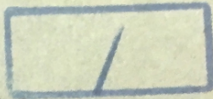


WITHIN THE VAIL:
OR
KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.


Spiritual Teachings

DELIVERED THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP

OF

W. J. COLVILLE.

AT THE RESIDENCE OF LADY CAITHNESS, DUCHESSE DE POMAR,
51, RUE DE L'UNIVERSITE, PARIS, JULY, 1885.

THEOSOPHY AND SPIRITUALISM:

THEIR TRUE RELATIONS TO EACH OTHER.

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON IMMORTALITY:

TO WHAT EXTENT IS MAN A FREE AGENT?

A SPIRITUAL VIEW OF THE RESURRECTION.

With Answers to Questions and Impromptu Poems.

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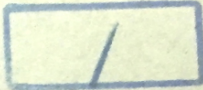
J. BURNS, 15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.

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WITHIN THE VAIL.

KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Lecture 1.

THEOSOPHY AND SPIRITUALISM:

THEIR TRUE RELATIONS TO EACH OTHER.

HAVING already, in many of our lectures, called the attention of our auditors to some of the essential laws and principles which govern Spiritual Phenomena at large, we have deemed it advisable to deal to-day, in response to your enquiries, with the subject of THEOSOPHY. We shall treat it in as wide a manner as possible, and repudiate altogether the narrow and limited definitions of the word, which are so common in certain quarters. Theosophy itself is quite as broad a word as Spiritualism; and, indeed, some persons have considered it a much broader term, so that under cover of "theosophy" many have been willing to study spiritual subjects, who would not identify themselves openly with any society bearing the name of Spiritualists.

Theosophy really signifies Divine Wisdom, all knowledge concerning God and things divine. When the followers of Emanuel Swedenborg banded themselves together in London, at the beginning of the present century, to study the doctrines embodied in his works, they took the name of "The Theosophical Society"; and that very appropriately, as they wished to obtain and give forth knowledge relating to spiritual facts and principles. Theosophy in the East

same word has to do duty in a great many instances, when several words ought to be coined or adopted to render speech more eloquent or expressive. We encounter this difficulty very seriously whenever we have to treat upon the essential differences between mind, spirit and soul; as these words are capable of many interpretations, and are used very variously by many writers and speakers at the present time.

To us Spirit and Life are identical. Spirit is self-existent and self-intelligent, eternal and uncreate; therefore, the expression, "God is Spirit," is quite correct. The term Soul we use to designate an essential or ultimate particle of life, an atom or primary which can alone be immortal. All expressions of life, inferior to the human, are but the result of impulsions or vibrations from the unitary state of existence which is Soul-life. This is the innermost, and to ask how it was formed, how it came into existence, or what it is composed of, must be to ask an unanswerable series of questions; as the human mind must always reach a point, if it travel far enough, beyond which its researches cannot extend, as no other mind than the Infinite can possess adequate power to fathom the abyss of eternity.

Science, speaking physically, acknowledges at the same time between sixty and seventy primates (while the ancients knew only of four), and contends resolutely for the self-evident truth of there being only one absolutely primary condition of being. This primary or atomic state of life is only conjectural; it is, however, inferred by logical deduction, but whoever claims to have tasted, touched, heard, seen, or smelt an atom? It appeals to no one of your five bodily senses, but it declares its existence to your reasoning powers and intuitions. If these primaries are not discoverable in the realm of matter, who shall make bold to declare that there are any absolutely primary conditions of matter?

Perhaps, after all, souls are the only primaries, and these alone are individually possessed of immortality. The Soul has ever been acknowledged, by the truly inspired in every age, as an immortal entity; and to distinguish it from whatever is transitory, it has been called by philosophers the *Divine Soul*, which expression distinguishes it from the human spirit and human mind, which are derived from it, are its offspring, and depend upon it for existence and sustenance.

In "Esoteric Buddhism," Mr. Sinnett quotes the seven-fold idea of human life entertained by the ancient Buddhists, and introduces a table of seven separate principles in the constitution of man into his work, as giving the best possible explanation of what is and what is not immortal in the life of man, as expressed and understood on earth. The seven principles—beginning at the foot of the ladder, the point where evolution commences—commence with the body, *i.e.*, the physical body, which is connected with the *astral or spiritual body* by means of *vitality*. Vitality is, therefore, the second, while the astral body is the third principle in man. So far man is only a piece of mechanism run by clock-work, capable, indeed, of surviving in astral form after the physical body is dissolved, but still only as an *ignus fatuus*, an apparition, a shell, a creature which may be compared to a comet hastening to destruction.

Materialism only recognises two principles out of the seven which constitute the perfect man, and therefore a thorough Materialist, realizing only the existence of the physical body and vitality, cannot go so far as the most external among Occultists, who recognise three principles.

When Mrs. E. H. Britten, some years ago, translated and edited a thrilling work entitled "Ghost Land," she related, or rather the author of the volume did, the opinions of certain materialistic psychologists, who believed in the survival of astral bodies, or shells, after the burial of the material frame, but whose gross sensuousness forbade them to accept any light on truly spiritual topics. They were, equally with Materialists, disbelievers in the immortality of the Soul, or rather, like the Materialists, they did not recognise the existence of the Soul. To them man was physical body, vitality and astral body, and nothing beyond.

It is quite proper to speak of these three principles, collectively or separately, as shells. They are shells. The spiritual nature is the kernal of the fruit, the astral body is the inner shell, while the physical structure is the outer shell, vitality being merely the link or magnetism which connects them.

To all readers of the works of Allan Kardec, the idea of the *perispirit* will be familiar. The perispiritual envelope is often mentioned in his "Genesis," while his "Spirits' Book" is full of allusions to this astral fluid and astral body,

which is now attracting so much attention in Hermetic Lodges and Theosophical Societies.

But there is nothing really theosophical in the researches of students of the Occult, until they get far beyond the border-land of astral life. We certainly are not prepared to deny the existence of elementary intelligences, and elemental spirit-substance. We certainly do not deny, that elementary spirits take part in producing physical phenomena, usually attributed by Spiritualists, exclusively, to the action of human disembodied spirits. But an admission such as this, while it may support the affirmations of many Occultists, by no means gives credence to the negative assumptions of the materialistic wing of the Occult brotherhood.

We admit the existence of animals, reptiles and insects upon earth; we allow that they possess certain powers, and exercise certain functions, sometimes to the aid and sometimes to the detriment of man. We know that these varied creatures can be seen, and often are encountered by men, but having granted as much as this, which common sense and observation compel us to admit, we should be foolish indeed, did we argue that because of the existence and activity of myriads of creatures on the planet, inferior to man, therefore the works of man could rightfully be assigned to an inferior agency.

There is a clear and sharp dividing line between man and all below him. The crucial point is that of intelligence. All intelligence below man matures, and lets us see that it can go just so far but no farther. Men on earth, and spirits of the human race in the Spirit-world, possess distinguishing powers, characteristic of humanity, and these powers, by a careful and thoughtful student of them, need never for a moment be confounded with manifestations, the result of sub-human intelligence.

Evolution is the watchword of Science to-day, Involution is the watchword of Spiritual Revelation. A material scientist, such as Darwin, is a most valuable contributor to the world's knowledge of the genesis of the human body, and the means whereby, through countless ages of struggle, souls have been able to embody themselves in matter, and express their potencies through instruments of clay. We must all by this time have come to the conclusion that, on all things spiritual, material science simply knows nothing.

WHY
NOT

True scientists are modest enough to confess their ignorance, and bow reverently before the Great Unknown. The instinct of worship, which prevails the world over, has grown up naturally, as the result of man's consciousness of something having been before him; and he feels that that mysterious, undefined *something* is the originator and sustainer of his being. The word *law*, and the phrase *law of nature*, in everybody's mouth, means nothing to those who are ignorant of Spirit. People talk of laws as though they were actual realities, living principles, while they are nothing of the kind. When we say that something occurs in obedience to an immutable law, we simply mean that we have traced an unvarying connection between certain phenomena we call cause, and certain other phenomena we designate effect; but what no one can possibly define, who builds on material premises, is *cause* itself. He may know that light, heat and electricity are the generators of material life, and are essential to the formation of organisms; he may speak learnedly of attraction, repulsion, and the polarization of atoms; but what brought into existence the primordial cell? What caused the production of cellular tissues? What gives to atoms the power of selection? These and countless other mystic problems are utterly beyond the knowledge of material sense; and science, on the physical plane, can only deal with effects, while leaving their origin entirely untouched by its researches and theories.

It is, however, foolish to assert, that concerning the genesis of matter nothing can be ever definitely known; for from times immemorial the spirit within man has asserted itself, the soul has made known its existence to the regenerated or twice-born in every age; and what can be more emphatic or more clearly illustrative of spiritual fact, fact which has a perfect analogy in the material world, than the intensely suggestive words of Jesus to Nicodemus, in the third chapter of the fourth Gospel: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." The ordinary interpretation of this frequently-quoted text, from which millions of sermons have no doubt been preached, is that unless a certain view be taken of the historic Christ, and souls trust for salvation in the atoning merits of the blood poured out on Calvary, they must suffer perpetual banishment from God, and the society of angels and spirits

of just men made perfect; while to the student of the Spirit—who attaches only a very secondary importance to historic events, and faith reposed in the divinity of certain inspired personages,—the words convey a fund of interior meaning, and open up unending vistas of spiritual delight.

New birth, or regeneration, is more correctly defined by Swedenborgians, than by any other sect of Christians, as they declare it to be a gradual work, not a sudden process. Conversion is instantaneous in many instances, as the word itself implies merely the act of turning or being turned round. Sanctification all classes of thinkers allow to be gradual; and what is regeneration or sanctification but spiritual growth, the assertion by the Divine Soul of its due sovereignty? When the will resigns itself completely to the Soul, then there is perfect harmony in man, and that state of harmony within induces harmony around; therefore, heaven within is essential to heaven without, while the power to know that there is such a state as heaven, is derived entirely from the expansion or liberation of the soul within.

Now, in the face of such terrific suffering, as we are all daily compelled to witness, we must all feel as did the noble Indian prince, Gautama, that the philanthropist can know no rest, no satisfaction with life, until he has discovered the why and wherefore of human agony, and set himself to work to alleviate the pains and sorrows of the race.

Evolution, now so universally lauded as the interpreter of God's method of creation, furnishes the scientific mind with a key that exactly fits into the door of spiritual being. Evolution is the result of Involution, and the more carefully we study the works of the most careful students of natural science, the more prepared shall we be to accept the true philosophy of Spirit, which only intuition and inspiration can make known to earth.

The Oriental doctrine of *Karma*, when freed from the superstitions usually attached to the transmigrational theory, reveals from behind the veil of matter the workings of the spiritual world, which interspheres and interpenetrates the earth.

The Hindoos of to-day are, to a large extent, degraded people; they have been deteriorating century after century, under the oppressive yoke of foreign bondage. Long before England established an empire in India, the Hindoo race

had become effeminate and cast down; and while England has done something to elevate India in certain respects, the native population is still treated with haughty insolence by the mass of British residents in the East.

It was not always so, though, according to Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia," so long ago as 550 B.C., the East had been subjected to cruel oppressions, and the bulk of the people were in the bondage of misery and want. But the records of India are of nameless, undiscovered antiquity, and profess to deal in some instances with events which took place 100,000 years ago.

We cannot give full credence to Hindoo chronology, though we must admit that no race of men could have compiled the Vedas, or any of the most ancient Sanskrit documents, unless they were marvellously cultured or excessively inspired. These old documents contain philosophical and scientific truths of such stupendous grandeur, that the finest Western intellects confess themselves utterly baffled when confronted with the mystery of their production.

All the bibles of the world contain an inner sense, astounding in its profundity. Translations now in circulation are certainly not correct renderings of actual originals, as the originals themselves have not been found, and we doubt very much if there ever were originals, such as some people suppose to exist, or to have existed. The Alexandrian Library contained many MSS. of priceless value, to which the Greeks had access, and which were not altogether unknown to the Christian Gnostics of the first few centuries of the Christian era. S. Augustine, and all the most learned of the fathers, were mystics, and wrote allegorically, according to their own confession. Their works were really in cipher, and in this mode of writing and teaching they copied the Greek philosophers, who all spoke two languages: one to the initiated, the other to the outside world.

It is thought by many that Bibles and Science are antagonistic. They are not, as the object of spiritual literature is not to record commonplace facts relating to external life, but rather to convey spiritual ideas, and unfold eternal laws and principles. All bibles are picture books, and all have been put into the hands of the multitude, who are intellectually children. All are, moreover, of Oriental origin, and it is natural for the Oriental to clothe his thoughts in symbol.

The nearer one gets to the equator, and the farther east one travels, the more figurative all speech becomes. Metaphor is natural to the Asiatic; he understands it, and without illustration or figure can only apprehend truths with great difficulty. The Oriental mind is very childlike; it is simple, though subtle and profound; and though the enervating climate, the antiquity of institutions, and the prevalent conservatism of the lands, indispose to the sharp, vigorous habits of mind which characterize the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic races, all these influences combined work on the feelings and emotions, and tend to stimulate the meditative or reflective disposition, for which Easterns are so celebrated, and in which the Western world is so deficient.

Very frequently it happens that, through inter-marriage, a great seer or sage is born on earth, one nation supplying elements which can find their just complement only in elements supplied by another nation. The East and West are now coming together, as never before within those periods now called historic, though in prehistoric days the East and West were veritably one; and from this cause we find the ruins of both hemispheres betoken an almost perfect unity of knowledge, as displayed in architecture and many other ways.

Turning upon itself, indulging constantly in introspection instead of in outward gazing, the Oriental mind realizes the fact of man's dual consciousness, to an extent never dreamed of in the West. Here and there we find a genuine Spiritualist, a true Theosophist, one whose inner being declares itself in rightful superiority to the things of sense; but only occasionally, in this part of the world, do we find anything beyond Materialism, in various degrees of grossness and refinement. The most religious are either dogmatic or agnostic. The Church either denies Science or confesses that it weakens her strongholds; because she has limited the outgoings of the Infinite, and while teaching divine incarnation, has limited the Godhead tabernacled in flesh, to a single appearance of an avatar.

We have no dispute with the beautiful truth of divine incarnation; we accept it in its entirety. God has only one child, for his whole creation is a perfect unity; but in that unity boundless variety exists. It is not only trinity in unity, but infinite diversity in unity, to which the universe

introduces us ; and it should ever be the work of the human intellect, which can only perceive results, to bow reverently before that eternal Mathematician, who places constellations in the fields of azure, in groups of perfect design, and who regulates the growth of the lowliest field flower, in accordance with exact principles in geometry.

Where nature geometrizes there is God. To deny Mind, Will, Intelligence as the Author of Nature, is to be at once irrational, illogical, unscientific and absurd. It is a truism, that a cause must be equal to the effect it produces. It therefore stands to reason that no jelly-fish can develop into a monkey, and no ape can develop into a man ; no matter can evolve Spirit, no blind forces can beget the attributes of mind.

But then, says an objector, you are denying the facts of science ; you are throwing discredit upon the researches of our most accurate naturalists ; for they proclaim that such results take place.

Our reply to all such cavil is : That physical science deals exclusively with effects, and knows nothing whatever of causes, and, moreover, is honest enough to claim to know nothing of causation. The Spiritual World, behind the scenes, is the director of the play of natural forces.

The word "nature" means something *born* ; something born implies the necessity of something to give it birth ; and that something is eternal Spirit, everlasting mind, indestructible will, the sole possessor of absolute immortality.

Continued existence may be in store for a creature whose origin is attributable to things temporal ; but immortality relates to eternity, not to prolonged time ; and there can be no eternity *before*, if there is none *behind*. The Soul itself, the *atma*, or seventh and highest principle in man, never began to be, and therefore always will be. It is the divine *nephesh*, the breath of the Eternal in human nostrils, the incorruptible treasure placed for a while in earthen vessels ; at once the cause and the associate of all material things.

The supposition, that all things originated from nothing, is simply unthinkable, because we cannot form an idea of nothing. Empty space, mere distance—we cannot conceive of either. An objective reality can alone make an impression on the human mind. What we imagine is, after all, what is imaged upon our minds ; and the likeness of nothing cannot possibly be taken.

What is the eternal *something*? We announce it to be Spirit. Matter we do not believe has any real or permanent existence. There can be only one essential and eternal element, from which all other so-called elements are born, and of which these are only differentiations.

We conceive of Spirit as having in itself all size, all form, all colour, all length, all breadth, all thickness, and what Zöllner has called a fourth dimension also; this fourth dimension being Zöllner's term for purely spiritual qualities, which seemingly have no correspondence in material existence.

The term "material life" is really a misnomer, as all life is *spiritual*, and when life ceases, it ceases only in appearance, not in reality. The expression "cessation of life" is kindred to the setting of the sun; life never ceases, the sun never sets, but certain phenomena occur which are purely illusive, and are occasioned by the extreme feebleness of human vision, and the narrowness of the range of sensuous perception. Life is one grand, unbroken chain, in which there are no missing links. All the links are not discernable by man, and he fancies he discovers gaps or breaks in the chain, because many of its links are veiled from his short vision.

The life that begins to manifest itself on earth in the monad, doubtless is withdrawn when the animation of the monad ceases, but the *cause* of life in the monad does not inhere in it, considered as a material entity. The life principle inheres in a spiritual unit, an essential atom of conscious existence, an absolute original and ultimate primary, from which a vibration or emanation has gone forth, which has resulted in the formation and animation of a feeble speck of dust. When the duad appears, the way has been prepared for it by the monad; for when first the unseen soul gives forth rays of its own vitality, these rays have an affinity for each other, and the affinity of life radiations for one another is the cause of attraction or chemical affinity in the lower worlds.

It would be quite incorrect to say that we, as human spirits, came up from the lower kingdoms of nature, in the sense of our being products of our inferiors; but it is by no means incredible, that the ever-living spiritual unit, in its first attempts to embody itself, should have succeeded only in

producing a very meagre and imperfect form, and that that form should be dissolved by the action of the power that gave it birth, so as to make way for a superior type or species of existence.

Every new type on earth is due to a new impulsion of Spirit, and has of necessity a form in spirit before that form is clothed with matter on the earth. Every spirit, therefore, creates its own environment, and must of necessity produce the crudest and lowliest forms of organism, before it can bring the higher into being.

From the standpoint of the spirit, who has conquered matter, and can control it completely, everything is seen to be of use. From the mountain-tops of celestial observation, every occurrence on earth is seen to be the precursor of a more glorious day. Thus, "Not a flower that blooms to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air," lives and blooms for naught; not a gnat, or fly, that does not fulfil a purpose in its being. Every form is a result of a condition of mind, that gives it birth.

Material science proves conclusively the instability of our material organisms, and brings us face to face with the spiritual problem of continued identity, persistent consciousness, individual memory apart from bodily identity. There is no such thing as bodily individuality, the body being an ever-shifting agglomeration of molecules. You grow stout, and then thir, then stout again. Your forms are partially pulled down by sickness and anxiety, and then built up again. But the form that is rebuilt is not the form that was removed. The same atoms do not come back again, and resume their wonted places which they occupied before sickness or fatigue forced them from their kindred. In seven years, at most, the body is entirely changed, and yet the four great attributes or essential elements of man's individual being remain: Memory, Consciousness, Understanding, Will: these belong to the spiritual nature, that does not lose its identity.

The Spirit itself is never fully embodied except in a perfect human form, but is connected with the body, in all cases, until the connecting cord is loosed; then with the breaking of the vital bond, the body begins to crumble into dust, and the Spirit finds itself unable any longer, except through the mediumship of those yet in an earthly form, to manifest itself to earth.

Now the much-mooted question of successive embodiments really involves no greater difficulty than that of the constant changes transpiring in the body you now wear. You must learn to think of yourself as outside your body as well as in it. Your spirit pervades your body, animates it, but does not necessarily at all times abide within it.

What becomes of the spirit during the sleep of the body? Sleep is occasioned by the total suspension of all voluntary motion, while involuntary motions occur as during waking hours. When you are fast asleep, you yourself are out of your body, and you may be seen by others, who are out of their bodies at the same time. In dreams you often actually encounter the spirits of persons who are now living on earth. Your astral selves meet in the astral world, while your physical bodies are in slumber. Frequently when you have some important message to convey to one between whom and yourself there is a close bond of sympathy, that friend will receive the message during the night, and be quite prepared for the news conveyed in your letter which reaches him the following morning. This power to communicate with friends in sleep, and remember having done so, is only acquired as the mind becomes able to employ the outer and the inner memories at once.

By a fervent effort of the will, you can sometimes remember your dreams distinctly, and profit by them, but learned physicians, who have made the study of dreams a speciality, declare that in many instances a dream seemingly occupying months, can be fully dreamed out in less than one minute. In such cases, where dreams seem so unaccountably rapid, by a process of spiritual photography which may be instantaneous, the Spirit is able to throw a vision of its experiences in the spiritual state, on to the sensitized plate within the mental camera.

Swedenborg and some other noted seers, have consciously lived two lives, and have frequently been conscious of what was going on in two realms of being at once. Those who are in possession of unfolded dual consciousness, have not the slightest difficulty with the question of identity, altogether apart from the body, as they realize that two lives are always going on together.

Now, if relationship be of the soul, if affections be spiritual, if your drawings to one another be real and interior, the idea

of two friends being sundered—because one is embodied while the other is disembodied, or because they are both embodied at the same time in different parts of the earth, or even on different planets,—is only imaginary. They meet on the astral plane, they commingle their thoughts and share their enjoyments with to each other in the night time, and while during the day hours those on earth are often mentally weary, but receive strength and rest for mind as well as body during periods of slumber, it is because during their nocturnal ramblings they enter the spiritual state, and hold restful and delightful converse with those they love.

Insomnia soon leads to insanity, because the Spirit, which is a native of the Spirit-world, cannot bear to live too intensely on the material plane.

Many persons, however, are still quite dissatisfied with the idea of repeated embodiments, because memory is defective, and only very few remember anything of their past history. But there are two answers to this objection, both of which are true and ample. The one is, that memory cannot be perfect until we are as much alive to the experiences we undergo during sleep as in our periods of wakefulness, as the spirit is just as conscious during the slumber of the frame as when it is most active. The reason why memory is so imperfect, is because only the very highly-developed, usually can do more than one thing at a time, or think about more than one thing at a time. When we are intensely engrossed in any pursuits, we are concentrating our consciousness at a given point, and are for the time oblivious to all things other than those upon which our minds are centred.

An exclusive realization of things material is a mark of a poorly-unfolded spirit. The more external persons are, the more they are affected by all things outward; and the more important material things appear to them, while the more deeply the spiritual nature is cultivated, the less valuable appear material possessions, and the more important seem all spiritual realities.

The higher metaphysics of all countries and ages, teach that matter is only a delusion of the senses. The old Brahmans, who regarded Maya as the material world, said: Brahma (spirit) is reality; Maya (matter) is delusion. The adepts of every age and clime have risen so far superior to material sensations, that they were indifferent to heat and

cold, and all the pains and pleasures of sense. The secret of adepthood is to so far retire into one's inner self, that only the realities of the inner world are deemed important.

Of course we do not recommend that an endeavour even be made to arrive, while on earth, at a point of absolute indifference to all outward things; for if the whole life on earth should be spent in introspection, and among the denizens of spirit realms, the outward duties of earth, incident to embodiment, could never be performed. But there are times in every one's history, when a complete withdrawal from all things outward is so desirable, that physicians administer the deadliest drugs, the most powerful anæsthetics, to induce the suspension of bodily consciousness.

Magnetism and Mesmerism have a medical value, because of the superiority and far greater safety of the mesmeric and magnetic fluids in inducing abstraction. The fully trained adept employs his own will to such an extent, that without being psychologized through the action of another mind, he can throw himself into a condition where material sensations for the time, at least, are *nil*. When man has fully developed this power of will over matter, diseases will be unknown, and death will result no longer from accident, and can never then be called "premature," for the Spirit, having gained the victory completely over matter, will be able to defy matter, if it endeavour to enchain the Spirit; then the true *elixir vitæ* will be found, but found only within man's spirit, when, having completed the round of preparatory existences, it can at length produce a perfect form, and in that form enjoy perfect liberty.

The other reason, which can be given to silence the objections of those who oppose the doctrine of re-embodiments, is that whether we at a given time remember or forget our past, we are what it has made us. Had we been other than we were in past existences, we should be other than we are to-day. This doctrine alone explains the discrepancies which everywhere abound. When we study it, it tells us why some are born so much higher up the ladder, intellectually and morally, than others. It reveals eternal justice, and goes behind heredity, and gives us a satisfactory reason for the influence of ancestral tendencies.

It is quite true that hereditary influences are powerful; quite true that children take after their parents; quite true

that iniquities are often visited from sire to son, through three or four generations; quite true that skilled astrologers can make a chart of the heavens, and inform you, if they are cognizant of the place and date of your nativity, what influences will most affect you; but heredity and astrology cannot touch the great underlying question: If these things be so, how can a just God permit them?

The Bibles of all the world agree with the Jewish, in unveiling two sides of the same great truth. The portions of the whole as seen on earth appear totally discrepant, but they are really in perfect harmony. A spirit is born when and where it is, because its condition is what it is, and its condition at any period in its career is the natural and necessary result of what has gone before.

The philosophy of successive struggles after perfection, and its ultimate attainment by every soul without exception, alone proves Nature rational and Deity just.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

ASKED AFTER FIRST LECTURE.

Question.—Is our higher self not fully incarnated during our present sojourn on earth?

Answer.—Your Divine Soul is not fully embodied until you reach the standard of the perfect man, called, in the New Testament, the full measure of the stature of Christ. Man is composed of seven principles, which are usually considered by those who have studied the occult sciences and Oriental literature, to be most clearly defined as follows: 1, The Body; 2, Vitality; 3, The Astral Body; 4, The Animal Soul; 5, The Human Soul; 6, The Spiritual Soul; 7, The Divine Soul. It requires the embodiment of the first four to produce a conscious animal, and of the fifth to produce a human mind. Six must be expressed in order to constitute a spiritually-minded person, and only those who are in their last embodiments, and finish their course on earth before leaving the body, express the seventh. The expression of the seventh principle is the distinguishing mark of one who is truly an avatar or messiah.

Ques.—Do we each come from a particular angel? What is a guardian angel? Does the guardian ever change?

Ans.—The question implies the thought of spiritual colonies or families, and these assuredly exist. Every soul on earth is conscious of peculiar drawings toward some other souls, and this drawing is an evidence of spiritual relationship. Every soul is destined at length to become an angel; an angel being a soul which has unfolded perfectly, through a complete series of earthly discipline, and experience in the spirit spheres which are connected with the earth. Though an angel is a minister or messenger, those spirits alone are competent to keep watch over mortals, who have themselves gone through and overcome all earthly temptations. A teacher must have learned the lesson first, he has now to convey to others. There would be no end served were guardian angels to change, because being angels, they are at the centre, and know all things that can be learned on earth; though they are not infinite in power or knowledge. The angel is a complete soul, two in one. The angels, who are at the head of spheres or societies, may be regarded as those who, by their peculiar fitness for the work, are commissioned to take the lead, and act as presidents of heavenly societies. In Spirit-life government is perfect, that is not to say there is no rule, and that there are no ruling powers, but rather that only those qualified to govern can possibly rise to the highest states.

Ques.—Is the Star Circle another name for the Christ sphere, or sphere of truth, or are they all one?

Ans.—We regard the three titles you have called over as merely three names for the same spiritual state. The Christ sphere, or sphere of truth, is merely that realm of spiritual being where spiritual laws and principles are fully understood, in relation to the earth. The Star Circle in the heavens, is the home of those angels whose inspiration is never felt on earth, except through intermediaries, save at such times as special messengers appear, who give up everything for truth. The Christ sphere is the centre of the Star Circle, but the points of the star are occupied by souls who have not yet reached celestial glories. Spiritualists have been accustomed to call this sphere the seventh, as seven, Kabbalistically interpreted, means spiritual perfection.

Ques.—Does the Christ sphere send messengers periodically to the earth? Would Socrates, for instance, be regarded by you as a messenger from the Star Circle?

Ans.—The Christ sphere, another name for the seventh or highest state, which holds direct communion with the earth, does send messengers periodically to the earth, one of which regularly appears in some part of the world, about once in every cycle of over 2,000 years; while at the close of every 600 years, or thereabouts, an unusual spiritual quickening is experienced somewhere on the planet. Buddha and Christ are titles applicable only to those who are spiritual messengers, and include the manifestation to earth of a sphere of exalted souls, among whom one may possibly be more advanced than all the rest, and be the first to herald the new era; as the highest mountain-peak in any range of mountains, will catch the morning sunshine before it reaches any lesser elevation. Truth and light are free to all, but those souls receive it first who occupy the highest spiritual eminences. Thus such a person as Gautama or Jesus, because of peculiar purity of life and devotion to truth, would be more directly receptive to celestial influence than their contemporaries. Socrates was an intellectual rather than a spiritual light, so was Confucius. These intellectual luminaries are rather at the points of the star than at the centre. Those who address the soul direct, speak as angels of light, who live in the Sun sphere. Those who reach the Soul through the intellect are less unfolded spiritually.

Impromptu Poem.

THE SPHERE OF TRUTH.

THERE is a mystic Sphere, where Truth is understood;
 A world of light and love, where everything seems good.
 'Tis where the enlightened soul, all earthly dreams above,
 Doth comprehend through all, the working of God's love.

There is a central Sun, around which Planets move,
 A central orb of light, and he, who this doth prove,
 Must needs endure the gaze of angels, who can read
 The inmost depths of mind; on fire he needs must feed.

The flame men so much dread, is the pure dazzling light,
 Which from the central Sphere shines earthward, perfect, white;
 All-loving, 'tis, all-wise, all-powerful, and all-true;
 All red, all golden blaze, and yet perpetual blue.

Only that royal bird, the eagle, turns its eye
 And gazes at the sun, in noon-day majesty ;
 And still it's unafraid, nor downward bends its gaze,
 But steadily peers on, into the awful blaze.

The eagle is a type of souls, who have grown strong
 Through earthly toil and strife ; they bore their burdens long.
 Sharp crosses bowed to earth their bodies here below,
 But they were made more pure by every biting blow.

When from the Central Sphere an angel bends to earth,
 There springs up through earth's soil, a heavenly flower to birth.
 Who can the Minstrel be, who sings songs so divine ?
 The waiting world enquires, listening to every line.

The music of the Spheres can penetrate the heart ;
 It breaks man's stubborn will, makes clean in every part
 His tendencies, desires, until at length he finds
 A peace beyond all price ; his soul with heaven he binds.

His every thought is pure ; his life is perfect rest
 From turmoil of the sense ; he is so fully blest,
 That though hedged in by want, by poverty and woe,
 He says he is in heaven ; for, wherever he doth go,
 He scatters heavenly seeds, emits a heavenly light,
 To guide to heavenly spheres, those who yet grope in night.

O glorious Sphere of Truth ! speak once again to man !
 The world is listening now : Thou to an ancient clan
 Didst secrets deep reveal, for Israel's prophets read
 The word of Truth from heaven ; it was their sacred bread.

And Jesus ate the bread of everlasting life,
 And told his followers :—Above all earthly strife,
 When he to heaven had gone, beyond their mortal sight,
 He, as their Comforter, their pathway would make bright ;
 His voice, in silent hours, their hearts should surely hear,
 And realize, through all, that God was ever near.

Upon the Ganges' bank, and where the Nile doth flow ;
 Where lotus flowers abound, where pure white lilies blow ;
 There, in the olden time, the voice of Truth was heard :
 Listen and look to-day,—behold the coming bird !

Gaze now into the sky ; heaven's gates are thrown ajar ;
 A dove, with olive branch, surmounted by a star,
 Approaches earth this hour, to bid contention cease,
 And usher in the age—the golden age of peace.
 Learn ye the lesson well : Peace and Goodwill to all,
 Alone the Truth can spell ; heed ye its sacred call !

Lecture 2.

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON IMMORTALITY.

TO WHAT EXTENT IS MAN A FREE AGENT?

A SPIRITUAL VIEW OF THE RESURRECTION.

YOU have proposed three great subjects for our consideration to-day, subjects so vast that ages might be consumed in considering them, and still they would remain fresh, unexhausted and inexhaustible.

When a spirit has arrived at that point in its history, when it begins to realize something like fully the truth of its own absolute individual immortality, it cannot understand how the thought of annihilation could ever enter a human brain, unless looking back across the long pathway of terrestrial experience and probationary discipline in spirit-life, it beholds how all those states which were once its own in the kingdoms of outer personality, have come to end; and how possible it is for a spirit to be temporarily so immersed in a particular state, which is in itself transitory, that even a dream of immortality is for the time being an unknown experience.

Having trod the perfect way, the way ordained for all to tread; having found the true Christ, the pearl of great price, the seventh and highest principle of existence within itself, the emancipated spirit ascends from earth and all its environs into heaven, which is a state of spiritual blessedness infinitely transcending the most glowing descriptions of spirit-life ever painted before the eyes of ravished spectators, by the most brilliant descriptive artist of the Orient. Heaven, the Christians have called this divine state of oneness with the Deity, which Orientals have called Nirvana.

Externalists who have utterly misunderstood the esoteric meaning of the Sanskrit allegories, have presumed to boast that only Christians have realized to anything like a true extent, the truth of human immortality; for, say they, Asiatics invariably desire the extinction of their selfhood after the decease of their mortal bodies. Orientals, equally

with Christians, desire rest from pain, labour, care and every emotion and fatigue, which renders life burdensome and makes existence for the time being appear a doubtful blessing. But rest and work are not antagonistic. Consciousness is as necessary to the enjoyment of repose as to the experience of toil or slumber. Dreamless sleep, which seems to have been passed in utter oblivion, can afford no joy; it is only blessed in retrospect and in prospect, because positive good is realized as its result, and negative good is associated with its reign.

To be or not to be? that is the question, says William Shakespeare, England's greatest poet and dramatic author. If a man die shall he live again? is the one great unanswered question of the poets and the sages; and Jesus is described as fulfilling a divine mission by bringing life and immortality to light. It is evident from the unrest which is everywhere prevalent, that fashionable Agnosticism does not satisfy the cravings of mankind. No prospect can be gloomier than that of man's existence, bounded on the one hand by physical birth, and on the other by complete annihilation of individual consciousness. We all instinctively desire that a time should come, when we can realize the good of our existence, and know beyond peradventure that we have not lived in vain.

Some lives are, on earth, at least measurably satisfactory; some are so bright, so happy, so useful, so successful, that here and there we meet with persons who are able and ready to exclaim: "If I do not live after death, I am contented to live now! I have no grudge against the Divine Power, or natural law, which has brought me into being and sustained me until now, even though before another hour is passed it sweeps me for ever out of individual existence." Such minds, however, though contented are not usually very profound, and rarely take an extended view of life. They are mere butterflies, for the most part, sunning themselves in the summer sunshine, and not thinking of the woeful lot of the multitudes of toilers who are struggling against adverse fate, and to whom existence is a curse instead of a boon, if there be nothing of man, as a conscious being, either before his birth or after his death.

We are speaking to-day, not so much to those who stand on the very threshold of mystical and spiritual research, and are prepared only for an initial lesson in the simple fact

of the continuity of man's existence beyond the grave, as to those who are prepared to delve deeper than the surface of existence, and probe, to some depth, into the mysterious realm of Cause, of which material nature is but an outermost effect. Our lecture of yesterday will have prepared those of y u who have heard it, to receive, at least with some knowledge of its import, the teaching concerning Immortality we desire (though of necessity in the briefest and most imperfect manner) to give to-day.

We have referred our auditors to the scientific attitude assumed by great men in England and elsewhere to-day, towards this greatest of all great questions, the Whither of mau; and though we are quite ready to admit that the Whither interests us even more than the Whence—as our past is necessarily irrevocable, and our future is to some extent ours to make or mar,—the question of the Whence is so involved in that of the Whither, that just as the scientist discusses evolution in order to make plain the basis of his calculations concerning progress from a material point of view, so the spiritual student, who desires to feel *terra firma* beneath his feet, when he forecasts the future of mankind finds it necessary to enquire into the *involution of spirit*, as the Darwinian finds himself compelled to fortify his position by tracing the progress of physical forms, upwards from the jelly-fish to man.

Only one of two possible hypotheses concerning existence can be tenable, and one of these is so ridiculous and at variance with common sense even, and logical reasoning upon cause and effect, that we venture to affirm Materialism, because of its irrationality, will soon cease to occupy the serious attention of really intelligent and gifted men.

Materialism has gained a hold upon the popular mind, by reason of the widespread opposition now being manifested to the puerilities of literalism concerning things spiritual. The character of Deity and the nature of the future life of man, together with the reasons assigned for the salvation of some and the condemnation of others, have been so detestable to progressive intellects, that a blank denial of all things spiritual has resulted from a caricature of most things spiritual.

Then there are persons, and these are neither few nor far between, who are so constituted mentally, that their invari-

able tendency is to look upon the dark or shadowy side of everything. Some of these persons are kind-hearted, well-disposed, thoughtful for others' welfare, and are doing all they can to alleviate the distress in the world they feel that nothing can cure. Mental depression results often from loneliness, reverses of fortune, disappointments, injustice received from others, and a variety of other allied causes; and as the sufferer, weary by reason of heavy burdens, intensely longs to throw the weight aside which bows him to the earth, and has no glimmering consciousness even of the coming better days which may be yet afar off, he desires to realize nothing, to lose all conception of being rather than continue to live in such unhappy states.

In countries where the heat is intensely trying and enervating, and where the masses have been for centuries upon centuries held down beneath the yoke of grinding bondage, where the constitutions of many have been weak and their health poor,—sleep, rest, inactivity, profound slumber, oblivion, have all sounded like magic words symboling the highest bliss which poor, jaded, decrepit beings could imagine; the future being often painted to them in that colouring in which they loved most to contemplate it,—the quiet, restful, neutral shade of passivity,—the tradition has gained strength, that to be no more and know no more, is to enter upon an inheritance of unending repose. But it is needless to consume time or employ words in refuting a self-evident fallacy. Existence, to be blessed, must be realized. The attainment of rest does not imply a cessation of consciousness, but quite the reverse; it involves stimulated powers which enable their possessor to appreciate the much-desired blessing.

Rest is a state of conscious enjoyment. To feel rested, to enjoy the luxury of repose, necessitates capacities for enjoyment, which only realistic consciousness can possibly supply; and that this dream of rest will at some period in every spirit's history be realized, is a truth we can never insist upon too frequently, or with too much earnestness. The spiritual philosophy now being inculcated as a substitute for the dogmas of old-time theologians is often objected to, on the ground that it robs the future world of the charming aspect of a world of rest, in which it has been presented to the weary children of earth by the evangelists. This objection

is utterly futile, though we frankly admit divine justice does not endorse any claim which is made to unearned increments.

To the Christian, Gospel teaching ought to be more satisfactory, and the words of Jesus more conclusive than the frothy harangues of schoolmen, who have raised so much dust while discussing the words of Jesus and assuming to vindicate his truth and honour, that the fair face of the Master has been hidden from the gaze of those who would fain inspect his features and hear his words, but cannot get near enough to him to examine him or understand his sayings, because of the press of human opinions and dogmas which obscure the face and stifle the voice of the divine teacher. When little minds endeavour to compass and interpret great ones, they always narrow the greatness of a hero until he becomes a pigmy like unto themselves.

All controversy on the personality aside, the sayings of him, who by Christians is called the Christ, are in themselves so sublime and comprehensive, so satisfying to the deepest needs of human nature that we can well believe them to be the gathered flowers of every garden, the amassed treasure of every mine. Jews are wont to say Jesus was not even a great prophet, because his sayings are to be found scattered all over the Talmud, and therefore were on record before his time, while the *Pater noster* is well known to be Hillel's prayer; and of Hillel it is recorded, that a man once came to him and said: "Can you give me the essentials of Judaism, in the short time that I can stand on one foot?" Hillel quoted from the old Law the two great Commandments, on which Jesus said all the Law and Prophets hang. Such episodes, mentioned in Jewish history, tend to weaken the faith of many in the personality of Jesus. They have no such necessary tendency, but even should they succeed in overthrowing the person, they can never overturn the truth or detract in one particular from the excellence of the words variously ascribed by various schools of thinkers to various men, but regarded by all alike as pearls of such great price, that for the sake of them all other literature is well forgotten.

There is, and there ever has been, but one true church on earth, one holy catholic religion. The mistake men have made is that they have centred it in the city men call Rome, which is on the earth in Italy. The apostle, who said to the

regenerated, "Our citizenship is in heaven," correctly defined the location of the true apostolic see.

But where is Heaven? Heaven is without and within. Its Kingdom is a kingdom which acknowledges no earthly sovereign or pontiff. It is not lighted by the sun of earthly splendour and majesty. It owes no lustre to the moon, which, shining with reflected light and subject to incessant waxing and waning, is a befitting symbol of the wisdom which flashes upon the outer mind, and though divine in its origin, is earthly in its portrayal. It is beautifully and graphically described again and again in the book of Revelation. In the twelfth chapter it is personified as a woman, who typifies peculiarly the triumphs of the individual soul; and in the concluding chapter of the Apocalypse, it is pictured as the New Jerusalem, which is a great city capable of accommodating a population so numerous, that no mortal can compute its extent. And yet that city, in its descent to earth, has limitations, and, according to the measure of a human angel, it has a defined length and height and breadth; but its dimensions are so equally proportioned, that we are soon impelled to forget the resplendent allegory, and turn our faces to the outwrought idea of equity, which such measurements suggest.

Divine justice, impartiality, utter lack of favouritism and caprice,—this is what the Revelator so eloquently and majestically portrays, when he declares concerning the Celestial City: "The length and the height and the breadth of it are equal." None can walk therein who are in any way defiled. There cannot enter into it any who have not washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb, slain before the foundation of the world. Glowing, majestic imagery! highly figurative, extremely Oriental language, but every similitude so rife and eloquent, so luminous and transparent, that the bewildering mazes of theological controversy are forgotten, when one stands face to face with a majestic picture, which is its own interpretation.

A great picture does not need the assistance a poor one derives from a descriptive catalogue. The work of a great artist tells its own tale: only a meagre effort needs an interpreter. But the greater the work the longer time it takes the spectator to arrive at the fulness of its meaning; and indeed we doubt very much whether the world's greatest

artists have ever been read. The Christ and the Madonna are still enigmas; they are still metaphors; they are yet books which have only been skimmed; they will bear reading a million times, and each time you attempt to understand them, they will reveal to you new beauties. Only small minds and small subjects are capable of exhaustion. A great theme and a great mind are as exhaustless as the ocean of eternity.

The prevailing vice of the present day, in the Western world, is hurry. Haste and noise are the besetting demons of present civilization. Everything has to be done in so short a time, that things are rarely done well, and often have to be undone and remade because of their unsubstantiality. The East and the West differ absolutely in this particular. The Oriental creeps like the tortoise, while the Occidental mind rushes and races like the hare. Sometimes, however, the old fable, doubtless familiar to you all in your childhood, turns out to be true. The moral, as you know is, that the slow, persevering, plodding turtle wins the prize, while the hare, exhausted with unnecessary exertion, is fast asleep and making no headway at all. The East is like contemplative Mary, the West, like bustling, anxious Martha. The sisters need to borrow from each other. Mary is apt to be too remiss in attending to household duties, and Martha is apt to neglect the culture of the mind by the assiduity with which she transacts external business.

The Bible is far more liable to misinterpretation in Europe and America than in Asia, because it is an Asiatic book, and the similitudes in which it abounds are mostly Oriental metaphors. A century from now, if Oriental research continues as it has been continuing and advancing during the past five years, the Hebrew and Greek MSS. of the Jews and Christians will be studied with the Sanskrit literature of the Hindoos, and with the aid of the Vedantic and Hermetic philosophies, many of the dark sayings in Holy Writ will be rendered plain.

The common assumption that we are all to go direct to an endless heaven or an endless hell, when we quit the material frame, has always been considerably modified in the Roman Church by the doctrine of purgatory. This the Reformers of the sixteenth century expunged from their Articles of Faith, because of the abuses which had gathered

round it. These accretions were however mere fungi, and should have been dealt with as parasites, and as such removed for the sake of preserving the tree whose destruction they threatened to accomplish. Instead of simply attacking the noxious appurtenances of the doctrine, the Reformers, bold, zealous, iconoclastic enthusiasts that they were, levelled the tree to the ground, but left beneath it the awful precipice of endless torment, which it had done much to modify though not to remove or even effectually conceal.

Modern Spiritualism has been largely instrumental in leading to the closing of the theological hell and the opening of the modern place of probation after death, called in Hebrew *Sheol*; but those who think they have got rid of the everlasting fire will find themselves mistaken, for the fire of Divine Justice is an eternal flame. The fire is quenchless, it can never go out; but its action is painful only so long as the spirit is not in harmony with it. The fire that burns from without is one with the fire within. The fire is Divine: it is an all-wise, an all-just, an all-merciful flame; and the fire of Divine Life within the soul of man is the Spirit of God in man, which is of identical nature with this ever-burning fire. When the flame has purified every metal and transmuted every substance in the human constitution into gold, then the crucible has done its work, the fire is no longer felt as a tormenting blaze but as a delightful influx of Divine Love and Wisdom, filling the innermost of man with a perpetual sense of the divine indwelling.

The Holy Spirit, who in due time will be the Comforter, is at first the Awakener; and while the rousing of the slumbering spirit is going on, the Holy Spirit is a disturber of the peace, a destructive sword which slays all conditions opposed to the perfect life. Think not, says Jesus, that I came to bring peace on the earth: I came not to bring peace but a sword; not unity at first but rather division and afterwards unity. In these words, paradoxes to most minds, the voice of Truth, of Light, is ever heard; and thank God there can be no rest, no satisfaction, no permanent happiness until moral or spiritual perfection is attained, and the perfect way is trod.

"The Perfect Way, or the Finding of Christ" is the title of a very valuable book now in the libraries. This work

written from the standpoint of mysticism, is based upon the command: Be ye perfect! a command so overwhelmingly astounding that we may, when we first read it, be pardoned for thinking it an impossible commandment; but as we look more closely at it, and gaze more deeply into its celestial lineaments, we find it is not an impossible command at all, as it does not by any means imply that we are to do more than fully unfold the nature we have within us. We are told that our Father is perfect, and that is the reason assigned for our own perfection. Ancestral reasons, hereditary proclivities, may therefore be brought forward as explanations of this august command. It is admitted on all hands that children take after their parents.

While a stream cannot rise higher than its source, it may rise as high as its source. A seed cannot produce a flower whose fruition transcends the dormant capacities of the seed, but every latent power may by careful and persistent culture be at length brought out. So man, who according to Genesis is not the Devil's child but the offspring of Deity, may be expected to exhibit at length every divine characteristic. We have God within us. We are the temples of the Almighty. The spirit of the Eternal tabernacles in us. We are the moving temples in which the Holy Spirit abides. We are holy arks, consecrated receptacles of eternal life, and as such we can trace our origin far behind the fall to a period when sin was unknown, and when there was no devil, for devils are but fallen angels; and this statement is corroborated by all scriptural and poetic teaching which the Church has ever received.

The descent of Spirit into matter is the one great truth which the world has sought both to reveal and hide by means of an elaborate and intricate system of symbols. These symbols however have not always been the vague, incomprehensible mysteries they are to the majority of Europeans and Americans at present. They were originally intended to portray actual spiritual facts, by means of an accurate and consistent sign-language, this language being older and more expressive than all forms of written speech. But not only have these symbols been employed to represent interior truths, they have also assumed the form of history, as the states they typify have from time to time been ultimated in effects on the surface of the globe.

Who is Satan? Who is Michael? What is "war in heaven?" Who is "the woman clothed with the sun?" Who or what is "the great dragon?" which pursues her and threatens to devour the child she has conceived, who, when born, is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. These, and multitudes of similar questions, crop up daily and engross the attention of mankind by fixing thought upon the graphic and expressive images which make the Apocalypse a veiled allegory rather than a revelation to the majority of readers.

It is very easy to answer: It is all mythical; but then arises the question: How did myths originate? You may reply: In the ages of barbarism gross superstitions accumulated, and a myth is the outgrowth of superstition, ignorance and folly. But what is superstition? It is in every age a superstructure built of something and upon some foundation, and while hay, wood, stubble and other refuse are often piled upon the foundation, other foundation *can* no man lay than the one which has been laid for ages immemorial, essential truth, actual fact.

All myths are allegories setting forth universal truths, and representing also historical occurrences. Take an example from Grecian mythology. Prometheus is undoubtedly Pythagoras; but the fire Prometheus stole from heaven, and by means of which he accomplished such surpassing wonders, was not the fire of spiritual knowledge and intellectual greatness which illumined the world through the aperture of the Sage of Samos only, it was the universal light which enlighteneth every man, but through a particular man in an especial sense did that light shine in Greece at a special period in Grecian history. The lesser and more outward origin and interpretation of the myth is literal, local, historical; the esoteric and higher origin and meaning is purely spiritual and quite universal. So with all the mysterious personages to which we are introduced in the vision seen by John on the Isle of Patmos. There was such an island as Patmos; there was such a man as John; but Patmos means *revelation*, and being alone on an island means being in a state of retirement, of contemplation, of profound meditation upon interior truths; while being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day means being uplifted as on to a mountain-top from which broader views of surrounding landscapes may be taken, and where clearer air may be breathed and higher light perceived.

It is altogether impossible to separate the outward from the inward, as the inward is cause and the outward is effect. Cause produces effect, and effect is the result of cause. In our instructions on Healing, we emphasize most particularly the importance of spiritual conditions and mental states. And although we are metaphysicians we do not deny truths which are susceptible of demonstration on the material plane. At the same time we attribute them to spiritual origin primarily. The mind regulates the body, the body gives expression on earth to the mind. All interior states which have universal bearing, can be ultimated in the experiences of individual lives. Thus the spiritual, the mythical and the personal are three senses in which facts may be revealed and understood.

Michael, as an archangel, may have an actual existence as a spiritual prince, and may take an active part in the control of the earth, and yet Michael may be the representative of a state, and that one of great spiritual supremacy. Viewed esoterically, Michael is the will acting as the instrument of the spirit subduing sense. Medically, Michael is strong, healthy vitality driving disease out of the system. Such feats are accomplished through the agency of minds in and out of earthly bodies, who have reached a status which enables them to employ celestial powers which lie latent in every soul however conditioned at present. The rebel angels with whom Michael fights may be literally spirits of darkness, who, actuated by pride and perverted ambition, are endeavouring to usurp positions which of right belong only to those who will govern wisely and kindly; but esoterically these rebel angels are in our own breasts. They must be cast down, chained, subdued. They are lower impulses, good in themselves but ordained to be servants. They make good servants but bad rulers, as when they occupy the ruler's seat they are in their wrong place, and everything in its wrong place is evil; evil being synonymous with discord, good being the natural and normal condition of all things, but nothing is evidently and relatively good unless harmoniously related to all things else.

Scientists and Philosophers all agree that man should endeavour to harmonize himself with his environment. Every wise teacher of ethics, the world over, declares that we must so employ our varied powers that our lives become like

some celestial choir or orchestra, in which numberless voices or instruments may be all singing or playing together, every one distinct in itself, and yet unitedly sending forth a mighty wave of perfectly harmonious sound. The perfect life is the completely harmonious life; the perfect way is the way of harmony, and if ever there has stood upon the earth one who was pre-eminently discordant, and one who produced active discords upon the instrument of his being, there was the personification of the devil, dragon or old serpent. Wherever one has appeared in whom harmony reigned triumphant in a fuller degree than in any of his predecessors or contemporaries, there was the personal manifestation of the Son of God, Emanu-El, God made manifest through a medium of flesh.

It is recorded in Genesis that everything was pronounced at the outset of its career "very good." God is the infinite involver, and Nature is the evolver of what the Eternal Spirit has involved. Life is the unrolling of a scroll which contains all truth, but the scroll must be unfolded and spread out before its contents can be divulged. Life in all its stages up to the celestial is experimental, and then the experimental element ceases, as that becomes a matter of successful demonstration which has hitherto been a matter of speculation and research.

The life of Buddha or of Christ, on the external plane, is both historically and prophetically true, both actual or literal and ideal. The ideal or future Christ is a larger manifestation of divine truth through the mediumship of mortal life than any historical revelation can be; as the future Eden, when all the world shall become a paradise, is a far grander conception than the remembered Eden in which there were only two persons. Life is ever advancing towards its ultimate perfection on earth, but as it does so it every once in a while, for the encouragement of all faithful toilers, exhibits itself in a more advanced degree of attainment than ordinary.

The historic Christ is merely he, she or they, who in a bygone period of the world's history, has or have attained to such a conquest over the senses, that man is permitted to see what advances it is possible for him to make by persevering efforts to develop his spiritual nature. You must all admit that every life is not equally great. Not every sculptor is a Phidias, not every painter is a Raphael, not every musi-

cal composer a Mendelssohn ; so not every moral teacher or spiritual exemplar has been a Jesus. Let us not lower our standard of what humanity has been in exceptional instances, and of what it may eventually become in all ; rather let us endeavour to raise it, and so to raise it as to universalize instead of localize the manifestations of the Divine Spirit through forms of clay.

Human free-agency is an extremely difficult problem to solve, mainly by reason of the immense difference in the extent of freedom enjoyed by, or possible to, different people. For all practical purposes it is enough for our ethical culture, that we take the ground that freedom begins and ends with knowledge and opportunity. But knowledge and opportunity are not fixed quantities or stationary qualities : they are subject to increase and progression. Thus an act becomes criminal at one time which was innocent at another. It may be satisfactory to some minds to fall back on to fatalism, and believe simply in absolute fore-ordination ; this cold, icy belief may inspire to stoicism or resignation to the inevitable, because there is no good in struggling against fate ; but it requires a far different view of life to develop great characters, every great character having realized the effectiveness of individual effort, and by means of this realization, even though abstractly and ultimately a fatalist, he has acted practically upon the basis of the acknowledged efficacy of human effort.

Mohammedanism is a gigantic system of fatalism ; so is Calvinism, and both these systems have for this reason decided and most conspicuous elements of weakness and strength, contending the one against the other. A belief that God is on our side, and that we are certain of success, because the eternal decrees have determined that certain things should be brought about, and these same decrees have compelled us to act as instruments through whose agency they shall be accomplished, is a belief that endows the believer with indomitable courage, and well-nigh ensures success, because it creates the state of mind which is always most conducive to victory. But should any one believe in the relentless decrees of fate, and feel that the eternal tide was against him—that the Infinite Will was opposed to his prosperity,—we can readily perceive how appallingly depressing such a conviction would be, and we see vivid illustrations

of both these cases before our eyes daily. History and daily observation demonstrate the mingled good and evil which inhere in and result from this majestic but awful and overwhelming doctrine.

Joan of Arc was only a simple village maiden, but she so electrified the armies of France, that when she headed the troops all the regiments felt themselves invincible. They believed God was on their side, therefore they fought desperately and effectively, and struck terror into the ranks of their opponents. The signal victories attending the Maid of Orleans were due to faith, and faith was the result of psychological influence. When the girl who had been so signally victorious, acted at a later day without the conviction that she was led by celestial voices, her capture was imminent, and her defeat as ignominious as her previous victories had been glorious.

But here a question arises: How could one unaided girl psychologize a whole army? In two ways: First, one superior mind, one dominant will, can influence any number of weaker wills, and spread the contagion of confidence far and wide. One general, like Washington, Nelson, or Gordon, can control a legion of soldiers. As faith and unbelief are alike contagious, feelings inspired by one dominant mind spread like infection from man to man, as an epidemic may break out in one person only, and soon infect a district. Secondly, a single person, possessed of such remarkable gifts, may be only the point of contact between an earthly district and company, and spiritual hosts innumerable and invincible. This one weak mortal, utterly insignificant when judged by physical standards and compared with the united bodily strength of the mass he has to lead and to control, is like an open window through which the light and wind adequate to illumine and propel a mighty host can enter. If from any cause that single aperture is closed, everything goes wrong because the propelling power is at once cut off.

What can one poor little pane of glass have to do with the sun and the air? So far as a room is concerned, everything. You are in light when it is exposed, in darkness when it is curtained; you are breathing the breath of life when it is open, suffocating with foul gasses when it is shut. If one little material object can be so important an item in architecture, that persons may physically owe health or

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disease—even life or death—to its mediumistic agency, who need deny the marvellous effect a single human being may exert upon his kind, when an instrument in the hands of heaven? A whole generation may be in a building in which there is but one window, or if there are many only one open. So at a given time and in a given place, one person may be engaged in so divine and important a work, that it is literally to that one's influence that all success is due, while spiritually the praise belongs to light and breath, universal and eternal.

Granting the fact of divine sovereignty—and we do not and cannot deny it,—and attributing everything to a self-existent source which is possessed of infinite consciousness and volition, we grant the existence of an infinite circle outside of which nothing can occur or exist. But this infinite circle may embrace any number of finite circles, and each smaller circle is as much a circle, though with limited dimensions, as the infinite circle is a circle with infinite dimensions; and while an Infinite WILL ordains and governs all things, the ordinations of that Will are not necessarily what certain schools of thinkers imagine them to be. Thus, if limited free-agency be a factor in human existence, that very freedom which man enjoys, or by reason of which he suffers, is the result of the action of the Infinite Will. We do not regard man as a mere automaton, a piece of passive mechanism, arbitrarily led hither and thither with no volition of his own. In the earliest stages of human existence on any planet, man is very nearly in that condition, and is like a barometer, thermometer and æolian harp, to a very large extent; but as man unfolds his inner nature, he rises superior to his environment, and becomes in measure the arbiter of his own fate.

The question of the freedom of the human will is by no means, after careful investigation, so difficult a one to deal with as at first sight it appears. In the most external circumstances of daily life on earth, everybody is at once controlled by circumstances and a controller of circumstances; in some measure their creator, and measurably their creature. No two persons, perhaps, have exactly the same amount of control over their respective surroundings. Our circumstances are our surroundings, the things which stand round about us. Some of these are too strong for us, we are too strong for some of them. If a chair or table stands in your

way you can easily remove it, while you cannot push a granite rock or even a marble pillar aside, without laborious and long continued efforts.

On the most external plane of being, freedom and victory are secured by means of superior physical strength alone, therefore the most degraded and animal tribes of men have worshipped all manner of ferocious beasts and reptiles, for the simple reason that being on a purely material plane of thought and action, they recognised in these creatures the power they at once coveted, admired and dreaded. These animals were their physical superiors, but in an age of higher culture, when reason asserted itself, worship took a higher form. Man no longer adored the beasts, when he found a way to subdue, and even to destroy them. As he became intellectually developed, his superior mentality, his greater ingenuity, enabled him to overcome the lower creatures, even to exterminate them, but still he was not thoroughly their master. But at length, when spiritual powers, when sovereign will began to be made manifest, then creatures below man became his humble servants; docile and affectionate, they obeyed the rule they loved.

Unfortunately for the perfect freedom and safety of mankind, cruelty is still often the most conspicuous factor in the means employed for subduing the lower creation. But cruelty is always a failure. Fighting the devil with his own weapons is always a mistake, there being no sound philosophy opposed to the Gospel teaching: "Overcome evil with good"; a maxim so self-evidently and demonstrably true, that it compares for lucidity with—Extinguish fire with water. On the material plane man is an inferior creature in strength to many of the animals who share this planet with him; he therefore is not free to overcome the tiger and the lion with their weapons of defence, their teeth and claws being far more effective than any bodily weapons with which he is furnished. Even if he slay them with sword, spear or gunpowder, it is his genius, a product of his mind, which permits him to construct weapons no animal can imitate. But when the weapons shall be laid aside, and the lion and the lamb lie down together, submitting gracefully to the guidance of a little child, man will have proved himself of origin divine, a relative of divinities, an heir to immortal dominion.

The human will and the Divine Will are only opposed to each other in cases where the body and spirit have not gained their proper relative positions. The prayer: 'Thy will not mine be done!' is the prayer of one whose interior life is beginning to assert its full supremacy over matter, but finds as yet the lower nature rebellious and struggling for the mastery. I and my Father are one, is the triumphant exclamation of one who has found perfect peace and reconciliation, who has experienced the blessing of at-one-ment, complete harmonization of individual desires with a revealed knowledge of eternal purposes. To be forever desirous of having a free or independent will, is to be perpetually conscious of a struggle; and no one desires to live eternally a life of conflict. There is, however, all the difference that can be imagined between voluntary and compulsory surrender. Voluntary surrender is accompanied by perfect peace, while the sense of having to submit, and not wishing to do so, goads a fiery spirit to rebellious desperation.

No better terms can be applied to Deity than those of Parent, Father, Mother; and no better conception of Deity is comprehensible than that of an infinitely wise and loving Parent, who acts from motives of perfect justice and pure benevolence. When a child is not conscious of the rectitude of his parent's conduct or the wisdom of his commands he may be pardoned for disputing them; and no wise father or mother will exact blind obedience, such obedience tending not to develop the child's character, but rather to fetter and repress it. But if the parent is right, after all there will come a time when the child will wish to do as the parent wills, because he sees that way to be the only perfectly wise and right one. So is it in the deepest sense with those who are so pure in heart, so advanced spiritually, so developed morally, that they have found God. They then experience a blessed sense of God at all times working in them. The Divine Presence not only rests upon them but illumines them within; the light shines so clearly in their own consciousness, that they are perfectly reconciled to the Divine Will, and have no longer a will in opposition. When that blessed state arrives in the experience of any individual on earth, the petition is answered: 'Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.' Freedom does not mean rebellion, does not mean lawlessness; it means obedience full and free, not

blind submission, but loving yielding to a will that the spirit feels and knows can never make mistakes and never be unkind.

When that state is fully reached, good-bye to earthly embodiments as you now understand them. A spirit having reached that glorious height would have no further need of earth experience. The lessons taught by pain would have been all learned, and the soul emancipated from every bond of sense would find matter more pliant in his hands than the softest clay in the hands of the most skilful potter.

If you have carefully followed out the argument in our discourse to-day, and also in that of yesterday, you will have reached in your own minds a solution of the problem of the resurrection, at once adequate to meet and answer every question that can be put as to the disposition of the body of Jesus or of any other illustrious personage, whose disappearance may have been due to spiritual control exerted supremely over material substance. The modern phenomenon called Materialization is connected with the distant past and many Oriental lands, and is beginning to open the eyes of the investigating public to the true miracles of yore. Forms are mysteriously built up, apparently out of air, and are again reduced to atmosphere, after having remained for a time thoroughly solid and capable of manifesting intelligence, breathed through them by invisible mind, which has operated in their production. The air always contains every element common to the human body, and if atmosphere were fully under man's control, he could produce at will, whenever and wherever he chooses, a multiplication or materialization of material food, or any other compound he might desire to form.

Jesus is represented as having completely vanquished sense. As the ideal or pattern man, the perfect exemplar, he exhibits in his appearances after his crucifixion the abilities of mind to utterly subdue matter. He has finished his material course, his work in an earthly embodiment is over, and so he can come and go as he pleases, extemporizing a material form when he wishes, and then as suddenly causing it to vanish away. The proofs brought by Thomas Paine, and thousands since his time, to show that the resurrection of Jesus was not the resuscitation of his literal, physical body, are quite sound, and could be enlarged upon

easily, so as to make them quite unanswerable; but such men as Paine, though doing a useful work in rooting up errors, are not able to explain what the resurrection was, though they can tell us quite satisfactorily what it was not.

No one who carefully reads the Gospel can suppose that the Evangelists wished to make readers believe that the identical flesh and blood which was crucified arose as a proof of the immortality of Jesus, for had they wished to leave such an impression on the mind, they would surely have suppressed the fact of the holy women and the disciples not recognising Jesus on the Sunday morning following the Friday afternoon when he expired. No friends could forget his material appearance in so very short a time. This circumstance overthrows the occultists' explanation, that Jesus was simply an adept and member of a mystic brotherhood of Nazarites or Essenes, who possessed the means of revivifying the body of a buried member of their order who was not really dead. This explanation covers the ground of the raising of Lazarus and all similar narratives pretty well, but the resurrection of Jesus is unique. He raised himself, others were raised by others; and this distinction we wish you carefully to note in the phenomena which followed. In all other instances the bodies raised were at once identified; in the case of Jesus identification was only by means of spiritual perception, until a full-form materialization was vouchsafed to the doubting Thomas. In the case of the widow's son raised by Elijah, in the case of several whom Jesus raised, there is no mention of the conditions of their being, after their delivery from the embrace of death, being changed. We are not led to infer that they were henceforward deathless beings; we hear nothing of their translation or ascension. These may have been buried in trances, and revived by the will and magnetism of him who restored them to the arms of their sorrowing kindred. But Jesus as a type of the triumphant spirit, both a real and an ideal character, demonstrates in his resurrection the final victory of will over matter, of spirit over death.

When the resurrection trump shall truly sound, then will the soul in man be the trumpeter. It will summon every slumbering faculty of mind, and marshal the hosts of its subjects beneath its sovereign sway. Then will inert matter respond instantly to the breath of life, and from such

unpromising material as the scattered dust of earth will glorious forms, making manifest the immortal spirit, arise. The spirit will then, if it desires to be embodied on any earth, clothe itself with matter, and then disrobe itself instantly when its mission is fulfilled. Death will then be swallowed up in victory; the earth will no longer be a charnel house, neither the graveyard nor the crematory will be required, but the ultimate race of men inhabiting the perfected globe will pass out of their bodies when their earthly work is done, causing the forms they vacate to vanish into air.

Not by a sudden step can such wonders be evolved, but the perfect way is sure, and though ages be consumed in traversing the road, at length it lands all on the celestial hills, whence they can look back and behold every link in the chain of their existence, and say of the Supreme Power which called them into being: "He doeth all things well!"

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

ASKED AFTER SECOND LECTURE.

Question.—Is it difficult for persons to put themselves in communion with spirits, and how shall we know if we are mediums?

Answer.—Spiritualism and Mediumship are often greatly misapprehended, and the difficulties besetting the investigator exaggerated by a prevalent failure on the part of many persons to realize what and where the Spirit-world really is, and what constitutes mediumship. In most cases mediums are born such; they are from earliest childhood extremely sensitive to the approach of influences, which most people feel to some extent but are unable to analyse or explain, for all are mediums in some degree, but those who stand out from among their fellows as exceptional mediums are always few and rare, as is the case with exceptionally-endowed persons in all departments of Science, Literature and Art. The Spirit-world is really a part of the earth, at least some portion of it is within this planet's atmosphere, though in its entirety it fills immeasurable immensity. Spiritual influences are ever around mankind, and act upon sensitive organisms much as the winds play upon *Æolian* harps, or as the changes

in temperature cause the quicksilver to rise and fall in thermometers and barometers. Mediums are not evocators, they have not spirits under their control, but when spirits first appear to them, they are as astonished as any one of their companions at finding themselves possessed of such, to them, marvellous powers. Spirits are often more anxious to communicate with their friends than those on earth are to hear from them, and this is evidenced by the singular spontaneity which is a salient characteristic of many of the most convincing phenomena, not only since 1848, but from the earliest time of which history furnishes any record.

In the case of the present instrument, at the tender age of five years he was in frequent communion with his mother, who passed to Spirit-life during her child's infancy; but, being totally unacquainted with spiritual things, he supposed she was yet in the flesh, and obtained access to his chamber in some remarkable way. So vivid was his impression that she had not died, that he would utterly refuse to believe in the story of her death and burial, and persisted in declaring she was yet on earth and often paid him visits. His experience has been in this matter similar to that of many who, a little later in life, have been called out to fill a conspicuous position under spirit guidance. This very spontaneity of development is one of the most satisfying proofs of the reality of spirit-control. At the same time, sittings for development are not altogether useless, as kindred minds uniting in a desire to hear tidings from the Spirit-realm will generate a force which spirits can manipulate, as though it were an electric wire or submarine cable across which they transmit their thoughts, and by means of which they render their presence palpably felt by some who are not intuitive enough to dispense with all outward aids. The most intuitive among mankind are quite superior to the need of circles and all phases of external phenomena, but in proportion to the population of the globe, the number of highly-gifted natural seers is very small, and even this natural seership is assisted by a quiet, contemplative life, simple food, regular habits, and constant exposure to the natural elements in a healthy climate.

For all practical purposes it may be well to observe a few simple rules for forming and conducting Spirit-circles. Let no persons sit together who do not respect and esteem one another, for mental discord produces a jar, and generates an

influence unfavourable to the best results. Let the séance be held in an appointed place, at regular intervals, with always the same persons, and whatever the accessories may be, it is extremely unlikely that no results will follow patient sitting, as mediumistic people are to be met with everywhere.

Ques.—Describe the first effects of a spirit leaving the body.

Ans.—As the experiences of all persons on earth are not uniform, and as the condition of the spirit after leaving the body is morally and intellectually precisely what it was immediately before, no great or sudden change is experienced except in manner of life and surroundings, and these again are regulated by the interior state of the spirit who is thus introduced to them. We may, for convenience sake, divide humanity into a few representative sections, so as in few words to give you a sort of general idea of the commencement of a spirit's career in the world beyond the grave :—First, we will speak of those who are somewhat spiritually developed, and have some perception of the Spirit-world and the nature of its enjoyments. Many such have been contemplating the hour of their departure from the physical frame with positive pleasure, and have felt so certain that they were about to be reunited with their loved ones gone before, that their thoughts and affections had for a long time been chiefly centred on spiritual things. These experience only a delightful sense of relief when the encumbering body is removed. The Spirit-world to them is home, and they meet their spiritual kindred there, and find every condition more favourable than on earth for the carrying out of their every desire. There are, again, those who though not altogether earth-bound, have formed very erroneous desires concerning Spirit-life. To them the experiences of death are of course surprising, and though they soon become more reconciled to their situation, at first the Spirit-world seems a disappointment, as it does not fulfil their dream of absolute and unmerited happiness. Then there are many who are so frivolous, that their thoughts and desires never ascended while on earth to anything higher than the pomps and vanities of external life. These are deprived of the sources of the sordid enjoyment they prized so foolishly on earth, and being undeveloped in all their spiritual faculties, they are like strangers in a strange land, and in many instances where they have lived only for self-

gratification, they are like blind and deaf visitors to some beautiful park, garden, gallery, or opera : they see and hear nothing of whatever is going on around them, and therefore can derive no satisfaction from their new-found existence. But as the case of no spirit is hopeless, these at length receive light, through acting, under the higher ones, as messengers to earth ; and when they begin to take a delight in doing good to others, their own condition is at once improved, as their powers of discernment immediately begin to unfold.

Ques.—Does the individuality of the soul always continue?

Ans.—From all we know of the progress of spirits, we have, to say the least, every possible reason to infer that it does, and not the slightest shred of evidence to the contrary ; therefore, leaving philosophy aside, we see no ground whatever for entertaining the idea that at length many shall be merged into one, though there may have been many expressions of the same spirit in the way of different embodiments, the memory of which may for a time be clouded over, but will at length become so perfect that the soul will be able to see behind it and before it with perfect ease, to the end of perfectly establishing its knowledge of its immortality as a distinct identity.

Ques.—Please explain dreams ?

Ans.—In periods of perfect rest, of sound, unbroken slumber, the spirit is temporarily released from the physical body, and lives in its spiritual body in the Spiritual World. This dream-life is a life of true reality, the spirit being never unconsciousness ; for did consciousness cease when the body was not being employed as a medium for the spirit, there could be no consciousness except through a physical organism, which, were it so, would of necessity overthrow all the teachings of Spiritualism, and establish either Materialism, which asserts that doctrine in its strictest sense, or Christadelphianism, which teaches that the spirit is dormant until the resurrection of the flesh at the last great day, a dogma quite irreconcilable with all spiritual revelations. Your spirit-friends frequently enjoy your company, and you enjoy theirs, during the night ; and when you wake in the morning with your brain refreshed and your mind stored with new ideas, as is sometimes the case, as well as with your body recuperated through a cessation, for a time, of all voluntary

movements, you are reaping the benefit of a night's intercourse with wiser beings than yourself. When you wake with a vivid recollection of your night's experience, you feel convinced that angels visit mortals, in dreams and visions of the night, now as well as in olden times; but when your dreams are troubled and confused, and you are suffering from mental or physical ailments, or both, you have been really nowhere, and seen nothing except by fits and starts. When half-asleep, you observe something that is going on around you on the outer plane of being, and also something of the Spirit-realm, and then the image of everything is so confused that you see things out of their true proportions. Unpleasant dreams and nightmares are caused by disease, anxiety, bad temper, impure air, and many other inharmonious states of body, mind and atmosphere. In order to get the greatest possible good out of a sleep, it is not necessary to have a long night's rest, but a sound sleep of a single hour's duration will do more both for mind and body than eight, ten, or even twelve hours of fitful dozing; as in sound sleep the spirit goes out of the body only maintaining a connection with it by means of a vital cord, which if snapped would cause dissolution to ensue; while in partial slumber, neither mind nor body enjoy perfect rest. Many scientific men who have made the study of dreams a speciality, have declared that frequently a dream which appears to have occupied a very long time, has really only occupied a few seconds. In such cases either a vision has been seen, or in the act of returning into the body the spirit has been able to photograph upon the brain the scenes it has visited during its nocturnal ramblings.

Ques.—Do you believe in the efficacy of prayer?

Ans.—We are bound to believe in the efficacy of an agency to which we can clearly trace many of the greatest blessings mankind have ever received. Cures are constantly performed by prayer, and the cases are in many instances so thoroughly well authenticated, that it would be sheer folly to deny the array of facts which are now brought forward to silence opposition. At the same time, there are many views of prayer with which we do not sympathize, and we certainly regard all mere formal prayers as useless. True prayer is earnest desire, fervent will; and will in operation is an immensely potent force, and is also highly contagious. One

person's enthusiasm can evoke a responsive flame in another's breast. Thus public prayer, while it cannot alter Deity nor change the laws of being, can put an audience or congregation into a new and better frame of mind; and by changing changeable human beings, it may alter their relations to the blessings which are ready to the hands of all, but are not received until the hand is outstretched to receive them. Prayer is mental effort, and relates the suppliant to spheres which are composed of spirits manifesting the attributes which he imagines to be those of the particular divinity whom he calls by name. When prayer is offered to the Eternal only, the petitioner can have no likeness before his mind, as no form can adequately portray the Infinite. Prayer to the Infinite is the highest and best of all, but when we pray we must be watchful over our motives, as our thoughts attract or repel spiritual beings. No prayer for the good of another can ever be offered in vain, for should it fail to accomplish the effect desired, it would produce a spiritual result far more important than any earthly blessing. The best result of prayer is, that it helps those in sorrow to realize the nearness of unseen sympathizers and helpers; it helps the erring to feel, that not only can no act of wrong be committed unobserved, but also that strength is ever procurable from spheres of right and knowledge; while being in itself an earnest effort of the spirit, it is like opening a window to let in light and air, which though not created by opening an aperture, are by such an act admitted. A further knowledge of the laws of nature than most people now possess, will prove prayer to be as effectual as farming.

Ques.—Will you say a few words on cruelty, and its effects on the spirit.

Ans.—Cruelty is always an evidence of a very low condition of mind, and invariably betokens weakness of character. It is said of Nero, the most cruel and profligate of all the Roman Emperors, that when a child he delighted in torturing insects, and this habit of cruelty, cultivated even from infancy, went with him through life till it accomplished his utter downfall. You will invariably find that real strength and genuine bravery are accompanied by gentleness and love of peace; and truly a righteous man may be known by his conduct to the animals under his charge. Too much care cannot possibly be taken to repress all tendencies to cruel

sport in children, while neither men nor women can be anything but brutalized by the chase and other barbaric sports, where sentient creatures are needlessly tormented. In Spain bull-fighting has been one of the institutions that has done most to keep the people down in ignorance and degradation. Any government or any religion that sanctions cruelty is self-destructive, for all forms of vindictiveness sooner or later recoil upon the vicious. For cruelties practised upon serfs centuries ago modern Russia is now suffering. The American Government, by its cruelty to the North American Indians, has always suffered and suffers still; while England's aggressive policy in India has so far disaffected the native population from the British Crown, that were there to be a need for a united defence of the English Government, the bulk of Her Majesty's subjects abroad would take no part in defending her honour. Ireland, though caressed and kicked by turns to-day, has been tyrannized over in the past; while the noblemen whose ancestral domains are now everywhere threatened through the increase of radical opinions, have in the past usurped territory and cruelly afflicted those weaker than themselves. The old biblical proverb: "They who take the sword shall perish by the sword," is constantly being fulfilled. The law of love is the only wise as it is the only humane one. Standing armies and navies will never save any nation from destruction, as history is ever proving that conquerors of one century are the conquered in another. Cruelty of every kind inflames hate and resentment in the breasts of the ill-used, who though they may be held in subjection for a time through fear, are sure to rise eventually and round on their oppressors. Love, on the contrary, begets affection, and paves the way for true union and the respect of one another's rights. No one would be cruel if he was even sensible, to say nothing of virtuous; for should the recompense of cruelty never come in this world, the pitiable condition of a tyrant in the Spirit-world is sad beyond description. Anyone who tortures animals on earth, on entering Spirit-life will find himself in the power of spirits who will assume the form of the creatures he has maltreated; while any act of cruelty places one in a condition wherein he is open to the visits of evil-disposed spirits, who have power to torment the cruel person, because his own act has given

them dominion over him. Kindness allies man with the angels; it makes friends out of enemies, and no deed of kindness will ever be lost. All will be more than repaid hereafter if not now, while the truly loving will be filled with unspeakable joy, when they realize that no effort to do good has ever really been in vain.

Impromptu Poems.

THE MYSTERY OF BIRTH AND DEATH.

WHENCE comes the soul to earth? from what celestial place
 Flows downward to this sphere, a spark of heavenly grace?
 How comes it that we dwell awhile in mortal mould,
 But sighing all the while for pleasures manifold,
 Which earth can never give and never take away?
 Can those of mortal birth—begotten of earth's clay—
 Sigh for a destiny far higher than their source?
 No! Rivers do not run, in all their winding course,
 Above the height where first they took their native rise;
 So human souls, that groan for yonder radiant skies,
 Must, far above the blue that belts all human sight,
 Have had an origin in homes of cloudless light!

The Muses court the souls of Poets unawares;
 And everywhere the Muse a mystic tale declares
 Of some remembered state, and yet almost forgot,
 Where we have lived before, in some sequestered grot
 Amid some peaceful hills; on some rich, fertile plains,
 Where flowers of countless hues grow bright 'neath gentle rains;
 Where balmy is the air; where daylight never fades
 Except to pave the way for stars; where 'mid the glades,
 The valleys and the hills, there are no beasts of prey,
 And no inclement storms destruction bring that way;
 Where friends are always true, and enemies unknown;
 Where love expression finds in perfect bliss; forlorn
 Man's spirit seems below,
 And ever longs to go
 Again to those bright bowers,
 Adorned with sweetest flowers.

But if we've had a home, a Fatherland above;
 And if we sigh once more to revel in such love
 As is not known on earth, save in some wond'rous state
 Of rapture, ecstasy, when ope'd is heaven's gate,—
 Why are we toiling here? Why did we come to earth?
 Why must we suffer pain, if we're of such high birth?
 Is not this life mistake, an accident of chance?
 It surely cannot be that earth-life can enhance
 The beauty of a soul, its dignity or worth,
 If it was born indeed of pure, celestial birth!

An answering voice we hear, from choirs who dwell in light:—
 "My children!" hear them sing: "The sorrow and the night,
 Of which ye here complain, will make of you sweet flowers,
 Like those celestial souls who grace the heavenly bowers.
 Remember ye how once, when ye were pure and fair,
 Untouched by time's rude hand, ye witnessed some more fair?
 More dazzling were their robes, more wisdom they possessed,
 And ye, sweet infants, asked, why some were doubly bless'd.
 And then an angel came, and told ye ye must fly
 Down to a planet dark, to weave a destiny
 As bright and high as theirs; they told ye of the way,
 Which they had long time trod, towards their world of day.
 And ye consented then to be as planted seeds,
 To grow deep in the ground, until that life that pleads
 For union with the spheres of purity again,
 Shall be so wise and strong, that it its quest may gain!"

Why are souls born on earth, to struggle and to strife?
 Ye may forget the day, when, ushered into life,
 Ye first came weeping o'er the glories ye had lost.
 Souls weeping come to earth, for, counting the great cost
 Of winning crowns of light, they falter, 'tis so dark,
 This earthly pilgrimage, where scarce a feeble spark
 Of heavenly light is seen, when first they're stranded here.
 The dead weep not, because their goal appears more near;
 The dying shed no tears, 'tis natural to go
 To that mysterious world, whence life did earthward flow.

An acorn planted not, might in itself contain
 The powers of giant oaks, adorning ancient plains.
 Unplanted, all these powers would ever dormant be;
 No branches deck'd with leaves would quiver 'neath the sky;
 No strong and stalwart branch, no fine, majestic stem;
 The acorn in the ground works for its diadem.
 And so the embodied soul, when life and death are o'er,
 When it attains at last the blest eternal shore,
 Will smile at every storm. Then, when all sorrows cease,
 The soul will evermore enjoy celestial peace;
 But wise souls then will be
 In perfect purity!

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

NIGHT is waning, day is breaking,
Darkness flies the light before;
Bondmen, freemen, all are waking,
On each island, sea and shore:
Looking forward to the future,
Wondering what that change will be,
Which in all the air around them,
All our spirits seem to see.

Nature rises in convulsion,
Plagues and sorrows make men fear;
Wars, and rumours of contentions,
Make hearts tremble far and near.
Yet through all the clanging discord,
We a still, small voice discern,
Whispering hope and peace to mortals,
If the light they will not spurn.

Empires hoary, churches wealthy,
Institutions old and grand,
Totter on those same foundations,
Where secure they long did stand.
Olden laws and ancient customs,
All are falling fast away,
And the surging tide of freedom
Makes rich poor, poor rich, to-day.

What means all this strange uprising,
'Gainst the idols of the past?
Wherefore need we a new dawning?
Doth not truth for ever last?
Is it not the same this moment
As in ages long gone by?
Will it not be through all ages,
In its immortality?

Yea! the Truth can let no shadow
On its face eternal fall;
But man's intellect grows clearer,
And his powers were once so small,
That he saw the faintest glimmer,
Only that, of heaven's day;
Now his eyes are growing stronger,
So he sees a larger ray.

WITHIN THE VAIL.

In the days of old, the prophets,
 Seers and sages saw the light
 Of a coming age of glory,
 When on earth, from heaven's height,
 Truth celestial, swift descending,
 Would a bride for Reason be :
 Love and Wisdom then would govern
 All the world in equity.

All the saviours of the nations,
 All the teachers of God's way,
 All are one in spheres celestial ;
 And, when comes earth's triumph-day,
 Will the peaceful Holy Zion,
 The fair City of the King,
 Be on earth so well established,
 That all nobles treasure bring
 Into her celestial portals.
 Then they'll study war no more,
 And the light of truth will flourish,—
 All the Eternal will adore !

Flickering lights and empty baubles,
 Playthings of an infant race ;
 Allegories, forms and symbols,
 Truth's clear light will all efface ;
 Sphinxes old and grim, mysterious,
 Will their secrets then disclose ;
 And the wayfarer and toiler,
 Wheresoe'er his pathway goes,
 Finding light, will need no prophet
 And no priest, but guides within,
 Which will teach the pure and humble
 How the highest good to win.

For all people shout glad tidings,—
 Not for any chosen few ;
 In the coming age of wisdom,
 Light will every soul imbue.
 New Jerusalem is coming ;
 Not the citadel of old :
 Not the temple with its ritual,
 Sacrifices manifold ;
 But the Temple of the Spirit,
 All the earth a holy place,
 Every heart a shrine of virtue,
 Love displayed in every face !
 Pray, by earnest work, and hasten
 The divine, illustrious day,
 When truth's bright illumination
 Chases every mist away !