lecturing at Liverpool, Manchester, Middlesborough, Harrogate, Leeds, Hull, Bradford, Sheffield and Nottingham.

THE SCANDINAVIAN SECTION.

The General Secretary of the European Section has been spending a fortnight in Sweden, working chiefly at Göteborg and Stockholm. A public lecture has been delivered in both cities, and a number of meetings, receptions and interviews have been held. The greatest interest was manifested. Mr. Mead chose as the subject of his lecture "The Theosophy of the First Two Centuries," and our members in Scandinavia seemed never to be tired of hearing of this remarkable period of the origins of the great religion of the West. Mr. Mead will also stop at Copenhagen on his return journey to London at the request of the members there, with whom he spent a couple of hours on his way to Sweden. The Convention of the Scandinavian Section was held at Stockholm on May 29th and 30th, and the European Section was represented by its General Secretary, who received a most hearty welcome, and was entrusted with the presentation of the greetings of the Scandinavian Section to the forthcoming Convention of his own Section to be held in London on July 10th and 11th.

AUSTRALASIAN SECTION.

The third Annual Convention met at Sydney on Good Friday, April 16th.

Mr. Peall, President of the Sydney Branch, was elected to the chair, and delegates from Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane were present, besides proxies for South Yarra, Hobart and Maryborough Branches.

It was with sincere regret that the chairman had to announce to the Convention the death of our universally respected and beloved General Secretary, Mr. J. C. Staples, and the representatives of all Branches testified to the debt of gratitude they owed to him for the help, sympathy, and guidance which he had ever freely given them.

It was decided to appoint an Honorary Acting General Secretary until a successor could be found to fill the vacancy; and as Mr. T. H. Martyn, who has been Acting General Secretary for the past eight months, is leaving very shortly for England, Mr. J. Scott was elected to that office, with Mr. H. A. Wilson as Assistant Secretary.

Miss Edger, General Secretary of the New Zealand Section, has generously volunteered to help in any way this Convention should see fit, and it was decided that she be asked to give a lecturing tour throughout the branches in Australia as early as possible.

Much discussion took place as to the best methods of increasing the usefulness of the Section.

Systems of correspondence between members, Lecture Bureaux, Colporteurs, and a Sectional Lending Library, were suggested, and it was decided to do as much on these lines as funds would admit.

The formal business of the Convention being concluded, the chairman gave his closing address, congratulating the members and delegates on the progress the Section had made during the year, and upon the harmonious and successful Convention which had been held.

The meeting then became an informal one, and discussed several points of disagreement in some of the later manuals and Theosophical publications, much good being done by the interchange of thought.

On Saturday evening, April 17th, the members of the Sydney Branch gave a *Conversazione*, so that their members might have a chance to meet and to become acquainted with the visiting delegates.

On Sunday evening Mr. H. W. Hunt from Melbourne, Mr. N. A. Knox from Adelaide, and Mr. T. H. Martyn of Sydney, delivered addresses on "Invisible Helpers," "Masters of Wisdom," and "The Theosophical Movement," to a large and attentive audience, thus bringing the Third Annual Convention to a fitting conclusion.

H. A. W.

NEW ZEALAND SECTION.

The General Secretary left Auckland on April 3rd on an extended lecturing tour, the first place visited being Gisborne.

The increased activity in Christchurch still continues.

As showing a growth of interest in Theosophy, the Secretary of the Dunedin Branch reports that one of the members there has been invited to read a paper on the subject to a Literary Institute.

An address on the "Septenary Universe" was given in Dunedin on the 8th inst, by Mr. A. W. Mavrais.

Mrs. Draffin lectured in Auckland on Sunday, 11th inst, on "Invisible Helpers," and will take the same subject in her next lecture.

AMERICAN SECTION: MRS. BESANT'S TOUR.

On Monday afternoon, April 26th, we left Ogden, one of the largest towns in Utah, and speeding round the head of the Salt Lake, across the desert and over the Sierra Nevada mountains, right down the length of California, we arrived on Wednesday evening at San Diego, beautifully situated on its land-locked bay, not far from the frontiers of Mexico. Here we rejoined the Countess, who had gone on direct from

Salt Lake City to join Count Axel Wachtmeister, her son. In the evening the drawing-room of the hotel was filled two or three times in succession by the crowds of people who flocked to see Mrs. Besant. Amongst them were a few old members, and it was pleasant to see them expand into a wider understanding of the aims and objects of the organization to which we belong, as they listened, during the three days we were in San Diego, to the lucid and convincing lectures given by Mrs. Besant. They were also present at the daily conversations, where they had an opportunity of asking some of the questions which had puzzled them, and they finally united with the new members to form a Lodge. One old member, especially, was very glad to have an opportunity of coming into closer touch with others, after several years of outward isolation on her husband's ranche at San Louis Rey.

Mrs. Besant lectured twice in the pretty little theatre at San Diego, and thanks to Count Axel's care and business capacity all the arrangements were well carried out. An afternoon lecture on "Theosophy and its Teachings" enabled many to hear Mrs. Besant who could not attend in the evening.

Several members of the Los Angeles Lodge met us at the station, and we were driven to the pleasant home of Mrs. Freeman, who was hospitality itself during our stay. In the evening a reception was given by the Harmony Lodge, and the two or three hundred people who attended were presented to Mrs. Besant and the Countess. Some good music by friends, and short speeches by Mrs. Besant and the Countess, filled up a pleasant evening.

The six days spent in Los Angeles were utilized for daily Lodge meetings, four public lectures, conversations and meetings at the Headquarters of the Society, and private interviews—besides a visit to Pasadena, and a lecture and afternoon talk there.

Last night, Friday, May 7th, we left our many kind members in Los Angeles, and wishing them success in their work, took the train for San Francisco. From there our proposed route goes through Portland, Tacoma, Seattle and Olympia to Spokane, where we expect to arrive on June 3rd.

A. J. W.

THE PRESIDENT-FOUNDER IN CEYLON.

The President-Founder spent the whole of April at Colombo in active service for the Buddhists. Within an hour of his landing they had him in the chair at a school meeting at the Society's Ânanda College and up to our latest dates he had been working early and late

with his staunch colleagues. He has gone over and revised the *Buddhist Catechism* (33rd edition) with the High Priest Sumangala, who has renewed his original certificate of approval of the first edition. The work now contains nearly two hundred more questions and answers than hitherto, and the matter is grouped in five parts, *viz.*, the life of Buddha; the Dharma or Doctrine; the Sangha; the History of Buddhism; and its scientific aspect. It is now a really comprehensive epitome. The work will shortly appear.

Colonel Olcott did a great deal of hard work in helping the Sinhalese to organize a fitting reception of the King of Siam, who stopped at Colombo on his way to the Queen's Jubilee celebration. The reception was arranged in good style, with a beautiful decorated pavilion near the jetty.

Being the last reigning Buddhist sovereign, the King had a peculiarly cordial welcome from the Sinhalese. In the pavilion His Majesty shook hands with Colonel Olcott, and warmly expressed his pleasure in meeting one who had been long known to him for his services to Buddhism.

The Colonel and the Prince Prisdon Choonsai of Siam, who recently put on the yellow robes, have perfected a scheme for the unification of the Buddhists of Siam, Ceylon and Burma under one Sangha, and hope to get the Siamese King to consent to its adoption.

On April 23rd, Colonel Olcott met at Colombo, by appointment, some Russian noblemen who wished to consult him about Buddhism. They then proceeded on their way to China and Mongolia.

CEYLON LETTER.

At a meeting of the Trustees of the Musæus School held on the 11th ult., with Colonel Olcott in the chair, it was resolved to raise a Sustentation Fund by a Committee consisting of the Trustees. Dr. Peebles, of San Diego, U.S.A., has promised a hundred dollars in aid of the proposed school building, and Colonel Olcott fifty dollars for the same object. Prince Hespère Outkhoksmys of St. Petersburg, who was *en route* to China, visited the Musæus School with Colonel Olcott. He was much pleased.

The Hope Lodge holds its meetings regularly on Sunday afternoons. The members are reading *The Growth of the Soul*.

S. P.

REVIEWS.

THE ACTS OF JOHN.

Texts and Studies, Vol. V., No. 1.: Apocrypha Anecdota II., by M. R. James, Litt.D. [Cambridge University Press: 1897. Price 7s. 6d. net.]

The new volume of that most valuable series Texts and Studies, among much of minor importance, contains a long fragment of the Acts of John, most of which has never been previously published. About a fourth of it is preserved in the Acts of the Second Council of Nice (A.D. 787), and is known; but the rest is quite new. It has been rescued from a fourteenth century MS. preserved in Vienna, which consists of a transcription of a collection of sermons, lives of saints and other edifying tales. The original of these Acts of John is early. Seeing that Clement of Alexandria quotes from them, we must assign the third quarter of the second century to them as the *terminus ad quem*. We have therefore before us an early document, our interest in which is further increased by the fact of its Gnostic nature. Nearly the whole of the fragment consists of a monologue put into the mouth of "John," in which he preserves for us a most remarkable tradition of the occult life of Jesus. The whole setting of the christology is docetic, and the fragment is thus a most valuable addition to our knowledge on this interesting point of Gnostic tradition. As readers of LUCIFER are now sufficiently familiar with the general tendencies of docetism, it is unnecessary to explain this cycle of ideas further. It is sufficient to point out that docetism was the rank growth of the legends of certain occult powers ascribed to the "perfect man," which were woven into the many christological and soteriological theories of the Gnostic philosophers; and also, as I believe, of a veritable historical fact, which has been obscured out of all recognition by the many pseudo-historical narrations of the origins. After his death Jesus, the Christ, did return and teach his followers among the "Essenes," and this was the part-origin of the protean Gnostic tradition of an inner instruction. He returned in the only way he could return, namely in a "psychic" or "spiritual" body; this body could be made visible at

will, could even be made sensible to touch, but it was, compared to the ordinary physical body, an "illusionary" body—hence the term docetic. But just as the external tradition of the Poor Men in time finally exalted Jesus from the lowly position of a prophet into the power and glory of the Godhead itself, so the internal tradition extended the original docetic notion to every department of the huge soteriological structure raised by Gnostic genius. The Acts of John pertain to the latter cycle of tendencies, and "John" is the personification of one of the lines of tradition of the protean docetism which took its origin in an occult fact, and of those marvellous teachings of initiation which became subsequently historicised, and which "John" sums up in the words, "I held firmly this one thing in myself, that the Lord contrived all things symbolically and by a dispensation toward men, for their conversion and salvation."

That Jesus during his ministry was possessed of occult powers of a high order is easy of belief to any student of occultism. That he could appear to others in a *mâyâvi rûpa* and change its appearance at will, is quite possible of credit. But that the tradition of these and other such happenings should have been handed down without exaggeration and fantastic embellishment would have been contrary to human experience in such matters. Thus, then, we are told that at the calling of James and John, first of all James saw Jesus as a child, while John saw him first as a man "fair and comely and of a cheerful countenance"; afterwards he saw him as one "having a head rather bald, but a thick and flowing beard," while James asserted that he appeared "as a youth whose beard was newly come."

Moreover another peculiarity which John remarked was that his eyes never closed. Strangely enough this is one of the signs of a "god" given in the Hindu scriptures. Many changes of appearance did John remark, sometimes as of "a man small and uncomely, and then again as one reaching to heaven"—a fact quite credible when related of a pupil in sympathetic contact with the powerful aura of an adept teacher. But stranger still, when John lay upon his breast "sometimes it was felt of me to be smooth and tender, and sometimes hard, like stones." Moreover, when Jesus was in prayer and contemplation there was seen in him "such a light as it is not possible for a man that useth corruptible speech to tell what it was like."

The following naïve story will perhaps bring a smile to the face of the orthodox, but will give the student of occultism the proof that the legend is not based entirely on the imagination, but pertains to the domain of occult fact, if the many similar legends current in India

concerning the touch of yogins when in certain states of ecstasis are at all to be credited.

“Again in like manner he leadeth us three up into the mountain, saying ‘Come ye to me.’ And we again went: and we beheld him at a distance praying. Now therefore I, because he loved me, drew nigh unto him softly as though he should not see, and stood looking upon his hinder parts. And I beheld him that he was not in any wise clad with garments, but was seen of us naked thereof, and not in any wise as a man: and his feet whiter than any snow, so that the ground there was lighted up by his feet: and his head reaching unto the heaven; so that I was afraid and cried out, and he turned and appeared as a man of small stature, and took hold of my beard and pulled it and said unto me ‘John, be not unbelieving, and not a busy body.’ And I said unto him, ‘But what have I done, Lord?’ And I tell you, brethren, I suffered great pain in that place where he took hold upon my beard for thirty days.” On this occasion also it was noticed that someone was speaking to Jesus while he was in the state of illumination, and this phenomenon was subsequently repeated in the presence of John, as recorded in the following naïve narrative.

“Again, once when all of us his disciples were sleeping in one house at Gennesaret, I alone, having wrapped myself up, watched from under my garment what he did, and first I heard him say, ‘John, go thou to sleep,’ and thereupon I feigned to be asleep; and I saw another like unto him come down, whom also I heard saying unto my Lord, ‘Jesus, do they whom thou hast chosen still not believe in thee?’ And my Lord said unto Him, ‘Thou sayest well: for they are men.’”

Here is the direct tradition of a fact which led to the subsequent great doctrinal distinction between Jesus and Christ in Gnostic christology. The Christ was the higher teaching power; Jesus was the man through whom He taught during the time of the ministry.

Interesting again is the simple story that when Jesus and his disciples were each given a loaf by some well-to-do householder, Jesus would bless his loaf and divide it among them, and each was well satisfied with his portion, and thus “our own loaves were saved whole”—an incident credible enough to any student of occultism, and supplying a basis on which the gorgeous oriental imagination could easily in time construct the legends of the feeding of the five thousand, etc.

Next follows the hymn which was sung before he was taken by “the lawless Jews.” The disciples hold one another’s hands so as to make a ring round Jesus, who stands in the midst, and to each line he sings, they intone in chorus the sacred word “Amen.” It is evidently

some echo of the mysteries and the ceremony is that of a sacred dance. The whole is exceedingly mystical, as may be seen from the following excerpts.

“ Grace is dancing. I would pipe : dance, all of you. Amen.
 I would mourn ; lament, all of you. Amen.
 One Ogdoad is singing praise with us. Amen.
 The twelfth number is dancing above. Amen.
 Also the Whole, that can dance. Amen.
 He that danceth not, knoweth not what is being done. Amen.

I would be united and I would unite. Amen.
 I have no house and I have houses. Amen.
 I have no place and I have places. Amen.
 I have no temple and I have temples. Amen.
 I am a lamp to thee who beholdest me. Amen.
 I am a mirror to thee who perceivest me. Amen.
 I am a door to thee who knockest at me. Amen.
 I am a way to thee, a wayfarer.
 Now respond thou to my dancing.
 See thyself in me who speak : and when thou hast seen what I do,
 keep silence about my mysteries.

Thou hast me for a bed, rest upon me.
 Who am I? Thou shalt know when I go away.
 What I am now seen to be, that am I not : but what I am thou
 shall see when thou comest.

I would keep time with holy souls.”

The hymn begins and ends with the following doxology, to which the disciples “ going about in a ring ” answer back “ Amen.”

“ Glory to Thee, Father. Amen.
 Glory to Thee, Word : Glory to thee, Grace. Amen.
 Glory to Thee, Spirit : Glory to Thee, Holy One : Glory to thy
 glory. Amen.
 We praise Thee, O Father : we give thanks to Thee, O Light,
 wherein dwelleth not darkness. Amen.”

Now at the time of the execution of Jesus, the Lord appeared unto John who had fled into the Mount of Olives.

“ Our Lord stood in the midst of the cave and lighted it up and

said, 'John, unto the multitude down below in Jerusalem I am being crucified, and pierced with lances and reeds, and gall and vinegar is given me to drink: but unto thee I am speaking, and hearken thou to what I say. I put it into thy heart to come up into this mountain, that thou mightest hear matters needful for a disciple to learn from his teacher, and from a man to learn from his God.' "

Then follows a most interesting vision and interpretation of the Cross, which receives its further explanation in the cycle of ideas prevalent in the Valentinian circle of Gnosticism, which will be brought before the readers of *LUCIFER* in two or three months' time.

The Gnostic writer of the Acts of John does not labour under the disadvantage of the Valentinians, however; we have not to recover the battered fragments of his thought from the Church fathers; our author can speak for himself, in his own fashion. Would to heaven bigotry had not silenced so many sweet voices of the past!

"And the Lord having thus spoken, he showed me a cross of light set up, and about the cross a great multitude: and therein was one form and one likeness: and in the cross another multitude, not having one form. And the Lord himself I beheld above the cross, not having any shape, but only a voice: and a voice not such as was familiar to us, but a sweet (*or* peculiar) and kind voice and one truly of God, saying unto me: 'John, it is needful that one should hear these things from me: for I have need of one that will hear. This cross of light is sometimes called the Word by me for your sake, sometimes Mind, sometimes Jesus, sometimes Christ, sometimes a Door, sometimes a Way, sometimes Bread, sometimes Seed, sometimes Resurrection, sometimes Son, sometimes Father, sometimes Spirit, sometimes Life, sometimes Truth, sometimes Faith, sometimes Grace. Now these things it is called as toward men: but as to what it is in truth, as conceived of in itself and as spoken of to you—it is the marking off of all things, and the uplifting and foundation of those things that are fixed and were unsettled, and the joining together of wisdom. And whereas it is wisdom fitly compacted together, there are on the right and on the left of it, powers, principalities, dominations and dæmons, operations, threats, wrath, devils (*or* slanderings), Satan, and the Lower Root, from which the nature of the things that come into being proceeded.' "

The last sentence requires fresh translation; Dr. James has lost his way among the Gnostic nomenclature.

"This, then, is the Cross which fixed all things apart by a word, and marked off the things from birth and below it, and then compacted all into one: but this is not the cross of wood which thou wilt see when

thou goest down hence, neither am I he that is upon the cross, whom now thou seest not, but only hearest a voice. I was reckoned to be what I was not, not being what I was unto many others : but they will call me something else, which is vile and not worthy of me. As therefore the place of rest is neither seen nor spoken of, much more shall I, the Lord of that place, be neither seen nor spoken of.

“ Now the multitude of one aspect that is about the Cross is the lower nature : and those whom thou seest in the Cross, even if they have not one form, it is because not yet hath every member of Him that came down been comprehended. But when the upper nature shall be taken up, and the race which is repairing to me, in obedience to my voice, then that which now hears me not shall become as thou art ; and shall no longer be what it now is, but above them, as I am now. For so long as thou callest not thyself mine, I am not that which I am. But if hearing thou hearkenest unto me, then shall thou be as I am, and I shall be what I was, when I have thee as I am with myself. For from this thou art. Care not therefore for the many, and them that are outside the mystery despise : for know thou that I am wholly with the Father, and the Father with me.

“ Nothing therefore of the things which they will say of me have I suffered : nay, that suffering also which I showed unto you and unto the rest in the dance, I will that it be called a mystery. For what thou seest, that did I show thee : but what I am, that I alone know, and none else. Let me therefore keep that which is mine own, and that which is thine behold thou through me, and behold me in truth that I am, not what I said, but what thou art able to know, because thou art akin thereto. Thou hearest that I suffered, yet I suffered not : that I suffered not, yet did I suffer : that I was pierced, yet was I not smitten ; hanged, and I was not hanged ; that blood flowed from me, yet it flowed not ; and, in a word, those things that they say of me I had not, and the things that they say not, those I suffered. Now what they are I will signify unto thee, for I know that thou wilt understand. Perceive thou therefore in me the praising (*perh.* slaying) of a Word, the piercing of a Word, the blood of a Word, the wound of a Word, the hanging of a Word, the passion of a Word, the nailing of a Word, the death of a Word. And thus speak I, separating off the manhood. Think thou therefore in the first place of the Word, then shalt thou perceive the Lord, and in the third place the Man, and what he hath suffered.’

“ When he had spoken unto me these things, and others which I know not how to say as he would have me, he was taken up, no one of the multitudes having beheld him. And when I went down I laughed

them all to scorn, inasmuch as he had told me the things which they said concerning him : and I held firmly this one thing in myself, that the Lord combined all things symbolically and by a dispensation towards men, for their conversion and their salvation."

All students of Gnosticism will naturally regard the Acts of John as a most precious fragment of the Gnosis, and even the orthodox will see in it many beauties which they cannot but admire in spite of what they are forecondemned to call its "heretical" setting.

We hope to return to a consideration of this most profoundly interesting fragment later on, and to furnish the reader with a translation and explanatory notes when the series of sketches, "Among the Gnostics," appears in book form.

G. R. S. M.

THE RELIGIONS OF INDIA.

By E. W. Hopkins, Ph.D. Leipsic. [Boston : 1895.]

In *The Religions of India* we have one more instance of the impossibility of a Western mind grasping the inner significance of Eastern faiths without the key furnished by the Esoteric Philosophy. In this volume we have a careful and scholarly *résumé* of the shells of the religions of India. The author is acquainted only with the most exoteric teaching. He devotes no little attention to the climatic and social influences which he holds to be responsible for the Rig Veda. He traces the development of the Vedic hymns, and follows the ramifications of the varied tenets with considerable care, and occasionally with some sympathy. The Atharva Veda is commented upon, and our author then proceeds to review Brâhmanism, the Upanishads, Jainism, Buddhism, the Purâṇas, etc.

On concluding the perusal of this careful work the reader is seized with a sense of barrenness, and a realization of the real fruitlessness of an analysis that entirely misses the living spirit of these great faiths.

Dr. Hopkins strangely enough professes to approach the Hindu religions from within, and admits India to be the "land of religions," *par excellence*. He states, however, that only a few centuries are sufficient to account for the development of Hindu literature, yet marvels that two or three thousand years B.C. it "should be possible to produce such finished work." He holds the belief that the Vedic hymns were the work of primitive poets, worshipping natural phenomena, and supremely ignorant of Nature's laws. He is sympathetic towards the sublime teachings of the Upanishads, but fails to comprehend the spirit of Buddhism when he states Buddha to have been an atheist and

pronounces Nirvâna to be annihilation. How the learned author reconciles the absolute annihilation theory with the statement that Nirvâna is attainable during life it is hard to say.

In reviewing the teaching of the Bhagavad Gîtâ, Dr. Hopkins denies the influence of Christian teachings. He does not believe that the doctrine of the Hindu Trimurti is borrowed from the Christian conception, and in other respects he writes without religious bias.

I. H.

THEOSOPHICAL AND MYSTIC PUBLICATIONS.

COLONEL OLCOTT'S now familiar stories of mesmeric cures come to an end in the May portion of "Old Diary Leaves," he having received instructions to suspend his healing operations. As he had treated eight thousand patients within twelve months it was evidently time to stop. The Colonel tells the story of a yogi who had achieved certain physiological powers and could do the feats of Hatha Yoga, but who knew so little of the higher training that he asked the Colonel to teach him how to concentrate the mind. The report from Colonel de Rochas of Eusapia's *séances* at Choisy-Yvrac concludes with this number. The phenomena are for the most part of the familiar materialization and object-moving kind. N. F. Bilimoria writes on "The Plague and its Causes." After mentioning the ordinary physical causes, astrology is brought to bear on the subject and some admirable examples of prophesying after the event are given. This paper is followed by some letters and a note by Colonel Olcott on the discovery of Kusinâra, where it is said that the body of the Buddha was cremated. The particulars given are as yet somewhat meagre.

The Journal of the Mahâ Bodhi Society contains the story of the temptation of Buddha by Mâra, a story that will always

remain one of the finest in Buddhist tradition. Following this is "The Buddhist View of Relics," with a letter from a prominent priest and quotations from the "Questions of King Milinda." The subject is due to the gift of an alleged relic of Buddha to Dr. Paul Carus, in recognition of his services to the religion. *The Theosophic Gleaner* opens with the paper on Zoroastrianism entitled "Gaiyomard and Zarathushtra." The curious legend is expounded according to the system of *The Secret Doctrine*, the evolution of the races of mankind serving as the key to the allegory. In the *Ârya Bala Bodhinî* the story of Nachiketas is told in a manner suited for youthful readers, and for the encouragement of the same the life of one of the Indian sages is given. An interesting account of Colonel Olcott's free school for Pariah children is given, Lord Havelock having visited the school and received the report. *Rays of Light* contains a letter from Mrs. Mona Caird on some possible dangerous consequences of the Prince of Wales's Hospital scheme.

The Vâhan for June is not a specially entertaining number, the "Enquirer" having been reduced to very small dimensions, owing chiefly to the insertion of three long letters. The writers were aroused by an answer of A.A.W. in a

recent issue on the sufferings of animals, and the letters contain vigorous protests against the views expounded therein. The short "Enquirer" is made up by two answers of C. W. L. on the question of astral help given by children, and one by P. S. on the duty of "non-receiving." The first one contains a short note by "Cyril," the child to whom the question mainly refers.

Mercury opens with an article by Mrs. Besant on the work of the Theosophical Society. She distinguishes the nature of the work which should be undertaken by a Theosophist from that which is the part of an ordinary religionist or a social reformer. The importance of self-training and of ordinary education is also emphasized. The incidents of the growth of Christianity and the overcoming of the few cultured by the many ignorant, are given as indications of dangers which may possibly menace the spread of Theosophy. The now too-familiar "close of the cycle" forms the subject, not only for the other article of the number but also for an answer in "the Forum Department." The paper contributes a good deal of information, mainly astrological. On two or three different occasions in the years 1897 to 1899 there are to be five and six planets in one sign, which would appear to portend horrors. According to Hindu astrology, we are told five planets in one sign means the destruction of all towns, and six of all kingdoms. We have the promise of some very exciting times. There is an amusing letter from Mr. Fullerton on the duties of a General Secretary, which throws a side-light on the responsibilities and the delights of office.

Theosophy in Australasia appears in its new garb, and the improvement is most noticeable. It now gives place to three articles besides the usual notes and activities. The first paper is on "Some Ancient Conceptions of Hell." The story of Theseus and the labyrinth is told as an illustration of the idea of hell. Miss Edger writes on "Unity," and L. E. Marcus on the Darwinian theory and the Theosophical view of evolution.

Le Lotus Bleu opens with a translation of Mr. Keightley's article on "The Desire-Body" from *LUCIFER*, followed by the continuation of Mr. Leadbeater's "Invisible Helpers." Another paper on cycles, this time by Mons. Courmes, helps to fill our French magazine. Luxâme's papers "Under the Bodhi Tree" come to an end this month, life and the means of emancipation from rebirth forming the subject of the discourse.

Sophia begins with memorial articles, the first on Madame Blavatsky, the sixth anniversary of her death giving rise to the article. The second is on Señor Montolú, the devoted Spanish Theosophist who founded the Spanish review and was largely instrumental in obtaining a hold for Theosophy in Spain. The body of the journal is made up of well-chosen translations. Along with this issue appears the first section of a Spanish translation of *The Story of Atlantis*, which will appear with the maps.

Nova Lux continues with the article by Signor Calvari on "The Ego and its Vehicles," the physical body being dealt with, and the processes by which it may be purified. Following the Theosophical article is a paper on "Idealism and Materialism" by a gentleman having an elaborate mystical title, and a letter from a Martinist writer.

Afra in the Dutch *Theosophia* writes on "Consciousness," explaining the different states and stages. The other original paper is one of some length on "Magnetism" dealing with the discoveries of Mesmer and the more recent investigations into the subject.

The *Teosofisk Tidskrift* continues Mr. Leadbeater's paper on dreams and concludes one by Mrs. Besant, a number of original contributions completing the issue. *Theosophia* also arrives from Sweden.

The German magazines, *Melaphysische Rundschau* and *Lotusblüthen* are somewhat dull reading, the subjects chosen being for the most part of a very heavy order.

La Nuovissima Antologia Italiana contains two articles on Spiritualism, one

of which originates in a criticism of Eusapia, the now famous medium. The other is a lengthy continued paper dealing with phenomena and their explanation, written from an independent point of view.

La Irradiacion, the Spanish spiritualistic journal, opens with a letter on dreams and presentiments from a Russian contributor, and is filled for the most part with general notes and ethical reflections. Dr. Simms' work on physiognomy is now being published in Spanish by the journal.

Reformador, a Portuguese fortnightly magazine, published in Rio de Janeiro, is devoted mainly to spiritism and psychic matters and contains numerous translated and original articles. Allen Kardec is, of course, the master followed. Spiritism, excepting the English and American branches, has done much to spread the ideas of reincarnation and karma taught by that writer.

Yet another "end of the cycle" publication! This time it is a production of the Lake Harris school, one of the funniest pamphlets that have appeared for a long time. It is called *The Impending World Crisis*, and consists largely of extracts from letters by Lake Harris and other specially privileged initiates of his school. The crisis appears to be coming by way of the "Fire-Breath," which is beginning to manifest through the body of the prophet in several very eccentric manners. The gem of the communication is an account of how "father" (Lake

Harris) lost the skin of his "arch-natural body." This was removed "excepting in three places, one at the neck, one at the solar plexus, one at the back of the neck; the skin was pulled off, as I pull off my jersey"! The appearance of "father" under these circumstances must have been interesting if the operation was visible to mere ordinary mortals. This, however, was probably not the case. But even this production is almost surpassed by some pamphlets issued by "The Order of the Temple." It appears that God the Father (not merely the Son of orthodox Christianity) has now incarnated, and as a woman! The author pathetically says: "Surely common-sense might assist Men's Faith on this point." With all the eccentricities, however, there is a welcome lack in these pamphlets of the vulgarity so commonly associated with pseudo-mysticism, and some of the ideas are likely enough to be useful to those whose thoughts run in such peculiar channels.

We have to acknowledge the receipt of *Notes and Queries*; *The Metaphysical Magazine*; *The Vegetarian*; *Light*; *The Agnostic Journal*; *Current Literature*; *The Literary Digest*; *The New Unity*, a semi-religious Chicago paper, with a series of articles by Mr. George F. Wright, a well-known Theosophist in Chicago; *Theosophy*; *The Pacific Theosophist*; *The Mystical World*; *The Irish Theosophist*; *The Theosophical Forum*; *The English Mechanic*.

A.