Vol.. XX. MAY 15, 1897. No. 117.

LUCIFER.

ON THE WATCH-TOWER.

"For the World-Maker is a Geometrician."

Mrs. Besant writes:

Remarkable advances are being made in America in a direction justifying the theosophical teachings about vibrations and the forms they create. Dr. J. Mount Bleyer, a New York specialist in ear and throat diseases, has just invented a method of photographing the forms made by light powders, when they are thrown up from a disk vibrating under the impact of waves of sound. It has long been known that geometrical figures are formed when the powder subsides on the disk, and Mrs. Watts Hughes succeeded in obtaining some remarkable results from musical notes. Dr. Bleyer, however, has ingeniously photographed the forms assumed in the air by the powder, and thus obtains the solid figure of which the geometrical shape on the disk is the projection on the flat. New light is thus thrown on the fundamental mathematicality (if the word may be admitted) of nature, and one begins to see that every plane geometrical figure might be thrown upwards into a solid form, and that may be Euclid, thus treated, would reveal some surprising facts. To return to our doctor, he says:

One remarkable feature of the experiments is that the sounds have been found to take the form of things familiar. Thus, a sharp, staccato tone gave a picture like a snake coiled as if to strike. Sometimes the reproductions are as if a beautiful flower had been photographed. These will make most interesting pictures when they are magnified and thrown upon a screen.

The reports state that:

Within a few days the biograph is to be brought into use, when three

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hundred continuous pictures will be made of one example, say a bar of "Home, Sweet Home." These pictures can then be thrown on a screen, when the music will be shown in what will appear to be reproductions of marvellously pretty submarine vegetation, intermingled with reefs and spidery forms, orchids and other plants, and tracings in new and strange patterns.

The photographs are taken at the rate of 100 a second.

Professor Blake, of Kansas City, lecturing on electricity, has pointed out that the vibrations of the molecules of the brain must affect the ether and that it is probable that it sets up waves therein. "If it does, that disturbance is going to travel out in a straight line. Suppose it should pass through another brain, the molecules of which should be sympathetically affected, then similar vibrations would be set up and we should have thought-transference." Exactly.

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THE SANSKRIT PUSTAKONNATI SABHA.

Under the auspices of the Theosophical Society, a "Society for the Preservation of Sanskrit MSS." has been inaugurated at Benares, and we take the following from its first prospectus issued by our colleague Mrs. Besant.

There is no country in the world so rich in its ancient lore as is India, and yet how many Indians care to take notice of this or to move one finger to render assistance to rescue the ancient Books from the ravages of time and from countless other evils. Amidst thousands of difficulties the British Government and the Orientalists have succeeded through the people of India in discovering about 15,000 Sanskrit MSS. within the course of twenty-seven years, at the expense of about Rs. 24000 per year, but the work has been done piecemeal and not continuously. Besides this, the Catalogues of Books, prepared by these, are in many respects imperfect, and do not contain detailed information on important points; in these catalogues, for instance, it is generally difficult to distinguish the names of authors from those of their works; nor can it be known what are the nature and the contents of a particular work, where it is to be found, and what other similar works were written by the same or by different authors. For the last thirteen years, materials of this kind have been collected by a learned and devoted Svâmi, and it is now proposed, working under his direction and guidance, to utilise in the first place the work already done by Government and by the Orientalists in Bibliography and to incorporate it with the mass of materials collected, in order to make a comprehensive Catalogue which shall contain in a clear and lucid form all the above details for the information of enquirers. Afterwards it is intended to take in hand and follow up the search for Sanskrit Manuscripts, to collect them into a place of safety and gradually to do other work, that may be thought necessary for the revival of ancient Sanskrit

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Literature. The Association now formed for these beneficent purposes confidently hopes to receive support and help from all literary men in every part of the world, because such an effort is likely to benefit not only India but the whole world of scholarship and literature directly, and through them the rest of the world.

This is an excellent undertaking, and it is needless to say that we wish it every success. As the Svâmi is not only an admirable scholar, but also one who knows the grandeur and nature of the inspiration which underlies all that is best in Sanskrit literature, there is more hope of the plan being carried out to a successful issue than would otherwise be the case.

* * *

A Living Library.

The Prashnottara for March prints some extracts from private letters concerning a remarkable Paṇḍit of the old type. Paṇḍit Dhanrâj, though scarcely twenty years of age, is said to carry in his memory "a mass of Sanskrit literature equal to about thirty Mahâbhâratas in bulk"!

Paṇḍit Dhanrâj says, from the age of about five upwards he has been doing nothing else than "committing to memory" at an average rate of about 1,000 shlokas every day. His work ceased about a year or so ago; and he is now setting about to digest and assimilate his vast mental meal. He studied at the houses of a race of Paṇḍits in his native village, where the "Parampara" has come down and where the books are yet found the very names of which have been long forgotten by and are now unknown to the modern generation of "much-talkers" called Paṇḍits.

An appalling list of standard works committed to memory is given with the number of shlokas which each contains. Thus:

Printed into Royal 8vo volumes of 800 pages each, every page containing 15 shlokas on an average, this total of 63,80,700 shlokas, would form a compact little library of 500 volumes, roughly—nothing surprising, by any means, seeing that 20 times that number of volumes is disgorged annually by the press of England alone.

But what *is* surprising is that Paṇḍit Dhanrâj, while modestly denying that he has the whole by heart, yet admits that he carries in his memory at least a good two-thirds of it, besides another ten lakhs or so in miscellaneous literature, novels and histories (yes, *novels* and *histories*) and Purâṇas and modern works!

Our readers will be pained to hear that this phenomenal young Paṇḍit is now totally blind. It is difficult for ordinary Westerns,

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whose memories are year by year becoming more atrophied owing to the degenerating environment of mechanism in which we live, to realize that the memory can be made a more accurate instrument for transmitting the technical treatises of religion, philosophy and science, than writing. Even Western Orientalists prefer the oral tradition of the text preserved by the Paṇḍits to MS. copies.

In the present instance, an important point to bear in mind is that Paṇḍit Dhanrâj has not memorized merely a mass of works which are accessible to everyone.

The MSS. out of which Paṇḍit Dhanrâj was taught are unavailable. They are kept away with jealous care from the reach of the inquisitive public. And Paṇḍit Dhanrâj, though willing to dictate all he has in his memory, cannot be provided with a writer sufficiently fast to reduce any tolerable portion of his stores into writing. Paṇḍit Parmeshri Dâs of Barabanki, Oudh, who has been recently contributing to *The Theosophist* some articles on the older Grammar, etc., with the help of this marvellous Paṇḍit, is doing all he can in the matter, but however thankful we may be for what he has done we cannot but feel that it is not enough by far. If some system of shorthand Devanâgarî could be devised by a Theosophical brother sufficiently ingenious, it would be a great help indeed —though we must always be prepared for disappointment even after all these old books have become "Lipi" from "Smriti." Such disappointment is by no means the unfrequent lot of Theosophical students. The first view has often aroused surging hopes of the promised land of grapes and honey; and yet a nearer view has often dissipated the illusion and shown that the first spectacle was a mere mirage only.

* * *

A Logical Clerk.

A sixpenny pamphlet published by J. Vincent and Son, 18, Little Britain, London, contains in full the "Cause and Purport of the Protest," recently made by the Rev. S. D. Brownjohn against the confirmation of the election of Dr. Temple to the See of Canterbury. Those who noticed at the time the short speech of "protest" (on the ground that Dr. Temple was "a self-confessed believer in the full doctrine of Evolution,") may be interested in knowing that it was made not from the stand-point of a "shocked Evangelical," but from that of a clergyman who renounced his own preferment in the Established Church in 1888, on the ground of the incongruity which he "felt to exist between the teachings of Science and the authorized teaching of the Church," believing his benefice to have been entrusted

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to him in virtue of his consent to the latter. Since that time, Mr. Brownjohn appears to have made sundry efforts to obtain from the authorities of the Church a frank recognition of this "incongruity," and an assurance of some steps being taken to remove it, but without success; and this Protest is his latest attempt to draw attention to what he considers a dishonest and discreditable "spiritual mockery."

* * *

An Important Find of Jewish MSS.

We take the following from *The Jewish Chronicle* of April 2nd.

After a journey which, if we are not mistaken, will prove a momentous incident in the modern history of Jewish literature, Mr. Schechter has returned to Cambridge. The University library in that city was not hitherto particularly rich in Hebrew MSS., but the treasures which Mr. Schechter has been able to bring back from Egypt and Palestine will probably raise the Cambridge Library to the front rank. Mr. Schechter's enterprise has not been without its dangers and difficulties. But everywhere his fame had preceded him, and with the Chief Rabbi of Cairo, the President of the Jewish congregation, Mr. Joseph Cattaui, and his son, Mr. Elie M. Cattaui, Mr. Schechter found a courteous and helpful welcome. It is, of course, too early to form an estimate of the rarity or the worth of the great mass of MSS. which Mr. Schechter has recovered from the dust and oblivion of ages. But that much of historical and literary importance has been unearthed is certain.

The large store of MSS. which Mr. Schechter has now safely deposited in Cambridge comes, like several fragments previously brought to Europe, from the "Geniza" at Cairo. This "Geniza," or "Secret Place," is a curious institution in Jewish life. Old copies of the Law, old Hebrew books in general, were not retained in use. Hence, we do not possess any Scroll of the Law older than the tenth or eleventh century at the earliest. But such mutilated or worn-out books were not actually destroyed. They were put into the "Geniza" or secret hiding place. Either they were piled into a lumber room of the synagogue, or they were buried in the earth hard by the cemetery. In the Talmud (Menachoth 29b.) we are told: "If a Scroll of the Law has two mistakes per page, it must be corrected; if three mistakes, *it must be hidden*," *i.e.*, deposited in some store-room where its preservation would depend on the condition of atmosphere and climate, as well as on the condition of the congregation. Mostly, of course, the hidden or buried treasure has been hopelessly lost. Decay on the one hand, wilful destruction of enemies on the other, have reduced many a spiritual and literary masterpiece to the elemental dust. But in Egypt the clear and limpid atmosphere has been kinder to the sacred remains entrusted to its care. In the cemetery located on the edge of the desert, where to a European

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visitor respiration is difficult, the old treasures have been preserved better than had they lain on the bookshelves of a Northern library. The common enemies of books could not invade the dusty Egyptian hiding-places. In Hebron, too, Mr. Schechter was fortunate enough to find some rich deposits of learning. Sometimes such treasures were deliberately placed in these secret recesses, sometimes they were hastily cast there by the victims of a sudden raid, who, expelled from their home, thought that in the graveyard their books might perchance be saved. And now the man has come to rescue them from death, to restore them to their long-lost light of day. Books indeed have their fates. Happy the books that fall into the loving hands of the present reader in Rabbinic to the University of Cambridge.

* * *

NIRVÂṆA IN THE ORIGINAL SÂṄKHYA.

We take the following from a review in the April number of *The Asiatic Quarterly Review*, on Dr. Dahlmann's recent work, *Nirvâṇa Eine Studie zur Vorgeschichte des Buddhismus.*

After stating the many contradictory views on this subject, the reviewer continues:

The explanation of the complicated problem is sought by Dr. Dahlmann in the hypothesis that the doctrine of Nirvâṇa is a fragment of another and an older system. "Buddhism makes a gallant show by the help of a garment borrowed from a strange wardrobe." Nirvâṇa is a pre-Buddhistic idea, borrowed neither from the classical Vedânta nor from the classical Sâṅkhya, but from an older system, in which Nirvâṇa means Brahma-Nirvâṇa, an entering into the absolute Brahma. This system is to be found in the Mahâbhârata, the great poem which Dr. Dahlmann knows so well. It is impossible to exaggerate the eloquence and wealth of illustration which the author employs in developing this part of his subject. He makes great use of the Bhagavad Gîtâ, a portion of the Mahâbhârata, often published separately, and treated practically as an independent work. Dr. Dahlmann's view is summed up in the following words: "The Sâṅkhya of the epic poems is, in its complete form, simply a knowledge of Brahma. From the plurality of its four and twenty principles is deduced the only spiritual twenty-fifth principle. In the knowledge of the Sâṅkhya is embodied the one only immutable knowledge which rests in Brahma. Sâṅkhya as knowledge simply is identified with Brahma, because in the lucidity of this knowledge is reflected the lucidity of this absolute being. 'The Sâṅkhya is the highest knowledge, the intransient, ever-enduring, infinite, everlasting Brahma.' The 'Sâṅkhya is the embodiment of the bodiless Brahma.' Out of this variously ramifying and much diversified system rises as a crown the science of Brahma, in the idea of Brahma-Nirvâṇa dominating the Brahmanical Philosophy."

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The Origins of Christianity.

The latest work on this ever absorbingly interesting subject is the impartial and scholarly contribution of Albert Réville, Professeur au Collège de France, entitled *Jésus de Nazareth, Étude Critique sur les Antécédents de l' Histoire Évangéliques et la vie de Jésus* (2 vols., 8vo., Paris; Fischbacher; 1897). It is to be hoped that this important study will be translated for the benefit of English readers.

* * *

À la Recherche de M. le Diable.

Mr. F. Legge, in the May number of *The Contemporary Review*, devotes his attention to "The Devil in Modern Occultism." He finds his "Devil" in the Astral Light, and "Modern Occultism" in the *salade* of Parisian *études esotériques*. Mr. Legge loses his way among these Neo-everythings galvanized into temporary notice by the Diana Vaughan *blague* of Léo Taxil. The same writer tries to persuade the public that he knows something about "Primitive Religion and Primitive Magic," in a second article in the May number of *The Edinburgh Review*.

* * *

A Jesuit Father on Occultism.

The Weekly Register, of March 13th, publishes a lecture on what Father Clarke calls "Occultism," delivered before the Historical Research Society, the Cardinal Archbishop being in the chair. It is, of course, clever, as we should expect; it is also curious. One or two sentences are worth reproducing. Thus:

> Occultism is an accumulation of the most ancient and rudimentary ideas about man and nature, entertained in the very beginnings of civilisation, and transmitted to us without religious or scientific elaboration. It is distinguished from non-occult or ordinary knowledge by preserving almost without mitigation its original crudeness, in consequence of the method—a method well adapted for keeping intact an ancient tradition—by which it has been handed on. There are three points in it: (1) a method of secret or reserved teaching; (2) a pretension to thaumaturgy or wonder-working; and (3) a view or theory set up to explain the wonder-working and other matters.

As to No. 1, we are told:

> You see its working in the founding of Christianity—in the use of parables, in the choice of twelve Apostles, in the precept not to cast pearls before swine.

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in St. Paul's teaching wisdom only among the perfect, and to the rest preaching only Christ crucified (1 Cor. ii. 6), and in his direction to commit the Apostolic teaching to faithful men who should instruct others also.

As to No. 2, Father Clarke would draw our attention to four factors—falsehood, conjuring, drugs, and hypnotism. As to No. 3, which should throw light on 1 and 2, the Rev. Father leaves it severely alone.

But what is most surprising is that the *deus ex machinâ* of Father Clarke's prior tragi-comedies on the subject, and of Roman Catholicism generally—the Devil—is for once given a holiday!

* * *

MANICHEEISM.

Students of Theosophy who know the importance of Manicheeism as a link between the Gnosticism of the first two centuries and the Gnosticism of the Albigeois and kindred movements, will be glad to learn that a new edition of the tract of Alexander Lycopolitanus has been edited by Brinkmann (*Contra Manichaei Opiniones Disputatio:* Leipzig; Teubner). The most important book on this subject of recent years is Kessler's *Mani, Forschungen über die Manichäische Religion* (Berlin; 1889). The second volume is still waited for with impatience. Professor Montet in the *A. Q. R.* says that "it will conclude the demonstration of the Oriental (not Christian) origin of what is called in the Church 'heresy,' and what has been in fact the Manichæan Religion."

G. R. S. M.

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REINCARNATION.

(*Continued from p.* 167.)

We shall best understand the evolution of the soul, if we take it up at the point where we left it, when animal-man was ready to receive, and did receive, the embryonic soul. To avoid a possible misapprehension, it may be well to say that there were not henceforth two Monads in man—the one that had built the human tabernacle, and the one that descended into that tabernacle, and whose lowest aspect was the human soul. To borrow a simile again from H. P. Blavatsky, as two rays of the sun may pass through a hole in a shutter, and mingling together form but one ray though they had been twain, so is it with these rays from the supreme Sun, the divine Lord of our universe. The second ray, as it entered into the human tabernacle, blended with the first, merely adding to it fresh energy and brilliance, and the human Monad, *as a unit*, began its mighty task of unfolding the higher powers in man of that divine Life whence it came.

The embryonic soul, the Thinker, had at the beginning for its embryonic mental body the mind-stuff envelope that the Monad of form had brought with it, but had not yet organized into any possibility of functioning. It was the mere germ of a mental body, attached to a mere germ of a causal body, and for many a life the strong desire-nature had its will with the soul, whirling it along the road of its own passions and appetites, and dashing up against it all the furious waves of its own uncontrolled animality.

Repulsive as this early life of the soul may at first seem to some when looked at from the higher stage that we have now attained, it was a necessary one for the germination of the seeds of mind. Recognition of difference, the perception that one thing is different from another, is a preliminary essential to thinking at all. And in order to awaken this perception in the as yet unthinking soul, strong

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and violent contrasts had to strike upon it, so as to force their differences upon it—blow after blow of riotous pleasure, blow after blow of crushing pain. The external world hammered on the soul through the desire-nature, till perceptions began to be slowly made, and, after countless repetitions, to be registered. The little gains made in each life were stored up by the Thinker, and thus slow progress was made.

Slow progress, indeed, for scarcely anything was *thought*, and hence scarcely anything was done in the way of organizing the mental body. Not until many perceptions had been registered in it as mental images, was there any material on which mental action, initiated from within, could be based; this would begin when two or more of these mental images were drawn together, and some inference, however elementary, was made from them. That inference was the beginning of reasoning, the germ of all the systems of logic which the intellect of man has since evolved or assimilated. These inferences would at first all be made in the service of the desire-nature, for the increasing of pleasure, the lessening of pain; but each one would increase the activity of the mental body, and would stimulate it into more ready functioning.

It will readily be seen that at this period of his infancy man had no knowledge of good or of evil; right and wrong had for him no existence. The right is that which is in accordance with the divine will, which helps forward the progress of the soul, which tends to the strengthening of the higher nature of man and to the training and subjugation of the lower; the wrong is that which retards evolution, which retains the soul in the lower stages after he has learned the lessons they have to teach, which tends to the mastery of the lower nature over the higher, and assimilates man to the brute he should be outgrowing instead of to the God he should be evolving. Ere man could know what was right he had to learn the existence of law, and this he could learn only by following all that attracted him in the outer world, by grasping at every desirable object, and then by learning from experience, sweet or bitter, whether his delight was in harmony or in conflict with the law. Let us take an obvious example, the taking of pleasant food, and see how infant man might learn therefrom the presence of a natural law. At the first taking, his hunger was appeased, his taste was gratified, and only pleasure resulted from the

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experience, for his action was in harmony with law. On another occasion, desiring to increase pleasure, he ate overmuch and suffered in consequence, for he transgressed against the law. A confusing experience to the dawning intelligence, how the pleasurable became painful by excess. Over and over again he would be led by desire into excess, and each time he would experience the painful consequences, until at last he learned moderation, *i.e.*, he learned to conform his bodily acts in this respect to physical law; for he found that there were conditions which affected him and which he could not control, and that only by observing them could physical happiness be ensured. Similar experiences flowed in upon him through all the bodily organs, with undeviating regularity; his out-rushing desires brought him pleasure or pain just as they worked with the laws of Nature or against them, and, as experience increased, it began to guide his steps, to influence his choice. It was not as though he had to begin his experience anew with every life, for on each new birth he brought with him mental faculties a little increased, an ever-accumulating store.

I have said that the growth in these early days was very slow, for there was but the dawning of mental action, and when the man left his physical body at death he passed most of his time in Kâma-loka, sleeping through a brief devachanic period of unconscious assimilation of any minute mental experiences, not yet sufficiently developed for the active heavenly life that lay before him after many days. Still, the enduring causal body was there, to be the receptacle of his qualities, and to carry them on for further development into his next life on earth. The part played by the monadic group-soul in the earlier stages of evolution is played in man by the causal body, and it is this continuing entity who, in all cases, makes evolution possible. Without him, the accumulation of mental and moral experiences, shown as faculties, would be as impossible as would be the accumulation of physical experiences, shown as racial and family characteristics, without the continuity of physical plasm. Souls without a past behind them, springing suddenly into existence out of nothing, with marked mental and moral peculiarities, are a conception as monstrous as would be the corresponding conception of babies suddenly appearing from nowhere, unrelated to anybody, but showing marked racial and family types. Neither the man nor

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his physical vehicle is uncaused, or caused by the direct creative power of the LOGOS; here, as in so many other cases, the invisible things are clearly seen by their analogy with the visible, the visible being, in very truth, nothing more than the images, the reflections, of things unseen. Without a continuity in the physical plasm, there would be no means for the evolution of physical peculiarities; without the continuity of the intelligence, there would be no means for the evolution of mental and moral qualities. In both cases, without continuity, evolution would be stopped at its first stage, and the world would be a chaos of infinite and isolated beginnings instead of a cosmos continually becoming.

We must not omit to notice that in these early days much variety is caused in the type and in the nature of individual progress by the environment which surrounds the individual. Ultimately all the souls have to develope all their powers, but the order in which these powers are developed depends on the circumstances amid which the soul is placed. Climate, the fertility or sterility of nature, the life of the mountain or of the plain, of the inland forest or the ocean-shore—these things and countless others will call into activity one set or another of the awakening mental energies. A life of extreme hardship, of ceaseless struggle with nature, will develope very different powers from those evolved amid the luxuriant plenty of a tropical island; both sets of powers are needed, for the soul is to conquer every region of nature, but striking differences may thus be evolved even in souls of the same age, and one may appear to be more advanced than the other, according as the observer estimates most highly the more "practical" or the more "contemplative" powers of the soul, the active outward-going energies, or the quiet inward-turned musing faculties. The perfected soul possesses all, but the soul in the making must develope them successively, and thus arises another cause of the immense variety found among human beings.

For again, it must be remembered that human evolution is individual. In a group informed by a single monadic group-soul the same instincts will be found in all, for the receptacle of the experiences is that monadic group-soul, and it pours its life into all the forms dependent upon it. But each man has his own physical vehicle and one only at a time, and the receptacle of all experiences

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is the causal body, which pours its life into its one physical vehicle, and can affect no other physical vehicle, being connected with none other. Hence we find differences separating individual men greater than ever separated closely allied animals, and hence also the evolution of qualities cannot be studied in men in the mass, but only in the continuing individual. The lack of power to make such a study leaves science unable to explain why some men tower above their fellows, intellectual and moral giants, unable to trace the intellectual evolution of a Shankarâchârya or a Pythagoras, the moral evolution of a Buddha or of a Christ.

Let us now consider the factors in reincarnation, as a clear understanding of these is necessary for the explanation of some of the difficulties—such as the alleged loss of memory—which are felt by those unfamiliar with the idea. Man, during his passage through physical death, Kâmaloka and Devachan, loses, one after the other, his various bodies, the physical, the astral and the mental. These are all disintegrated, and their particles remix with the materials of their several planes. The connection of the man with the physical vehicle is entirely broken off and done with; but the astral and mental bodies hand on to the man himself, to the Thinker, the germs of the faculties and qualities resulting from the activities of the earth-life, and these are stored within the causal body, the seeds of his next astral and mental bodies. At this stage then only the man himself is left, the labourer who has brought his harvest home, and has lived upon it till it is all worked up into himself. The dawn of a new life begins, and he must go forth again to his labour until the even.

The new life begins by the vivifying of the mental germs, and they draw upon the materials of the lower mental levels, till a mental body has grown up from them that represents exactly the mental stage of the man, expressing all his mental faculties as organs; the experiences of the past do not exist as mental images in this new body; as mental images they perished when the old mind-body perished, and only their essence, their effects on faculty, remain; they were the food of the mind, the materials which it wove into powers, and in the new body they reappear as powers, they determine its materials, and they form its organs. When the man, the Thinker, has thus clothed himself with a new body for his

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coming life on the lower mental levels, he proceeds, by vivifying the astral germs, to provide himself with an astral body for his life on the astral plane. This, again, exactly represents his desire-nature, faithfully reproducing the qualities he evolved in the past, as the seed reproduces its parent tree. Thus the man stands, fully equipped for his next incarnation, the only memory of the events of his past being in the causal body, in his own enduring form, the one body that passes on from life to life.

Meanwhile, action external to himself is being taken to provide him with a physical body suitable for the expression of his qualities. In past lives he had made ties with, contracted liabilities towards, other human beings, and some of these will partly determine his place of birth and his family. He has been a source of happiness or of unhappiness to others; this is a factor in determining the conditions of his coming life. His desire-nature is well disciplined or unregulated and riotous; this will be taken into account in the physical heredity of the new body. He has cultivated certain mental powers, such as the artistic; this must be considered, as here again physical heredity is an important factor where delicacy of nervous organization and tactile sensibility are required. And so on, in endless variety. The man may, certainly will, have in him many incongruous characteristics, so that only some can find expression in any one body that could be provided, and a group of his powers suitable for simultaneous expression must be selected. All this is done by certain mighty spiritual Intelligences,* often spoken of as the Lords of Karma, because it is their function to superintend the working out of causes continually set going by thoughts, desires and actions. They hold the threads of destiny which each man has woven, and guide the reincarnating man to the environment determined by his past, unconsciously self-chosen through his past life.

The race, the nation, the family, being thus determined, what may be called the mould of the physical body—suitable for the expression of the man's qualities, and for the working out of the causes he has set going—is given by these great Ones, and the new

* Spoken of by H. P. Blavatsky in the *Secret Doctrine*. They are the Lipika, the Keepers of the Karmic Records, and the Mahârâjas, who direct the practical working out of the decrees of the Lipika.

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etheric double, a copy of this, is built within the mother's womb by the agency of an elemental, the thought of the karmic Lords being its motive power. The dense body is built into the etheric double molecule by molecule, following it exactly, and here physical heredity has full sway in the materials provided. Further, the thoughts and passions of surrounding people, especially of the continually present father and mother, influence the building elemental in its work, the individuals with whom the incarnating man had formed ties in the past thus affecting the physical conditions growing up for his new life on earth. At a very early stage the new astral body comes into connection with the new etheric double, and exercises considerable influence over its formation, and through it the mental body works upon the nervous organization, preparing it to become a suitable instrument for its own expression in the future. This influence, commenced in ante-natal life—so that when a child is born its brain-formation reveals the extent and balance of its mental and moral qualities—is continued after birth, and this building of brain and nerves, and their correlation to the astral and mental bodies, go on till the seventh year of childhood, at which age the connection between the man and his physical vehicle is complete, and he may be said to work through it henceforth more than upon it. Up to this age, the consciousness of the Thinker is more upon the astral plane than upon the physical, and this is often evidenced by the play of psychic faculties in young children. They see invisible comrades and fairy landscapes, hear voices inaudible to their elders, catch charming and delicate fancies from the astral world. These phenomena generally vanish as the Thinker begins to work effectively through the physical vehicle, and the dreamy child becomes the commonplace boy or girl, oftentimes much to the relief of bewildered parents, ignorant of the cause of their child's "queerness." Most children have at least a touch of this "queerness," but they quickly learn to hide away their fancies and visions from their unsympathetic elders, fearful of blame for "telling stories," or of what the child dreads far more—ridicule. If parents could see their children's brains, vibrating under an inextricable mingling of physical and astral impacts, which the children themselves are quite incapable of separating, and receiving sometimes a thrill—so plastic are they—even from the higher regions, giving a vision of ethereal beauty, of

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heroic achievement, they would be more patient with, more responsive to, the confused prattlings of the little ones, trying to translate into the difficult medium of unaccustomed words the elusive touches of which they are conscious, and which they try to catch and retain. Reincarnation, believed in and understood, would relieve child-life of its most pathetic aspect, the unaided struggle of the soul to gain control over its new vehicles, and to connect itself fully with its densest body without losing the power to impress the rarer ones in a way that would enable them to convey to the denser their own more subtle vibrations.

ANNIE BESANT.

(*To be continued.*)

THE IGNORANCE OF LEARNED MEN.

A GOOD deal of light may sometimes be thrown on the value of theosophical teaching, by an examination of non-theosophical essays on some of the subjects to which our own inquiries relate. The helpless way in which even profound thinkers and deeply learned men may stumble about amidst misconceptions, the character of which is fairly obvious to theosophical thinkers, has been illustrated lately by Professor Max Müller's bulky and pretentious volumes entitled *Contributions to the Science of Mythology*. Profound sagacity and erudition are exhibited in the way in which he traces the connection between the mythologies of different races and periods, but over the whole treatise there hovers the shadow of a huge ignorance concerning certain fundamental information relating to human progress with which theosophical teaching has long since furnished the minds of students qualified to appreciate its importance. We still find Professor Max Müller harping on the idea that mythologies represent the "infantia" of the human race. He is eager indeed to maintain that they do not represent a period of "dementia." Taking Greek mythology alone as it stands, this last idea might not unnaturally be suggested. A body of people capable of attributing to gods the infamous and preposterous proceedings of the Olympian deities, might come under the suspicion of being idiots and maniacs,

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and this to Professor Max Müller, although he does not object to the idea that we may be lineal descendants of some Simian species—would be painful, as suggesting the possibility of atavistic influences operative at a later date. He is rescued from this embarrassment by perceiving that the Olympian deities themselves are originally traceable to others that have simply been invented in the first instance as personifications of natural phenomena, and thus gets comfortably back to the "infantia" doctrine. In a very characteristic passage he wants to know "how these so-called gods came to exist at all, what was the meaning of all the facts and circumstances relating to them? After they had been superseded by the true God was there any substance at all left, any real personality behind their personal adventures?" There is a curious naiveté in this reference to "the true God" in the mouth of a philosopher making such large claims on our respect as the present author. He has built up for us, he explains in a previous passage, the Science of Language, the Science of Thought, the Science of Religion, and now he has given us a treatise on the Science of Mythology in order that there may be no gap in the magnificent array of his expositions; and yet he talks as though a finality had been reached in reference to the couception of the sublime power underlying the universe in connection with the views concerning the "true God" entertained at Oxford in 1897.

We may have advanced, he says, "just as our God has advanced beyond Jehovah, and as Jehovah had advanced beyond the Gentiles, but there must be continuity in all the strata of the thought as there is in the strata of the earth." That continuity he can observe as he looks backward, but it does not seem to have occurred to him that time stretches forward as well, and that without waiting for the slow growth of coming centuries we may some of us, even now, stand in possession of ideas concerning the true government of the universe, as far in advance of those current around us, as these, in their turn, may have been advanced compared with the bewildering confusion of a degraded mythology at the period just preceding the Christian era.

Of course an all important point which Professor Max Müller and all comparative mythologists who work on his methods overlook entirely, is this:—the mythologies of the ancient world were

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not the invention of the infant races amongst whom they prevailed, but were the distorted reflection in the minds of those races of the symbolical teachings conveyed to them in the beginning by Superior Beings, with an infinitely wider grasp of the truth than it was possible for them to convey at the time to the ill-developed consciousness around them. Mythologies in fact will remain disjointed nonsense until students realize that they are the degenerate offspring of adept teaching, confided to the earlier races. Common-place speculations concerning the beginning of human intelligence, leave out this idea altogether and then blunder about in a confusion that can never be cleared up by any speculation along the lines laid down by Professor Max Müller. We know now that going back far behind the beginning of our own race, the earlier humanity of the later third and fourth, was cared for by teachers already on a far superior level than that of the humanity they had undertaken to bring up; and from our present point of view we can in some measure figure to ourselves the problem they had before their minds when endeavouring to formulate something like a religious system for people as little fitted to comprehend the whole truth within their own grasp, as the modern savage would be to comprehend the idea of spiritual existence divorced from flesh and blood. Pure abstractions of thought would have been of no avail in dealing with such a subject. Symbols of some sort or another were required even to foreshadow, however faintly, the knowledge reserved for a later date, and thus it appears that in the first instance, adept teachers of the fourth, and probably those of the fifth race also, resorted to what has been rather inappropriately called the Solar Myth, with a view of inspiring in the minds of the people around them the first sentiment of adoration of a Sublime Power presiding over human affairs. Nothing can be stupider than the treatment of sun-worship, as though it were a blind invention of simple and ignorant people, impressed with the power and force of meteorological phenomena. If we had to do the work to-day over again, for a race entirely devoid of religious feeling, it is difficult to know how a better appeal could be made to the latent sentiment of adoration, than by one which pointed directly to the incomprehensible splendour of that central power within our universe from which there radiated, day by day the benign influences which could be appreciated year by year as the seasons revolved.

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From the point of view of the adept teacher, the sun was, of course, a symbol of that mighty consciousness which we ourselves as yet can only figure in our minds in the vaguest fashion. But it was a dignified and worthy symbol, and looking indeed at the ghastly confusion of thought in which the attempt to anthropomorphise deity has thrown the modern world, one is sometimes tempted to wonder whether in the cyclic evolution of things a time may not come again in which for the purposes of ritualistic observance and external religion, something in the nature of a sun-worship may not be revived. But meanwhile it may be plainly perceived in looking back at the mythologies of the past—and in connection with such a retrospect the philological erudition of writers like Professor Max Müller, may be useful even to students who can appreciate in thought the part played by the Root Manus—that the later mythologies have represented as clearly as the later Christianity of the churches, a degradation of beautiful ideals placed before mankind by superior wisdom in the first instance. This thought, indeed, tends to rob the study of comparative mythology of the interest which its more devoted exponents assign to it. There is nothing really to be learned by an investigation of the changes that have degraded the divine Solar Myth in the course of ages, except the ever recurring lessons associated with human stupidity in all its aspects.

No sooner had the race been left with a truly grand religious conception given them by the Manu, than they proceeded to amalgamate it with ideas really arising in their own infant minds, and in the course of time grotesque presentations of the first truth surrounded it like a weed growth. That which is known at the present day as Vedic mythology or symbology, was thus in truth not the actual beginning of the process of thought modern mythologists are endeavouring to trace out, but was itself a degradation thereof. There is reason indeed to suppose that somewhere there still exists an original version of the Vedas free from any of the corruption which crept into the later traditions, though these are treated by our exoteric scholars as primeval in their nature—just in the same way as the real Institutes of Manu will perhaps some day be recoverable, though the versions handed down to recent generations are no better than clumsy caricatures of the original. But no great interest

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attaches to the investigation of further corruptions imported into the Aryan mythology—already degraded in ancient India—as it in turn gave rise to the pantheon of the Greeks. When a fuller light is eventually let in on the actual beginnings of mythological religion, then, indeed, the subject will rise into an atmosphere quite unfamiliar to the philological student. Then all educated men of that later period will be enabled to smile as we smile to-day at some of Professor Max Müller's dogmatic assertions, dependent for what he considers their proof on a state of blank ignorance concerning the higher potentialities of the human mind. Mythology he calls in one place a "disease of language," meaning by this phrase that thought and language are identical. He tells us in his *Science of Thought* "that language and thought are inseparable." Such a doctrine is really inseparable from the atheistic conception that human consciousness is a function of the nervous system, a condition of activity in the cortex of the brain. One would think that even a professor of so much religion as is involved in the belief that there is a "true God," and, at any rate, possibly a survival of the soul, would be able to imagine that in reaching the plane of that soul's ultimate consciousness, the true God, in dealing with us, would not be entirely dependent for the transmission of thought, either on the use of English or German, of Sanskrit or Greek, or even of some "tongue" of pure celestial derivation, the grammar of which would have to be acquired on the spiritual plane by disembodied souls before they could exchange ideas with one another. Here is another illustration of the absurd crudity of conception into which the most accomplished of our non-theosophical contemporaries may be betrayed for want of information concerning other planes of nature which our own resources have enabled us to control.

A. P. SINNETT.

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THE WISH TO BELIEVE.

(*Concluded from p.* 115.)

Author. We now come, my dear Philothea, to another complication. I am afraid you will think we are losing sight altogether of your "simple gospel"—but try to have patience for a while. I was laying down the principle that we may safely regard the Jesus Christ you love as having been far more than *mere* man, such as are the men around us; as having attained a height which it may take *us* millions of years to reach. But this does not satisfy you; you will say, "Whatever height He may have reached this leaves Him still man and not God. You must call Him God as well as man, or your doctrine is not Christian whatever else it may be." Were I arguing with you for victory, I might simply say, "Call Him God, then, by all means!" and leave you to find out in what sense I was using a word which means far more to us than it does to you. But before I speak of this, I must first ask, "In what sense do *you* use the word?"

You do not mean that the Jesus Christ of the Gospel was the Infinite, Eternal God in whom we both believe. The Infinite cannot be *contained* in a human body. You say that He was, in some mysterious way, God's Son. So far, we are agreed. As St. Paul says, we *all* are sons of God. But when you come to identify this Jesus of Nazareth with One who is spoken of in another place as the "Only Begotten Son of the Father"; to assert that God has no *other* sons; and, still farther, to associate this relationship with the circumstances of His physical birth in Palestine, I must ask you to stop—and think. It is, of course, useless to press upon you the metaphysical difficulties (amounting, indeed, to impossibilities) involved in this view; but there is one thing I can put to you. Do you accept the logical conclusion that His mother, Mary, the daughter of Anna, was Mother of God? You say, "He was con-

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ceived of the Holy Ghost"; you cannot make these words signify anything less than that she, a human being like yourself, was God's wife, and mother of His Son.

Philothea. How can you ask such a question? You know perfectly that no enlightened Gospel Christian believes in the Virgin Mary! It is only the benighted Papists who do so—you are insulting me!

A. I quite admit that the story seems more like one of the tales told of the Pagan gods than the proceedings of such a Divine personage as should be the ideal of an English Christian of the nineteenth century. But the gospels—the "inspired word of God"—expressly say so.

Ph. Well, you know, *everything* in the Bible must not be taken literally. If we were to admit that, it would give the Papists such a handle against us. They would say, Why don't you worship her then, as we do?

A. I accept your admission that there are certain passages in your Bible which must be explained away because your doctrine disagrees with them. It is an awkward admission for one who professes to believe in "the Bible, and the Bible only." But we have not time to see how much there is in "Revelation" which is thus, according to the old jest, "unscriptural." There is much more than you think. But there is a more fatal difficulty. If you give up the actual, physical birth of Jesus as the Son of God, you give up the only conceivable basis of your fundamental doctrine, the "Atonement." In the minds of those who worked out this doctrine it had a meaning, and an intelligible one. They held that by the mysterious and quite incomprehensible union of the two natures in Jesus Christ, He was not only God—not only *a* man, but Humanity itself, and far more. They believed that by virtue of the infinite extension (so to speak) which His Godhead gave to His Manhood, His obedience to His Father's Will was something so immeasurable that all the transgressions of finite humanity might actually be lost in it, like a brook in the wide ocean; that His Suffering was an infinite suffering—an actual compensation (presupposing, of course, a God who *could* receive suffering as compensation) for all the suffering which mankind could deserve by any sin. Thus God's justice was actually and not metaphorically

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satisfied—all that could be due was paid, and far more. Granting the premises, the claim of the defenders of this doctrine could hardly be denied. For noble souls there *is* something noble and soul-inspiring in it; though for the small, mean minds which think only of saving their own souls, whatever becomes of the rest of the world, its influence is not so good. It is *so* easy to set every one about us down as belonging to "the wicked," and comfortably to acquiesce in their damnation. As has been often remarked, the Christians of this day are much better than their creed.

Ph. Well, the "free grace of God" *is* a noble doctrine. If you admire it so much, why don't you accept the salvation it offers you? It is the one thing needful. Everything else is vanity.

A. My dear Philothea, the question we are now upon is why don't *you* and your friends believe it? Don't be indignant. I know you use the *words*, but you have just admitted that you dare not say that you believe in the actual identity of God and Man in Christ Jesus which the doctrine of the Atonement assumes—for fear of the Papists! But unless it be so, there is no meaning in the word Atonement. A mere man might have done anything short of that. But let us get a step further.

As soon as the doctrine was formulated, it was seen that there was at least one serious difficulty. It proved too much; for if salvation were gained in this arithmetical way, not only was there salvation provided for all, but no one could in fact fail to be saved, *quod non erat demonstrandum.* What would become of the Gospel if no one was to be damned? The whole history of what is called Protestant theology from the first years of the Reformation onward is the succession of desperate struggles to reconcile the Atonement with what was always assumed without enquiry as the actual fact, that more than half mankind were to spend Eternity in the torments of Hell. Hence all the hair-splitting wrangles as to the nature of the "Faith" which saved; and as it came to be recognized that a definition was impossible, theologians speedily fell to the doctrine of Predestination—the lowest depth that could be reached by man civilized or savage—that men were to be damned forever simply for God's private enjoyment. It was felt to be horrible; but there was no logical escape; no other reason could be given for the assumed fact; and good, kindly Christian men actually preached this astounding doctrine as the glad tidings of salvation!

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But whilst theologians were thus descending from Martin Luther down to Calvin and Jonathan Edwards, men around them were growing upwards into a certain amount of common sense, and a faith in *that* which soon become incompatible with subjection to such theology. Jonathan Edwards' congregation after suffering under him for many years, finally, their patience quite worn to its last thread, unanimously voted him out of his pulpit and resolved that he should never under any circumstances preach for them again; and what they did on a small scale the world about them did for his theology on the larger plane. In the last hundred years no one of the smallest intelligence outside of the professional class of preachers and their personal followers has troubled himself in any way as to what they teach as to man's future. You are shocked at this statement, but you know it is true. As you would say, the world is growing more wicked every year. At all events it is growing more drawn away from your idea of goodness. But you must brace up your nerves for a more serious shock than this. You won't understand what we think of Jesus unless you can take this in. The controversies of which I have spoken were really needless. The majority of humankind (those whom you so airily dismiss as "the wicked") are *not* going to be damned for ever, and the Bible does not say so!

[Ph. emits an inarticulate gasp of horror. Is about to faint, but thinks better of it. The Author is somewhat advanced in years and there is no one else to catch her in his arms. She at last recovers herself enough to speak.]

Ph. But the Bible *does* say so. It says "the lake of fire and brimstone . . . for ever and ever," over and over again. How *can* you deny it? [Sobs.]

A. I don't deny that your English Bible says so. But every scholar knows that the original Greek does not. The original word *aionion* means a long space of time, I grant you; and we do not deny that very possibly many will have to suffer for this long space, but an *endless* time it does *not* mean.

Ph. But if the wicked don't go to Hell for ever and ever (and it would be very nice if one *could* believe it) what about the righteous in Heaven? Is it the same word? You don't—you *can't* mean we are to be turned out of Heaven after a time—sent to Hell, perhaps to take their place? [Indignantly.]

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A. Did it never strike you that supposing you were in Heaven with all your friends about you (excepting of course those who had gone to Hell instead; and, perhaps, a few as to whom you might possibly feel that you wished them in Heaven indeed, but would, on the whole, prefer they should inhabit *another* of its "many mansions"), it *might* happen in the course of some thousands of years, that you might get rather tired of them; and that, after some more thousands of years you might be almost glad of Hell for a change? Such enjoyment as you look for in Heaven cannot satisfy a human soul for ever; and I don't think you could find any reason to complain if, after you had enjoyed all the reward you deserved for your goodness and (so to speak) used up Heaven for the time, you were set down once more upon earth to learn a fresh lesson and grow bigger and better still.

Ph. I don't see it. What enjoyment could there be in Heaven if one knew it was to come to an end—sooner or later. It would not *be* Heaven at all! What we want is rest from our troubles, no more anxiety about our future, the "peace of God which passeth all understanding," you know. [More sobs.]

A. My dear child, it is quite true. Most of us have found our lives in one way or another a failure, and our first thought of what we should like in the future is, as you say, to have no more trouble. From the poor old woman whose idea of Heaven was to sit in a pew with her hands before her, and a nice clean white apron on, to the poet's highest vision of light and music and joy, it is all the same; and I would not say a word against it. *As long as that feeling lasts*, there is no fear of your being turned out of your Heaven; you are not yet fully rested—not ready to go. But let me remind you that it was to people on earth that this peace was wished. The soul within you is far too great ever to be permanently standing still, and there is only one way of progress—to live on earth and learn, keeping God's peace in our hearts all the time.

Ph. But we can never grow tired of God! There must always be something new to learn about Him in Heaven. We might get tired of our friends, but never of Him!

A. True again, but you must not think that you can continually learn more of God by merely living in Heaven. Heaven is not a place for *growth*, and to know more of God you must grow bigger;

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be large enough to take more of Him in. The highest angel cannot exhaust God, but it needs very little of Him to fill *you* up to your highest capacity. The real truth of the matter is, that the huge space between the Infinite God and man is not a mere empty void, over which the Sons of God have, as it were, to spring to come upon earth and to return to Him—betwixt Him and us "a great gulf fixed," as in the vision of Dives. It is, rather, a vast stairway like the ladder which Jacob saw in his dream; and on every step souls (angels, he called them) ever drawing nearer to the Divinity; some but little above ourselves, others so far beyond that, to us, they are utterly lost in the Eternal Light. And this height is gained by love and service, not by dreaming in Heaven. There are great souls (and the Jesus who lived and died two thousand years ago in Syria is one of them) whose longing to know the secrets of God's love for men, and to help more efficiently their fellow-men to reach the heights they themselves have gained, has won them to refuse Heaven altogether, choosing rather to return to earth time after time, to labour, to suffer and to grow greater, more helpful, more loving still. Think of Him, already bringing to His Syrian incarnation all that beauty of character, that fulness of the Divine fire which the Gospel narratives image, yet so faintly; and then try to imagine His life since; not sitting idle on some throne in Heaven listening to angels' harps and the vanity of human praises; but ever working for us, and with each work accomplished Himself gaining more wisdom and more power. See Him living amongst His children, now in a human body, now out of it; but ever (incarnate or no) from day to day, as in Galilee of old, "increasing in strength and wisdom" and in favour with "God and man." Think of that glorious Path which He is thus treading, as one which has no end, but for ever new life and new power, leading Him on beyond earth and sun and stars, to infinities which no thought of unaided human intellect can conceive. What to Him, now and hereafter, anything done to the poor, frail human body which He inhabited for a few short years in Palestine, in the course of His endless life and labour—cast aside like so many before and since as His work required? Why, then, should it be anything to us, his younger brethren, following on the same Path, though so far behind? It is not that *body*, nor any other, which is His title to our love and reverence; but the great, warm, loving

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Heart which as a sun draws our hearts to such as He. Our "salvation" is that we too, in virtue of the Divinity within us, are on the same Path—the steps of the same Heavenly stair, and must sooner or later stand with Him and the great souls His fellows; that we and the souls above and below us, form the links of the "great gold chain which binds this earth fast to the feet of God"; through which flash help, guidance, life, in constant streams from the highest Divinity to the lowest organised being; joining all creatures in one great league of mutual love and help, which shall hold and widen and deepen as the centuries pass, resistlessly sweeping away all sin and sorrow and shame, until we all come, perfected and triumphant, to "enter into the joy of our Lord." I use words which are familiar to you; can you not gather from what I have said how much *more* they mean to us than they do to you? Is not so great a life something more and better than merely "meeting our friends in Heaven"?

Ph. [who has been growing very uneasy for some time] I can't *think* how you can go on talking such heathenish nonsense! Give me the simple trust in a living Saviour! I am sure your heart is not right in the sight of God. . . . Philosophy, falsely so called, as the Bible warns us. . . . [Sniffs indignantly.] And wanting us to worship the Virgin Mary, too! *I* see how it is, you are just a Jesuit in disguise! *We* know your ways—always so plausible, so insinuating! I won't hear another word from you! [Rises from her chair and exit, very red in the face, muttering something of which we only catch, "Tenfold more the child of Hell than themselves!" Door closes with a bang.]

Author [soliloquises]. Well, well; I ought, I suppose, to have known better. That people should be so good, so amiable, so useful, and yet so—impracticable! She must live her life out, and have her Heaven, poor soul! Perhaps some time she may learn, or perhaps not; for it always seems to me that it is from her class will come most of the failures of this present humanity. The one indispensable qualification for passing on is the aspiration to something higher; and to this there is no hindrance (not even vice itself) so complete and hopeless as the conviction which the lower forms of religion in England and America force upon their followers that in "simple faith" they have all they need for all eternity. They do much good, and will have their due reward; but that spent, what seed is there

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in such lives for anything greater, what is there for the forces of evolution to work upon? It is a pity, I meant well, but all one can say is (like Titus), "I have lost a day."

A. A. WELLS.

AMONG THE GNOSTICS OF THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES.

(*Continued from p.* 142.)

THE SO-CALLED CAINITES.

BEFORE returning to the time of the origins along the only line of tradition of which one or two obscure indications still remain—the Carpocrates-Cerinthus trace—we will briefly refer to the obscure chaos of tendencies classed together under the term Cainite and its variants. Our sources of information are scanty, and if we exclude the mere mention of the name, are confined to Irenæus and Epiphanius; the latter, moreover, copies from Irenæus, and with the exception of his own reflections and lucubrations, has only a scrap or two of fresh information to add.

This circle of tradition is generally classed as "Ophite," and as usual we find that its adherents called themselves simply Gnostics. They were distinguished by the honour they paid to Cain and Judas; which fact, taken by itself, was sufficient to overwhelm them with the execrations of the orthodox, who ascribed the perpetration of every iniquity to them. Thus we find that Epiphanius, who wrote two hundred years after Irenæus, embroiders considerably on the account of the Bishop of Lyons, even where he is in other respects simply copying from his predecessor. We will now proceed to see the reason why these Gnostics entertained an apparently so strange belief.

If the reader will bear in mind the systems of Justinus and of the Sethians, he will be in a better position to comprehend what follows. Is it even possible that the name Justinus (Ἰουστῖνος), which we find nowhere else than in the account of Hippolytus, may be an

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error for Judas (Ἰούδας)? The main features of the system of these Gnostics, then, was as follows.

The creator of the world was not the God over all; the absolute power from above was stronger than the weaker (ὑστέρα—hystera) power of generation, which was symbolised as the power of the impure world-womb, containing heaven and earth within it—the sensible world. But this sensible world was, as it were, an after-birth (ὕστερα—hystera), compared to the true birth from the virgin spiritual womb, the ideal world of the æons above. Epiphanius has made a great muddle of this part of the system; it is evidently consanguineous with the Valentinian "deficiency" (ὑστέρημα—hysterêma), or abortion, the sensible world, without or external to the ideal fulness or perfection (πλήρωμα—plerôma), or world of the æons.

The inferior power, therefore, was the God of generation, the superior the God of enlightenment and wisdom. The Old Testament idea of God went no further than obedience to the commands of the inferior power. Those who had obeyed its behests were regarded as the worthies of old by the followers of the External Law, who seeing no further, had, in their traditions, vilified all who refused to follow this law, the commands of the inferior power of generation. Thus Abel and Jacob and Lot and Moses were praised by the followers of the law of generation; whereas in reality it was the opponents of these who ought to be praised, as followers of the Higher Law who despised the laws of the powers of generation, and were thus protected by Wisdom and taken to herself, to the æon above. They therefore claimed that Cain and Esau, and the inhabitants of the cities of the plain, and Coran, Dathan and Abiram, were types of those individuals or nations who had followed a higher law.

We can here see very plainly the traces of the same antitheses as those worked out by Justinus; the influence of the psychic powers or angels being traceable along the Abel line of descent, and that of the spiritual powers along the Cain line. This antithetical device, in one form or other, was common enough—as for instance, the later Ebionite antitheses of superior and inferior men (Isaac-Ishmael, Jacob-Esau, Moses-Aaron), or the Marcionite antitheses of the God of freedom and the God of the law, the God of Christ and the Jehovah of the Old Testament—but the school whose tenets we

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are describing, seem in their contempt for Jehovah, to have pushed their theories to the most extravagant conclusion of any. This is especially brought out in their ideas of New Testament history, which in spite of their strangeness, may nevertheless contain a small trace of the correct tradition of the cause of Jesus' death.

This Gnostic circle had a number of writings, chief amongst which were two small summaries of instruction, one called The Gospel of Judas and the other The Ascent of Paul. To take the latter first: The Ascent of Paul purported to contain the record of the ineffable things which Paul is reported to have heard when he ascended into the third heaven. Whether this was the same as the Apocalypse of Paul referred to by Augustine is uncertain; in any case it is lost. A more orthodox version of one of the documents of the same cycle has come down to us in The Vision of Paul, a translation of which may be read in the last volume of the Ante-Nicene Christian Library (1897). If we can rely on this title, for which Epiphanius alone is responsible, the school of the Cainites is consequently post-Pauline.

But the strangest and, from one point of view, the most interesting development of their theory, was the view they took of Judas. The "Poor Men's" (Ebionite) tradition had consistently handed over Judas to universal execration; there was, however, apparently another tradition, presumably Essene in the first place, which took a different view of the matter. Obscure traces of this seem to be preserved in the unintelligent Irenæus-Epiphanius account of the Cainite doctrines.

This circle of students looked upon Judas as a man far advanced in the discipline of the Gnosis, and one who had a very clear idea of the true God as distinguished from the God of generation; he consequently taught a complete divorcement from the things of the world and thus from the inferior power, which had made the heaven, the world and the flesh. Man was to ascend to the highest region through the crucifixion of the Christ. The Christ was the spirit which came down from above, in order that the stronger power of the spiritual world might be perfected in man; and so Jesus triumphed over the weaker power of generation at the expense of his body, which he handed over to death, one of the manifestations of the God of generation. This was the christological doctrine of

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the school, and it was apparently, judging from the "he says" of Epiphanius, taken from The Gospel of Judas.

But besides this general mystical teaching, there was also a historical tradition: that Jesus, after becoming the Christ and teaching the higher doctrine, in their opinion fell away and endeavoured to overset the law, and corrupt the holy doctrine, and therefore Judas had him handed over to the authorities. That is to say, those to whom Jesus originally taught the higher doctrine, considered that his too open preaching to the people was a divulging of the mysteries, and so finally brought about his condemnation for blasphemy by the Jewish authorities.

Yet another more mystical tradition, preserved in one of their books, declared that, on the contrary, the Christ had not made a mistake, but that all had been done according to the heavenly wisdom. For the world-rulers knew that if the Christ were betrayed to the cross, that is to say, were incarnated, that the inferior power would be drained out of them and they should ascend to the spiritual æon. Now Judas knew this, and in his great faith, used every means to bring about his betrayal, and in this way the salvation of the world. And thus we have preserved a dim trace of the pseudo-historical tradition of the mystery-drama. These Gnostics consequently praised Judas as being one of the main factors in the scheme of salvation; without him the mystical "salvation of the cross" would not have been consummated, nor the consequent revelation of the realms above.

The Cainite circle, therefore, from their doctrines appear to have been rigid ascetics. But says Epiphanius, embroidering on Irenæus, they were very dreadful people, and, like Carpocrates, taught that a man could not be saved without going through every kind of experience. We will therefore now take a brief glance at the views of the Carpocratians, who in other respects are the next link of our chain.

THE CARPOCRATIANS.

Our main source of information is Irenæus; Tertullian, Hippolytus and Epiphanius simply copy their predecessor. Carpocrates or Carpocras was (according to Eusebius) a Platonic philosopher who taught at Alexandria in the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117-138); he was

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also the head of a Gnostic circle, whom the Church fathers call Carpocratians, but who called themselves simply Gnostics. With regard to the charge which Epiphanius brings against them two hundred and fifty years afterwards, it is evidently founded on a complete misunderstanding of the jumbled account of Irenæus, if not of malice prepense; for the Bishop of Lyons distinctly says that he by no means believes that they did the things which he thinks they ought to have done if they had consistently carried out their teachings. As a matter of fact, the whole confusion arises through the incapacity of the latter Church father to understand the elements of the doctrine of rebirth. The main tenets of the school were as follows.

The sensible world was made by the fabricating powers, or builders, far inferior to the ineffable power of the unknown ingenerable Father. Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, and was born like all other men; he differed from the rest in that his soul, being strong and pure, *remembered* what it saw in its orbit round (or conversation with) the ineffable Father. This is the Platonic idea of the orderly course of the soul in harmonious circuit round the Spiritual Sun, in the Plain of Truth, when it is in its own nature. In consequence of this reminiscence (which is the source of all wisdom and virtue), the Father clothed him with powers, whereby he might escape from the dominion of the rulers of the world, and passing through all their spheres, and being freed from each, finally ascend to the Father. In like manner all souls of a like nature who put forth similar efforts, shall ascend to the Father. Though the soul of Jesus was brought up in the ordinary Jewish views, he soared above them, and thus by the powers he received from above, he triumphed over human passions.

Believing, then, that all souls which rise above the constraints of the world-building rulers, will receive similar powers and perform like wonders, these Gnostics still further claimed that some of their number had actually attained to the same degree of perfection as Jesus, if not to a higher degree, and were stronger than Peter and Paul, and the other disciples who had attained similar powers.

In fact, they boldly taught that men could reach higher degrees of illumination than Jesus; it is not, however, clear whether they made the usual distinction between Jesus and Christ. These powers were of a magical nature, and the next paragraph of Irenæus puts us strongly in mind of the tenets of the Simonian school. Such ideas

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seem to have been very prevalent, so much so, that Irenæus complains that outsiders were induced to think that such ideas were the common belief of Christianity.

The next paragraph deals with the doctrine that there is no essential evil in the universe, but that things are bad and good in man's opinion only. Let us, therefore, see how Irenæus arrives at this generalization from his summary of their doctrine of rebirth.

The soul has to pass through every kind of existence and activity in its cycle of rebirth. Irenæus is apparently drawing his information from a MS. which asserted that this could be done in one life; that is to say, apparently, that some souls now existing in the world could pay their karmic debt in one life. For the MS. quotes the saying, "Agree with thine adversary quickly whiles thou art in the way with him, lest at any time thine adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to his officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen, I say unto thee, thou shall not come forth thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." Now, the adversary is the accuser (diabolus), that is to say the karmic record in the man's own nature; the judge is the chief of the world-building powers; the officer is the builder of the new body; the prison is the body. Thus the MS., explains the text; precisely the same exegesis as is given to it in the Pistis Sophia treatise, which explains all in the fullest manner on the lines of reincarnation and karma.

But not so will Irenæus have it. He asserts that the doctrine means that the soul must pass through all experience good and bad, and until every experience has been learned, no one can be set free. That some souls can do all this in one life! That the Carpocratians, therefore, indulged in the most unmentionable crimes because they wished to fill full the tale of all experience good and bad, and so come to an end of the necessity of experience.

Irenæus, however, immediately afterwards adds that he does not believe the Carpocratians actually do such things, although he is forced to deduce such a logical consequence from their books. It is, however, evident that the whole absurd conclusion is entirely due to the stupidity of the Bishop of Lyons, who, owing to his inability to understand the most elementary facts of the doctrine of rebirth, has started with entirely erroneous premises, although the matter was as clear as daylight to a beginner in Gnosticism.

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The circle of the Carpocratians is said to have established a branch at Rome, about 150, under a certain Marcellina. They had pictures and statues of many great teachers who were held in honour by their school, such as Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, and also a portrait of Jesus.

It is curious to remark that Celsus, as quoted by Origen (c. 62), in referring to these Marcellians, also mentions the Harpocratians who derived their tenets from Salome. Is it possible that this is the correct form of the name? Harpocrates was the Græcised form of Horus, the mystery-god of the Egyptians, and Salome, we know, was a prominent figure in the lost Gospel according to the Egyptians.

"EPIPHANES."

We next pass on to the contradictory and manifestly absurd legends which Patristic writers have woven round the second best known name of the Carpocratian circle. We have already referred to the extraordinary blunder of Epiphanius, who has ascribed a whole system of the Gnosis, which he found in Irenæus assigned simply to a "distinguished teacher" (probably the Valentinian Marcus), to this Epiphanes; the Greek for "distinguished" being also "epiphanes."

This is excusable in a certain measure, seeing that Epiphanius wrote at the end of the fourth century, at least 250 years after the time of the actual Epiphanes, when any means of discrediting a heretic were considered justifiable; but what shall we say of Clement of Alexandria, who is generally fair and who lived in the same century as Epiphanes? His blunder is even more extraordinary. This is his legend. Epiphanes was the son of Carpocrates and Alexandria, a lady of Cephallenia. He died at the early age of seventeen, and was worshipped as a god with the most elaborate and lascivious rites by the Cephallenians, in the great temple of Same, on the day of the new moon.

Such an extraordinary legend could not long escape the penetrating criticism of modern scholarship, and as early as Mosheim the key was found to the mystery. Volkmar has worked this out in detail and shown that the festival at Same was in honour of the moon god, and accompanied with licentious rites. It was called the

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Epiphany (τὰ Ἐπιφάνια) in honour of Epiphanes (ὁ Ἐπιφανής), the "newly-appearing one," the new moon. This moon lasted some seventeen days. Thus Clement of Alexandria, deceived by the similarity of the names and also by the story of licentious rites, bequeathed to posterity a scandalous libel. It is almost to be doubted whether any Epiphanes existed! Clement further asserts that among the Carpocratians one of their most circulated books was a treatise On Justice, of which he had seen a copy. He ascribes this to Epiphanes, but it is scarcely possible to believe that a boy of seventeen or less could have composed an abstract dissertation on justice.

We thus come to the conclusion that the Carpocratians, or Harpocratians, were a Gnostic circle in Alexandria at the beginning of the second century, and that some of their ideas were set forth in a book concerning justice, a copy of which had come into the hands of Clement. This Gnostic community was much exercised with the idea of communism as practised by the early Christian circles; being also students of Plato they wished to reduce the idea to the form of a philosophical principle and carry it out to its logical conclusion. The false ideas of *meum* and *tuum* were no longer to exist; private property was the origin of all human miseries and the departure from the happy days of early freedom. There was, therefore, to be community of everything, wives and husbands included; thus carrying out in some fashion that most curious idea of Plato's as set forth in the Republic. We have, however, no reliable evidence that our Gnostics carried these ideas into practice; it is also highly improbable that men of education and refinement, as the Gnostics usually were, who came to such views through the Pythagorean and Platonic discipline, and through the teachings of Jesus (the sine quâ non condition of such ideal communities being that they should consist of "gnostics" and be ruled by "philosophers")—should have turned their meetings into orgies of lasciviousness. Such, however, is the accusation brought against them by Clement. This has already been in part refuted by what has been said above, but it is not improbable that there were communities at Alexandria and elsewhere, calling themselves Christian, who did confuse the Agapæ or Love-feasts of the early times with the orgies and feasts of the ignorant Pagan populace. The Pagans brought such accusations against the Christians indiscriminately and the Christian sects

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against one another; it is quite credible that such abuses did creep in among the ignorant and vicious.

The Carpocratian school has been sometimes claimed, though I think improperly, as the originator of the so-called Monadic Gnosis. This idea has been worked out with much detail by Neander. The following summary of Salmon's will, however, be sufficient for the general reader from which to form an idea of the theory.

"From one eternal Monad all existence has flowed, and to this it strives to return. But the finite spirits who rule over several portions of the world counteract this universal striving after unity. From them the different popular religions, and in particular the Jewish, have proceeded. Perfection is attained by those souls who, led on by reminiscences of their former conditions soar above all limitation and diversity to the contemplation of the higher unity. They despise the restriction imposed by the mundane spirits; they regard externals as of no importance, and faith and love as the only essentials; meaning by faith, mystical brooding of the mind absorbed in the original unity. In this way they escape the dominion of the finite mundane spirits; their souls are freed from imprisonment in matter, and they obtain a state of perfect repose (corresponding to the Buddhist Nirvâṇa) when they have completely ascended above the world of appearance."

The Cerinthians.

Continuing to pick our way back along this trace towards the times of the origins we next come upon the circle of the Cerinthians (or the Merinthians according to the variant of Epiphanius). They are said to derive their name from a certain Cerinthus, who is placed in "apostolic times," that is to say the latter half of the first century.

Epiphanius has busied himself exceedingly over Cerinthus and cleverly made him a scapegoat for the "pillar-apostles'" antagonism to Paul. Most writers have followed his lead and explained away a number of compromising statements in the Acts and Pauline Letters by this device. Impartial criticism, however, has to reject the lucubrations of the late Epiphanius, and go back to the short account of Irenæus from whom all later writers have copied. Irenæus, who was himself a full century after Cerinthus, has only a brief paragraph on the subject.

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Cerinthus is the strongest trace between Ebionism, or the original non-Pauline tradition, and the beginning of the second century. He is supposed to have come into personal contact with John, the supposed writer of the fourth Gospel, but the same story is told of the mythic Ebion, and must therefore be dismissed as destitute of all historical value.

Cerinthus is said to have been trained in the "Egyptian discipline," and to have taught in Asia Minor. The Egyptian discipline is supposed to mean the Philonic school, but this is a mere assumption. In any case the importance of Cerinthus, whom some Gnostics claimed to have been the writer of the Apocalypse orthodoxly ascribed to John, is that his name has preserved one of the earliest forms of Christian tradition. Its cosmogony declared the stupendous excellence of the God over all, beyond the subordinate power, the World-fashioner. Its christology declared that Jesus was son of Joseph and Mary; that at his "baptism" the Christ, the "Father in the form of a dove," descended upon him, and only then did he begin to prophesy and do mighty works, and preach the hitherto unknown Father (unknown to the Jews), the God over all. That the Christ then left him; and then Jesus suffered, and rose again (that is, appeared to his followers after death).

Such is the account of Irenæus, which seems to be straightforward and reliable enough as far as it goes. The scripture of the Cerinthians was not the Hebrew recension of the Sayings ascribed to Matthew, which formed one of the four sources of the present Greek text of the first Synoptic, but a still earlier collection in Hebrew. All other collections and recensions were rejected as utterly apocryphal. The Greek writer of the fourth canonical Gospel is said to have composed his account in opposition to the school of Cerinthus.

The Nicolaitans.

We have now got back to such early times that even the faintest glimmer of historical light fails us; we are now deep in the sombre region of legend and speculation. We will, therefore, plunge no further into the dark depths of the cave of the origins; but once more retrace our steps to the mouth of the cavern, where at least some fitful gleams of daylight struggle through. But before doing so, we must

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call the reader's attention to a just discernable shadow of early Gnosticism, the circle of the Nicolaitans. These Gnostics are of especial interest to the orthodox, because the writer of the Apocalypse has twice gone out of his way to tell us that he hates their doings. Encouraged by this phrase, Irenæus includes the Nicolaitans in the writer's condemnation of some of the members of the church of Pergamus, who apparently "ate things sacrificed to idols and committed fornication." Subsequent hæresiologists, in their turn encouraged by Irenæus, added further embellishments, until finally Epiphanius makes Nicolaus the father of every enormity he had collected or invented against the Gnostics.

And then with all this "evidence" of his iniquity, Epiphanius rhetorically proceeds to address the shade of the unfortunate Gnostic: "What, then, am I to say to thee, O Nicolaus?" For ourselves we are surprised that so inventive a genius as the Bishop of Salamis should have drawn breath even to put so rhetorical a question.

Tradition claims Nicolaus as an ascetic, and relates an exaggerated instance of his freedom from passion. Even granted that he taught that the eating of sacrificial viands was not a deadly sin, there seems no reason why we to-day should follow these Church fathers in their bigotry-begotten condemnation of everything but their own grey view of the Christ's doctrine.

CERDO.

Let us now return to the historical twilight of the second century, and turn our attention to the great Basilidian and Valentinian developments. But before doing so, it will be convenient to give a brief sketch of the great and contemporaneous Marcionite movement which at one time threatened to absorb the whole of Christendom. The method of this school was the direct prototype of the method of modern criticism. Its conclusions, however, were far more sweeping; for it not only rejected the Old Testament entirely, but also the whole of the documents of the "in order that it might be fulfilled" school of Gospel compilation.

The predecessor of Marcion is said to have been a certain Cerdo, of Syrian extraction, who flourished at Rome about 135 A.D. But the fame of Marcion so eclipsed the name of his preceptor, that

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Patristic writers frequently confuse not only their teachings but even the men themselves. It is interesting to note that though Cerdo's relationship with the Church of Rome was unsettled, no distinct sentence of excommunication is recorded against him; it, therefore, would appear that the idea of a rigid canon of orthodoxy was not yet developed even in the exclusive mind of the Roman presbytery. It was no doubt the success of Marcion which precipitated the formulation of the idea of the canon in the mind of the Roman church, the pioneer of subsequent orthodoxy.

MARCION.

Marcion was a rich shipowner of Sinope, the chief port of Pontus, on the southern shore of the Black Sea; he was also a bishop and the son of a bishop. His chief activity at Rome may be placed somewhere between the years 150 and 160. At first he was in communion with the church at Rome, and contributed handsomely to its funds; as, however, the presbyters could not explain his difficulties and refused to face the important questions he set before them, he is said to have threatened to make a schism in the church; and apparently was finally excommunicated. But as a matter of fact the origin of Marcionism is entirely wrapped in obscurity, and we know nothing of a reliable nature of the lives of either Cerdo or Marcion.

The Church writers at the end of the second century, who are our best authorities, cannot tell the story of the beginning of the movement with any certainty. For all we know, Marcion may have developed his theories long before he came to Rome, and may have based them on information he gleaned and opinions he heard in his long voyages. This much we know, that the views of Marcion spread rapidly over the "whole world," to use the usual Patristic phrase for the Græco-Roman dominions; and as late as the fifth century we hear of Theodoret converting more than a thousand Marcionites. In Italy, Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, Syria, Asia Minor and Persia, Marcionite churches sprang up, splendidly organized, with their own bishops and the rest of the ecclesiastical discipline, with a cult and service of the same nature as those of what subsequently became the Catholic Church. Orthodoxy had not declared for any party as yet, and the Marcionite view had then as good a

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chance as any other of becoming the universal one. What then was the secret of Marcion's success? As already pointed out, it was the same as that of the success of modern criticism as applied to the problem of the Old Testament.

Marcion's view was in some respects even more moderate than the judgment of some of our modern thinkers; he was willing to admit that the Jehovah of the Old Testament was just. With great acumen he arranged the sayings and doings ascribed to Jehovah by the writers, and compilers, and editors of the heterogeneous books of the Old Testament collection, in parallel columns, so to say, with the sayings and teachings of Christ, in a series of antitheses which brought out in startling fashion the fact, that though the best of the former might be ascribed to the idea of a Just God, they were foreign to the ideal of the Good God preached by the Christ. We know how in these latter days the best minds in the Church have rejected the horrible sayings and doings ascribed to God in some of the Old Testament documents, and we thus see how Marcion at once voiced a protest which must have already declared itself in the hearts of thousands of the more enlightened of the Christian name.

As for the New Testament, in Marcion's time, the idea of a canon was only just being thought of. Marcion, too, had an idea of a canon, but it was the antipodes of the views which afterwards became the basis of the orthodox canon.

The Christ had preached a universal doctrine, a new revelation of the Good God, the Father over all. They who tried to graft this on to Judaism, the imperfect creed of one small nation, were in grievous error, and had totally misunderstood the teaching of the Christ. The Christ was not the Messiah promised to the Jews. That Messiah was to be an earthly king, was intended for the Jews alone, and had not yet come. Therefore the pseudo-historical "in order that it might be fulfilled" school had adulterated and garbled the original Sayings of the Lord, the universal glad tidings, by the unintelligent and erroneous glosses they had woven into their collections of the teachings. It was the most terrific indictment of the cycle of New Testament legend that had ever been formulated. Men were tired of all the contradictions and obscurities of the innumerable, mutually destructive variants of the traditions of the historical

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Jesus. No man could say what was the truth now that "history" had been so altered to suit the new Messiah-theory of the Jewish converts.

As to actual history, then, Marcion started with Paul; he was the first who had really understood the mission of the Christ, and had rescued the teaching from the obscurantism of Jewish sectarianism. Of the manifold versions of the Gospels, he would have the Pauline alone. He rejected every other recension, including those ascribed to Matthew, Mark and John. The Gospel according to Luke, the follower of Paul, he also rejected; at any rate in its subsequent orthodox form. This he regarded as a recension to suit the views of the Judaising party. His Gospel was the Pauline collection of Sayings. Of course the Patristic writers say that Marcion mutiliated Luke's version; but it is almost impossible to believe that, if he did this, so keen a critic as Marcion should have retained certain verses which made against his strong anti-Judaistic views. The Marcionites, on the contrary, contended that their Gospel was written by Paul from the direct tradition, and that Luke had nothing to do with it.

So many orthodox writers wrote against Marcion after his death, that it is possible to reconstruct almost the whole of his Gospel. It begins with the public preaching of the Christ at Capernaum; it is shorter than the present Luke document, and some writers of great ability have held that it was the original of Luke's version. As for the rest of the documents included in the present collection of the New Testament, Marcion would have nothing to do with any of them, except ten of the Letters of Paul, parts of which he also rejected as interpolations by the reconciliators of the Petro-Pauline controversy. These ten Letters were called The Apostle.

The longest criticism of Marcion's views is to be found in Tertullian's invective Against Marcion, written in 207 and the following years. This has always been regarded by the orthodox as a most brilliant piece of work; but by the light of the conclusions arrived at by the industry of the modern criticism, and also to ordinary common sense, it appears but a sorry piece of angry rhetoric. Tertullian tries to show that Marcion taught two Gods, the Just and the Good. Marcion, however, taught that the *idea* of the Jews about God, as set forth in the Old Testament, was inferior

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and antagonistic to the ideal of the Good God revealed by the Christ. This he set forth in the usual Gnostic fashion. But we can hardly expect a dispassionate treatment of a grave problem which has only in the last few years reached a satisfactory solution in Christendom, from the fanatic Tertullian, whose temper may be gleaned from his angry address to the Marcionites: "Now then, ye dogs, whom the apostle puts outside, and who yelp at the God of truth, let us come to your various questions. These are the bones of contention, which ye are perpetually gnawing!"

(*To be continued.*)

G. R. S. MEAD.

THE SAGE AND THE THREE YOUNG MEN.

A SAGA BY A. KNÖS.

IN the once-upon-a-time there lived an old man who was very wise. His reputation as a sage was known everywhere, and many sought his presence in order that they might gain help and wisdom. One day there came to him three youths. They were all in that golden age of hope and expectancy, full of the joy and vigour of life, when the soul is burning with the desire for activity, before disappointment has occurred to cool the zeal and ardour of youth and whilst the ideal still shines out in unclouded beauty. They seemed most eager to get information from the old man so that afterwards they might be able to benefit others by their knowledge. The first asked:

"Good father, of thy wisdom I pray thee to give me something by which I may be of service to my fellow creatures. I am filled with an intense desire to be of use in the world, and certain it is that thou better than any one else can teach me that which is necessary thereto."

The sage answered:

"I read thy eagerness in thine eyes. But dost thou possess patience and perseverance? The path of knowledge is steep, and at times most wearisome."

"I will do anything, if thou wilt but grant my wish."

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"What then, is thy choice? Mark well, though. Thy decision once made, thou must rest satisfied. It cannot be undone, nor canst thou choose again."

"I am well aware that such is the demand made of those who seek to draw the pure water of knowledge from thy fount of wisdom. Well then, my choice is already made. As I journeyed here I saw on the road an afflicted and wretched man, who with much pain and difficulty was trying to creep along. The sight of him set me thinking that it would be a glorious thing to be able to help the suffering and heal the sick. In this way many would be helped to happiness and well-being. Therefore, I pray thee, teach me the remedies for all sickness and disease, and then I shall be eternally grateful, and all mankind will bless thee."

"It is not enough to know the remedies, in the first place thou must learn to know the diseases themselves. For in every case it is necessary to be able to recognise what disease it is that must be cured. To be able to understand this thou must know each separate organ of the body, with its object and functions. Then a knowledge is required of the composition and effects of the various remedies, and to acquire this thou must know the foundations upon which a number of natural laws rest, as well as how these laws further evolve with completely accurate results."

"Is there so much? Is it not enough to know the special remedy for each disease?"

"There are many diseases and many remedies. If thou dost not learn to distinguish each separately, then there would be the risk of committing mistakes, and thy imperfect knowledge would thus become more of a curse than a blessing to those whom thou wouldst aid."

"And how long will it take me then to acquire the amount of information which thou considerest necessary?"

"That dependeth on thy perseverance. But, however industrious thou mayest be, many years must elapse before thou canst gain sufficient experience."

"So long? I have never thought that. I wish to help my fellow creatures much sooner, almost directly. So long I cannot wait. During that time so many would die unhelped. No, there must be a quicker way. I will search for it. So farewell, father."

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And he went away.

Then the second youth came forward and said:

"Thou wilt not be rid of me so easily, O sage. I am burning with desire for another kind of knowledge. It does not concern the things of the body, nor does it pertain to this earth alone. My eager longing is aroused by the boundless firmament, and my soul seeks for the wisdom which comprehends cosmic space. I know that this space is full of worlds, which follow courses determined by mysteriously working forces. Teach me, then, O sage, thou who hast knowledge of all things, the laws of these forces. It ought to be a glorious task, with cognizance of these laws, to be able to calculate the course of those onward circling worlds, and moreover ascertain their relation to one another, as well as to reveal those secrets which might give clearer information respecting our own earth. It is a knowledge of the great world which I aspire to, and this gained I will afterwards proceed to investigate the lesser world. According to my belief this is the only lofty path. And when I have once succeeded in increasing my own knowledge, I will go forth and give mankind the benefit thereof, and this ought surely to become a help to enlightenment and happiness."

"Understandest thou that for such knowledge much preparatory study is needed?"

"I see it, and am prepared for it. Prepared to sacrifice years of my life to this study, in order to be able in my turn to instruct others."

"And knowest thou that for the sake of this thy studies must be extended not only to the natural sciences in general, but especially to the mathematical. Thou knowest the whole chain through which these last mentioned run, and how thou must go along this chain, link by link, proof after proof, in order to finally reach thy goal. Art thou prepared for the work all this demands?"

"I am aware of it, and with all diligence I am ready to devote myself seriously to it."

"And thou dost resign thyself to this work not merely that thou mayst increase thy learning, but, as I understand, that thou mayst be able in due time to instruct others? Is this the aim thou hast set before thee?"

"Yes, that is my aim, and it seems to me both grand and worth striving after."

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"And dost thou believe then that the multitude will afterwards follow thee upon this laborious path to wisdom, with the same amount of earnestness and endurance which thou thyself hast given?"

"Most certainly! Can there be any subject of research wider and grander than this? It must surely interest all!"

"So thou mayest think. But the subject will appear in a very different light to those who by the sweat of their brow must work to gain their daily bread. The laws of the cosmos will be all the same to them. The interest of the multitude thou couldst never hope to awake. They could not earn their bread by such learning, nor would it influence their hard, every-day existence. Comparatively few would be interested in thy teaching, and out of these only an infinitesimally small number would have courage and patience to tread the hard and troublesome path upon which thou art now prepared to take the first step. Still more! Thou mayest believe me, for well I know the world and its people; and I moreover declare that this knowledge thou art dreaming of will never accomplish the great work thou thinkest possible, neither is it calculated to make mankind, in a true sense, happier. In order to do this something more than wisdom and learning is required—even if these could comprehend all things beneath the heavens."

The youth seemed deeply distressed. The words of the old man had shattered his illusions. The aim which seemed so magnificent, and which had dazzled his eyes with its radiant glitter, now sank down dim and faded, and no longer appeared worth striving for. Sad and heavy of heart, he went his way.

The third youth alone remained, and he was thoughtful and serious.

"And what is the aim and the work that thou art meditating for the sake of others?"

"The words which thou hast spoken to my companions, wise father, have only served to strengthen my idea of what is, and ought to be, the highest aim of all, and most worth striving for. If I am to help others I must give them that which will be of real use to them. To heal the sick and to comfort the sorrowing are beautiful things, to inspire mankind with a desire for wisdom is a splendid thought, but most glorious of all, to my thinking, would be to teach people to lead lives of *truth* and *goodness*."

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"Grand and noble is thy thought. But dost thou not look for something in return for thy work in the service of truth?"

"Nothing more than the gratitude of my fellow-beings."

"Thou wilt not even get that."

"Nevertheless, I will work for them; I will not even ask for gratitude. Teach me, O wise father, the profound mysteries of truth, and it shall be my delight to proclaim them, and to suffer for them if it should be necessary."

"Art thou then for thy own part prepared to receive them?"

"In truth, yes! O sage, thou couldst not possibly find a pupil with a more earnest desire for knowledge."

"That is not sufficient. Thy thirst for knowledge must find its development through constant and untiring labour, and this alone can guide thee in the direction of truth. However much wisdom may be possessed by another, it can but help thee a little. If thou wouldst become a defender of truth and a helper of humanity it is requisite that thou must thyself search for the pearl of truth. Without this, thy work amongst mankind will be fruitless and no one can have this precious pearl who has not himself discovered it. Only very rarely wilt thou receive any direction on the path of research, and it will not carry thee far. Through the darkness of doubt, and over the quagmire of the passions must thou pass on thy way. Cast from thee all pleasure, forget thyself, leave all hope behind, and lead a life of self-sacrifice alone, for others' sake. If eventually the pearl of truth thou findest, then thou must promise never to use it for thy own advantage, and finally thou must be prepared to suffer all things for the truth. If thy heart fails thee, and thou canst not be certain that thy strength and courage will suffice to carry thee through all this, then is it wiser to forego the search for the pearl."

"Good father, thy words terrify me. Thou makest me fearful and hesitating, for almost impossible would it be to say now that I should be certain to overcome all these difficulties which must beset my path. Thou seest my uncertainty. Oh! counsel and direct me what I ought to do."

"Bide thy time, and for the present labour to gather strength sufficient to go on and take the great step towards which thy mind is turned, and which has aroused thy ardour."

"Must I then think only of myself? I journeyed hither in the

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hope that I might learn that which could be of special use to others. Canst thou not give me some small portion of the knowledge which is truth, so that whilst working at my own development, I may at the same time be able to point others to the path?"

"I have already told thee that truth must be found by thyself alone. In proportion as thou findest it, thou mayst endeavour to share it with others. Thy desire is to reform mankind through the preaching of truth. Remember then, that every reformer must first reform himself, if he is desirous that people may listen to his words. His life and actions must be in strict harmony with his teaching. Still one thing more thou must bear well in mind: thy fellow-beings will not be benefited by merely *listening*, nor by ever so much *learning* about the good and the true; for only when they know and understand to do what is right, will they become better."

The young man was silent, sunk in meditation on the words of the sage. He had imagined that with calm delight he would be able to satisfy his thirst for knowledge from the sage's fount of wisdom.

But that which he had been told, was so surprisingly new.

He went his way deep in thought.

(*Translated from the Swedish by* MRS. HAIG.)

THE PHÆDO OF PLATO.

(*Continued from p.* 131.)

III.

WE have now arrived at the conclusion of the great series of arguments by which Socrates endeavours to awaken in the minds of his companions a conviction corresponding to his own in respect to the immortality of the soul. Another consideration, to which he briefly adverts, may be offered as an additional, and perhaps unanswerable, argument to all those who admit an over-ruling Providence, or believe that a law of justice lies at the foundation of the universe. For if to all men death bring the same end, and if the soul perish together with the body, the good are surely placed

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at a great disadvantage as compared with the wicked, whom death absolves from the retribution due to their sins. Nor can we lessen the force of such a reflection by insisting upon the supposed triviality of human affairs; for if we once assume that the law of justice may fail in any, the most trifling particular, we have no sure ground for our faith that it holds good in the most important concerns.

The remainder of Socrates' discourse deals largely with the soul's life in the afterworld. When the soul arrives at Hades (the unseen place) it is said to possess nothing but discipline and education. To Hades the souls are conducted by their guardian dæmons. There they are judged, and receive their proper allotments; and thence, "after many and long periods of time," they are by other dæmons conducted back to the earth, that they may again incarnate. Now in the *Republic*, Plato describes the soul's journey beneath the earth—*i.e.*, the interval between two incarnations—as a journey of a thousand years. Here in the *Phædo*, however, he speaks of "many and long periods of time." But the former expression is not to be taken literally; by the thousand years is meant not a measure of time, but a measure of perfection.

The Pythagoreans denominated the number ten the perfect number, as the basis of their decimal system of calculation, and as including the forms of all numbers in itself, as the soul contains in herself the forms of all things. In an ancient Pythagorean fragment, attributed to Philolaus, it is written, "We must contemplate the works and the essence of number according to the power which is in the decad; for the power of the decad is great and all-perfect and all-working, a principle and guide and ordainer of divine and celestial and human life." The decad is therefore assimilated to the monad, in which all number causally abides. As, moreover, the duad, being the number of contraries, is the symbol of progression or manifestation, Plato, in the *Republic*, assumes the *second* power of ten (10 × 10), or the period of 100 years, as the sum of a single earth-life, or manifestation of the soul in body. And as the triad is the number of conversion or return, he takes the *third* power of ten (10 × 10 × 10), or the period of one thousand years, as the measure of the interval which brings the soul back to generation. The multiplication of the number of years in an earth-life by ten, to produce

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the period of the interval, has reference also to the multiplicative nature of both good and evil Karma; as a single action, a single thought, is multiplied in its consequences. And lastly, as the solid figure of the cube is properly adapted to a terrestrial condition, so the cubic figure 1000 (10×10×10) is chosen as that of the period which concludes with the return of the soul to earth. By the thousand years, therefore, Plato means not a definite measure of time, but the period in which the soul assimilates the experiences of its past life, and prepares for a new incarnation; and this period must be longer or shorter according to the nature of its experiences.

The belief in dæmons, as the guardians and leaders of souls, is an important and most interesting feature of the Hellenic religion, upon which, however, I can here offer but a few observations. It is a fundamental doctrine of Platonic philosophy, that all things, from highest Being to lowest materiality, which is the mere shadow of being, are bound together in a perfectly-ordered gradation; that there is no break in the continuity, that which is first on every plane being closely assimilated to that which is last on the plane immediately above it. Hence it follows that between the eternal Gods and mortal men there are various grades of intelligent beings, some of whom are more nearly allied to the divine, and others to the mortal nature; and all these middle powers are comprehended under the general term of dæmons. It is, indeed, a widely comprehensive appellation, for we find it sometimes applied to the departed souls of virtuous men, sometimes also to beings of a far lower order, and, in general, to almost every kind of intelligent, or semi-intelligent entity, which is not bound to an earthly body. But most of these were called dæmons only by analogy; the true, or essential, dæmons are those which hold a middle position between the Gods and mortal natures, connecting both, and constituting the medium whereby the providential energies of divinity are transmitted to mortals, and the aspirations of mortals are carried upward to the Gods. The dæmonic nature is, therefore, essentially connective, and it is for this reason that Diotima, in the *Banquet*, calls Love a dæmon, as being a power connective of the lover and the beloved.

Now the Gods are indeed One, if we consider them according to their deific characteristic, the unity which transcends being; but

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they are many, considered according to their relation to inferior natures. Under every mundane deity, or God who rules within the universe, is arranged an attendant throng of dæmons, in order, as Taylor expresses it, "that the divinity may be connected with man, and that the progression of things may form an entire whole, suspended, like the golden chain of Homer, from the summit of Olympus."* The highest order of dæmons consists of those who immediately conjoin to the divine nature such souls as are completely purified, and whose essence and energy are in perfect accord. These dæmons are sometimes called Gods, not as being Gods essentially, but from their proximity to deity; as Plato, on the other hand, occasionally gives the appellations of dæmons to the Gods themselves, regarded under certain relations. To this highest order the dæmons of Socrates and Plotinus are said to have belonged; but although every rational soul, being in its essence intellectual and divine, has such a divine dæmon as its essential guardian, souls which have not yet attained liberation are under the especial guardianship of dæmons of a less exalted rank—those, namely, whose office it is to watch over the descent and ascent of souls. It is to dæmons of this order that Plato alludes in the *Phædo*, as conducting the soul to judgment and leading it again in due time to the earth. But since the soul is self-motive, it may follow its dæmon either willingly or reluctantly and with difficulty; only in the long run it is compelled to follow, for, rebel as we may against the guidance, we are never left without a guide, and the dæmon is the medium of divine justice, from which there is no escape. When, finally, the soul returns again to incarnate upon the earth, a new dæmon is allotted to it in accordance with the new life for which it has fitted itself.

There are dæmons of yet lower orders, intermediaries between the Gods and all the productions of nature, but with these we need not at present concern ourselves. It is important, however, to remember that all dæmonic natures, lower as well as higher, are necessary links of the great chain which binds together all the planes of existence. "He who denies the dæmons," says Plutarch, "denies providence and breaks the chain that unites the world with the throne of God." The Christian notion of guardian angels, and the

* Taylor's *Plato*, vol. i. p 16, *note*.

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invocation of saints, must be regarded as relics of the ancient faith in dæmons.

The account which Socrates gives of the earth, of its fair abodes on high, and of the subterranean rivers, is in great part avowedly a fable; but it is a fable with an inner meaning of profound truth. Indeed, Socrates himself seems to hint as much when he says that to affirm that these things are exactly as he has described them, is not the part of a wise man, but that it is right, nevertheless, to believe that something of the kind takes place. By these words, it appears to me, he intimates as clearly as possible that we must look beneath the surface to discover the true significance of the fable. He tells us, in the first place, that the earth is of a spherical figure, and situated in the middle of the heavens. That Plato imagined this planet which we call earth to occupy a central and stationary position in the heavens, is I think, scarcely to be doubted; it is possible, though by no means certain, that he knew of the earth's revolution upon its axis. In Plutarch's *Life of Numa*, however, we find the following interesting passage which bears upon this question. "The earth they (the Pythagoreans) suppose not to be without motion, nor situated in the centre of the world, but to make its revolution round the sphere of fire, being neither one of the most valuable nor principal parts of the great machine. Plato, too, in his old age, is reported to have been of the same opinion, assigning the earth a different situation from the centre, and leaving that, as the place of honour, to a nobler element." Now on the surface this passage might seem to point to the conclusion that Plato in his old age, was acquainted with the doctrine of the earth's revolution about the sun, but, as a matter of fact, it will not support any such inference. For by the central fire the Pythagoreans understood not the visible sun at all, but a life-giving principle, irradiating all things from the centre, and about which the sun itself revolved, with the other heavenly bodies. In any case, if we are to take what is said in the *Phædo* and *Timæus* in a literal sense, we can hardly doubt that, when these dialogues were written, Plato was convinced that the earth occupied in the heavens a central and stationary position.

After all, this is perhaps a point of minor importance. Let us take Plato's theory in a more mystical sense, and try if we can arrive at some more satisfactory conclusion. The universe was represented

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under the figure of a sphere, not because it was supposed to terminate in a circumference, equidistant so many miles from the centre, but rather for the following reasons. The circle is a figure without beginning or end, subsisting always uniformly about its centre, and returning upon itself. It is thus, in the first place, an apt emblem of the intelligible world, or eternal Being. For its having neither beginning nor end denotes eternity, its uniformity with relation to its centre denotes immutability, and its unvarying sameness of progression, returning continually upon itself, denotes a nature which is all-perfect and self-sufficient. In the second place the circle, or sphere, is a fit emblem of the material universe, since this is generated by the creative intellect as an image of the intelligible world; and as the latter is eternal, perfect in itself, and a whole comprehensive of all true being, so the material universe is perpetual, perfect in itself, and a whole comprehensive of all sensible natures. And furthermore, every total nature within the universe—every nature, that is, which comprises in itself all that is necessary to its existence, is likewise said to be constituted in the figure of a sphere. Of such natures are the spheres of earth and the other planets. And this is true physically, no less than symbolically; since even the universe may be regarded physically as an infinite sphere, of which the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere.

Now as all the planes correspond with one another, it follows that the four elements of which the sensible universe is constituted must subsist, in an appropriate manner, upon every plane; upon the material plane, corporeally; intellectually, upon the intellectual. Earth, therefore, which is here solid and, of itself, motionless, represents, on the plane of intellect, the solidity and stability which are there; and when it is said to occupy a central and stationary position in the universe, we may understand by this that the universe is established upon a solid and stable foundation. There is, moreover, another method of explaining the assertion that earth is at the centre of the universe. For as earth is the heaviest and grossest of the elements, it may be taken to symbolize the lowest and grossest plane of material existence, and hence the central position is justly assigned to it, since the centre is the lowest point within the sphere, as being the most remote from the circumference. But by the circumference of the universe is signified the least

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material of its planes, and that which is most closely allied to an immaterial and intellectual nature.*

The true earth, according to Socrates, is prodigiously great, and it is "of a pure nature, and situated in the pure heavens, in which the stars are contained, and which most of those who are accustomed to speak about such particulars denominate æther." But within the earth there are many hollow places, of various forms and magnitudes, into which the dregs of this pure earth continually flow; and such are the places which we now inhabit, imagining, by reason of our blindness, that we dwell upon the upper parts of the earth. That we may understand this portion of this discourse, some information will be requisite concerning the vehicles of the soul, and in the investigation of this subject we shall derive the greatest assistance from the *Timæus* of Plato, and especially from the Commentary of Proclus upon that dialogue.

Soul is the vital and motive power through which the creative intellect imparts life and motion to the world. No atom of the universe is devoid of soul, and every corporeal nature is its vehicle. The universe itself is a divine animal, proceeding from intelligible Animal, and comprising within itself the physical manifestation of every form of life which subsists in the Ideal World. As an animal, therefore, it possesses an intellect in energy, derived from the supermundane Intellect, a rational soul, an irrational nature, and certain bodies, the vehicles of the soul in space. These vehicles are three, of which the first is formed of the æther, or celestial fire, and is termed the ætherial body; the second is formed of the pure elements, and is called the aerial body; while the third, or terrestrial body, consists of what may be dominated the dregs of the elements, of elements, namely, impure and commingled, as we know them on this, the lowest plane of material manifestation.

But the universe is also divine, and a God, inasmuch as it is an all-perfect whole, and contains in itself totally all the mundane progressions of deity. And in a lesser degree, every total nature subsisting within the universe, such as Earth and the other heavenly bodies, is likewise a God and a divine animal, possessing a soul and the vehicles of soul. The universe itself, then, and the divine wholes

* Thus, according to Plato in the *Timæus*, the demiurgus "fabricated *within* soul the whole of the corporeal nature."

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which it contains, are the mundane Gods, the divinities who give completion to the sensible world, and from their divine nature are suspended all inferior natures, *viz.*, soul and the three vehicles thereof, inasmuch as the power and providence of deity extend through all things without exception. Partial souls, such as ours, which descend into the lowest material plane, possess also these three vehicles, but whereas our energies are limited by the nature of the vehicle in which we are acting, it is otherwise with the Gods, whose energies are eternal and unrestrained, and whose vehicles are merely a means of manifestation on different planes. To dæmonic souls, holding a middle position, the ætherial and aerial vehicles are alone ascribed, since neither are their powers total and extending to all things, like those of the Gods, nor do they descend into a life grossly material, such as ours.

But it is necessary to investigate more particularly the nature of these vehicles. The highest, or ætherial, body is fabricated by the demiurgic Intellect, and is connote with the mundane existence of the soul. That is to say, as soon as the rational soul proceeds from its source in intellect, and receives its allotment in the universe of space and time, it employs this ætherial body as its vehicle. This vehicle is spherical in form, and is distinguished as "simple and immaterial," being formed of the celestial fire, or æther, which is not the burning fire of earth, but a simple, unburning, vivific radiance, containing in itself causally, but not corporeally, the powers of the other elements. Of this fire the heavens are constituted, as the first vehicle of the universal soul, and of the same fire the ætherial vehicle of every rational soul within the universe is perpetually generated. As being *perpetually* generated, it is immortal, since although, being generated, it may be said to consist of parts, its parts are homogeneous, and therefore not mutually destructive; only it subsists by a continuous influx and efflux of celestial fire. And it is immaterial as compared with the lower and grosser vehicles of the soul; since, being on the highest plane of corporeal existence, it is assimilated as closely as possible to that which is immaterial, and participates of the vital and self-motive characteristics of the soul itself. And as the summit or source of the irrational nature subsists perpetually in the rational soul, so the summits of the senses subsist unitedly, as one impassive sense, in the ætherial vehicle. Now, according to

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Proclus, the primary characteristic of fire is not heat, but visibility. Not that this celestial fire is of itself visible to our terrestrial organs of sight, which require an admixture of the earthly element; but it is essentially visible, and to a higher sense than ours. As fire is the source of light, so is earth of darkness, and pure light is invisible to us without its contrary; for which reason we perceive the light of the stars, which have an earthly body, but not that of the interstellar spaces, where earth subsists only causally, and not corporeally. The celestial fire is, then, a kind of link between the purely immaterial light of intellect, and that light which is apparent to our material senses. It is thus a fit vehicle for the rational soul, which, using it, lives a celestial life, assimilated to the life of the Gods.

But since the rational soul possesses in itself the summit of the irrational nature, it may descend in order to develope that nature, which, becoming developed, requires also an appropriate vehicle. Divine and total natures, indeed, develope their lower vehicles without descending, as by a certain illumination proceeding from their essence; but partial souls descend for that purpose, although they are still conjoined to the Gods by their guardian dæmons. The descent, therefore, is from the sphere of perpetually generated life into the sphere of mortality, the region of generation and corruption. In this gradual descent the irrational nature is gradually unfolded, and it clothes itself by degrees in a body formed from the pure elements, which is denominated the aerial or spiritual body (τὸ πνευματικὸν σῶμα). This vehicle is said to be fashioned by the junior or mundane Gods, who weave together the mortal and immortal natures; since that which proceeds from the demiurgus himself is of necessity but one remove from intellectual wholeness, and as intellect is eternal, that which emanates directly from it is immortal. But the irrational nature is mortal, except in so far as it has a causal subsistence within the rational soul; and in like manner its vehicle is mortal, except as regards its causal subsistence in the celestial fire; since it is in time dissolved, and restored to the elements from which it was congregated. The aerial vehicle is distinguished as "simple and material." It is simple, as being constituted of pure elements, and as not possessing separate organs of sense, but having the senses united as one passive sense in every part of it. And it is called material, because it contains all

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the elements materially, and not according to their immaterial powers alone. Lastly, it is called "aerial" because the element of air predominates in its constitution, and this is more particularly the case with the highest and purest of aerial vehicles, since in their descent they become heavier by degrees through the increase of the moist or watery element. "For souls," says Proclus, "in descending, receive from the elements different vehicles, aerial, aquatic and terrestrial, and thus at last enter into this gross bulk. For how, without a medium, could they proceed into this body from immaterial spirits? Hence before they come into this body they possess the irrational life, and its vehicle, which is prepared from the simple elements, and from these they become invested with *tumult* [*i.e.*, a nature subject to generation and corruption], which is so called as being foreign to the connate [ætherial] vehicle of souls, and as composed of all-various vestments, and causing souls to become heavy. . . . And as the lapse is from that which is incorporeal into body, and a life with body, according to which the soul lives in conjunction with its celestial vehicle; so from this, the descent is into a genesiurgic body, according to which the soul is in generation, and from this into a terrestrial body, according to which it lives with the testaceous body [*i.e.*, our present earthly body]. Hence, before it is surrounded with this last body it is invested with a body which connects it with all generation. And on this account, it then leaves this [aerial] body when it leaves generation. But if this be the case, it then received it when it came into generation. Hence prior to this last [terrestrial] body it received that [aerial] vehicle, and retains the latter after the dissolution of the former. It lives therefore in this [aerial] vehicle through the whole of the genesiurgic period." *

In its lowest descent the soul assumes this terrestrial body, which is also formed from the elements, not now pure, but composite and confused, as being distant in the furthest degree from their intelligible cause. This body is, therefore distinguished as "composite and material," and the element of earth predominates in it. It must not, however, be supposed that the soul, on assuming one of these vehicles, abandons that in which it has previously energized. A soul functioning upon the terrestrial plane possesses its three vehicles

* *Commentary on the Timæus.* Taylor's translation, vol. ii., pp. 416, 417.

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simultaneously, although its energies are usually limited by the lowest vehicle with which it is invested. But without the higher vehicles as media, it would be impossible for it to communicate with the terrestrial body. The first vehicle, therefore, is attached to the soul throughout the whole of its mundane existence; the second, so long as it is conservant with generation and corruption; and the third, during the period of a single earth-life, after which it dwells in its aerial body until fate calls it to a new incarnation.

W. C. WARD.

(*To be concluded.*)

PLANTS, INSECTS AND BIRDS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

WHEN looking at landscapes of those countries where the great nations of ancient times once flourished, nothing strikes the thoughtful observer more than the desolate aspect which generally they now present. Ruins of the most magnificent buildings are found in the midst of deserts, which surely could not have existed when the buildings were planned and raised. The student of nature is further impressed by the scantiness of arboreal or even scrubby vegetation. The travelling naturalist regrets the scarcity of birds; and from this a deficiency of insect life, except of a few usually troublesome species, can be safely inferred, while the soil itself is stated to be usually of the poorest description, with the exception of some well-watered or irrigated areas. Yet ancient history abounds in references to luxurious vegetation. Whence the change since? What is or was the cause?

The reasons usually assigned are so vague and unsatisfactory that one is forced to raise the question whether sterility as now prevailing has not been artificially produced through the treatment accorded to nature, and the methods employed by civilized man himself; and if so, what were the laws of nature which, by their contravention or infraction, were capable of bringing about the dire results? The agencies through which they acted must have been

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such, that the great mass of the people considered them as unimportant or inexhaustible, on account of their humble aspect or their abundance, or even as interfering with their pursuits in some way or another, else they would surely have taken notice of them and not have been guilty of national suicide.

Having studied Australian nature for nearly half a century, especially that of the southern province, which is favoured only with a moderate and more or less irregular rainfall, and which therefore resembles the climate of the ancient countries alluded to; and having observed the original luxuriance of its native vegetation with the extraordinary productiveness of the soil when first brought under cultivation, while nature still teemed with lower life—I am the more deeply impressed with the contrast the same localities present now Their aspect is more or less that of deserts in bareness of soil and landscape, in scarcity of bird and insect life, except for a limited number of injurious creatures, while productivity has been decreasing year by year for the last twenty years. Here we know that the change is due to man's deliberate and inconsiderate actions; that deserts have been and are being created through the pursuits and prejudices of the people, where nature before their advent had slowly and laboriously succeeded in establishing almost a paradise. All this change is brought about unintentionally and unconsciously through ignorance of the laws of nature.

With the conscious or unintentional suppression of a part of the prevailing organic life, be it plants, insects (under this conventional term I include all lower life more or less similar in function, such as worms, etc.), or birds, together with reptiles, small mammals, etc., changes are inevitably brought about which cause the gradual, though it may be undesired, disappearance of other forms of life, till finally—in decades, centuries or thousands of years—nothing may be left but the bare soil or the barren rock. Inversely, the poorest country, if it only contain a few spots of sufficient size and fertility for the sustenance of a frugal people, can be gradually converted into a more or less prolific one in time by the steady application of simple natural laws. There is, however, this difference, that it requires a much longer time and much higher intelligence to make than to destroy a paradise.

Generally we find that the fertility of the soil remains unchanged

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for long periods, only in those countries where either the carbonaceous alluvium is of great depth, and kept permanently moist by irrigation, heavy rainfalls, or winter snows, or else in those inhabited only by savage races, who, as a rule, do not much interfere with the economy of nature, while, on the contrary, it is more or less speedily reduced, and finally exhausted, in such tracts where the soil is thin, and the climate hot and dry, and when civilized nations enter on the scene, and encourage excessive trade in raw products, and waste of food materials by their conversion into luxuries or mere conveniences, at a constantly augmenting rate.

Fundamental Definitions.

The vegetable kingdom culminates in trees and forests as the most constructive agents, the animal kingdom in mammals and man as the most destructive. They converge downwards in the Protista, *i.e.*, organic beings which combine the functions of both plants and animals, terminating in mere animated specks of protoplasm. All these beings, from the lowest to the highest, require something daily for their preservation, and that something we call food. It is almost as varied as the organisms themselves, and is all, directly or indirectly, derived from the soil.

What is food? How does it get into the soil?

Food consists of substances capable of replacing the waste of body substance resulting from the exercise of vital functions, and of furnishing material for growth and reproduction. It must, therefore, contain all the elements, in due proportion, of which the respective bodies are built up.

Independently of respiration, the components of all organic bodies, and therefore of food, may be ranged under four general headings: Carbon; Nitrogen; Soluble mineral substances; Water. The original source of the first two is practically the atmosphere; of the last two the soil, as derived from the rocks, which alone cannot support higher plant life.

The proof is furnished by the following simple experiments.

If we subject good rich soil to a temperature of about red heat (as is done on a rather large scale in primitive charcoal burning), or to the fierce rays of the summer sun for a lengthened period, every trace of both carbon and nitrogen disappears, and on such soil no

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higher plants can grow, because without nitrogen vegetation cannot advance beyond a certain stage. Similarly, if we take the soil like *débris* (crushed rock) from wells or mines, or even the earthy subsoil from a moderate depth, where few or no roots, worms or insects have penetrated, and therefore neither carbon nor nitrogen can be present, we find that scarcely anything will grow on it for years, no matter how well watered it may be. Mineral substances and water cannot support plant life alone, notwithstanding sunshine and rain in due proportion.

How did and does the carbon and nitrogen get into the naturally sterile soil?

Through the interaction of plants (even the most objectionable weeds!), and low animal life (microbes, worms, insects, etc.), by arresting and conserving solar energy, utilizing it for the production of carbonaceous and nitrogenous tissues and compounds with the minerals and water of the soil, and in perfect accord with physical laws of nature.

The Action and Function of Plants.

From the sun emanates energy in the form of light, heat, electricity, magnetism, etc., which is intercepted by the earth. For our present object the first two alone concern us as relating especially to what takes place at and near the surface.

The sun's light striking the bare ground is partly converted into heat, elevating its temperature, partly reflected into space. The heat thus gained by the earth by day, is, however, again lost entirely by night, and nothing is saved. When, however, light falls upon the green leaves of plants or their substitutes, the case is very different. In conjunction with their inherent vital energy (or life) it enables them to split up the carbonic acid of the atmosphere into solid carbon and gaseous oxygen, retaining the former and rejecting the latter. The process is usually classed as respiration, but is really of the opposite character to that in animals, for by the latter heat is set free (by combustion), while by the former it is absorbed.

By the action of the plants sunlight is annihilated as such and the energy becomes latent or potential in carbon and its combinations with the terrestrial minerals and water. Thus we have solar energy stored or saved, instead of uselessly dissipated again. Its

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exact equivalent is again reproduced by the re-union of carbon with oxygen in combustion, no matter whether this take place in brief time in the form of light or fire, or as "low heat" and imperceptibly during extended periods in the form of gradual decay.

But the carbon is not obtained as a chemical deposit, nor as a quasi-mechanical admixture. Atom for atom it is instantly combined *within the leaves* with the constituents of the ascending "sap," consisting of the minerals required, nitrogen (in combination) and water, and thus formed into fluid plant substance. This ascending sap, the "blood" of the plants, has been collected in the soil by the tips of the roots, and is raised through the vital energy of the protoplasm of the living cells to the foliage for the sole purpose of becoming carbonized, while a portion of the water is utilized to reduce the temperature through evaporation, cooling the leaves and the adjoining air. The carbonized sap is then returned in a descending stream of molecules to every part, down to the remotest tips of the root hairs, supplying them in due proportion with the food they need.

Thus the solar energy gathered by the leaves is distributed, and a portion securely deposited below the surface of the ground, each molecule of which contains all the constituents of plant food in due proportion, and secured by the carbon against any rapid dispersion.

When vegetable tissue is slowly deprived of water (and in time nitrogen) through natural decay (slow combustion), it forms mould or humus, which gradually becomes less in course of time. If the same process is rapidly performed through fire, pressure or chemical action, charcoal is the result. The molecular structure of the latter must be a highly complex one, but I have not met with any evidence that it has been exhaustively studied by chemists, it being usually treated in text books as impure (that is, mechanically mixed with other matter) carbon, instead of as a compound body. Through this singular oversight the disastrous error of agriculturists generally has arisen that the ashes, *i.e.*, dead mineral matter, are the essential and the carbon the non-essential factor of fertility, overlooking the fact that the latter is the immediate and sole expression of solar energy. It appears to be self-evident, that in the charcoal, as well as in the mould molecule, every component of plant substance (except nitrogen and water) must be present in the exact propor-

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tion required as food for the part it was derived from, and that these are held together quite securely by the carbon even in the most miscroscopical particles. The food atoms are thus effectively secured against dispersion by solar heat, chemical and mechanical agencies, etc., but readily available for use, when these are made subservient to vital energy at the tips of the root-hairs. By the presence of such prepared food substances the higher plants are saved the labour of reaching for each of the atoms separately and can utilize the energy saved in greater luxuriance of development. From this standpoint it is plainly seen, that all complete burning of plants must exhaust the fertility of the soil quite as much as their more or less complete removal, and that the growth even of weeds does not exhaust, but enriches the land; and also that periodical deprivation of all, or the greater part of the limbs or foliage of shrubs or trees, falsely called "pruning" is exceedingly irrational and injurious, and wholly due to prejudice and ignorance of natural laws.

There is no other physical agency in nature than that of plants, known thus to conserve and store solar energy for the support of organic life. Everything human depends also upon its sustained action in one form or another. For the perfect manifestation, however, the greatest possible variety of forms is necessary in order to provide for all changes of conditions and to meet all dangers and risks of failure. The limited number of plants directly useful to man is incapable of doing this, hence the gradual decadence of fertility and prosperity in all countries where other plant life is sacrificed for their exclusive production, is an inevitable result.

The Functions of Insects, etc.

Thus far extends the exclusive share of plant-action in the creation of fertility, but besides carbon, mineral matter and water, (the conservation of the last in the soil is also largely due to the influence of vegetation), plants require nitrogen for the protoplasmic cell contents and the formation of fruits and seeds, *i.e.*, vitality and reproduction. We have seen, however, that this element is neither an abundant, nor constant ingredient of our rocks, or the soils resulting from them. Moreover, its quantity is so unstable that a very moderate exposure to air or solar heat suffices to dissipate it completely, and within a comparatively short time. Yet in a state of natural growth

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there is always enough to meet the necessities of a constant drain, and sufficient for all the innumerable host of living beings which imperatively require it. The plants themselves possess no organs to get the nitrogen directly from the air, but they, like the higher animals, attain it second-hand as food through the roots. How does it get into the soil in such enormous quantities as are daily required for exuberant plant and animal life? How and by what agencies or agents is the—at any time—limited stock replenished, and even slowly and gradually augmented? The reply is: only through the vital action of low animal life in the soil.

Until 1891 it was held that rocks and stones in the ground broke up and decayed through chemical and aërial agencies alone, but Winogradsky discovered in that year (Dr. F. Ludwig, *Niedere Cryptomen*, 1892) that the effect was largely due to microbes, the so-called Nitro-bacteria, the lowest known manifestation of life. It is they which attack the surfaces of rocks, etc., containing potash and iron, dissociating the atoms, producing nitrites, and laying the foundation of all fertility. The only conditions necessary are moderate moisture and temperature. Cold, at and below the freezing point, renders them only torpid, heat and drought kill them. Their initial action is subsequently enormously augmented by that of worms, insects, etc., which distribute the nitrogen throughout the upper layers, and fix it more or less in carbonaceous combinations, thus furnishing higher plants, mosses, lichens, ferns, herbs, grasses, etc., in succession with the required pabulum.

Insects perform other most important functions besides that of nitrifying—*i.e.*, fertilizing or manuring the soil, wherein they are aided by all animals, large or small—namely (1) bringing about cross-fertilization, that is, the carrying of the pollen of one individual plant to the stigma of another, by means of which a large proportion of plants (including our fruit trees) are alone enabled to produce perfect seeds, and (2) the general control of plant-life in respect of number of seedlings, flowers and seeds permitted to reach perfection. Without the first service, performed by specially adapted kinds and forms for each other, many of the most useful plants, fruits, and beautiful and showy flowers must soon die out. In the function of plant-control all insects and much of other low life, such as fungi, etc., are concerned (*a*) in reducing largely the

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number of germs by living on them so that they may not choke themselves and all become incapable of reproduction; (*b*) by reducing the too exuberant foliage so as to permit sufficient light to reach all the remaining leaves, yet allow enough for the work of conserving sun-force and to digest the food sent up from below; and (*c*) finally to reduce sickly, dead and decaying matter as quickly as possible into inoffensive and nutritious mould for other plants to re-absorb, re-digest, and re-form into living tissues.

By these services, which man can only imperfectly emulate, the despised worms and insects surely earn abundantly the food and shelter offered by the plants, for without them plant existence and plant improvement would be impossible, according to the known laws of nature. Wherever the balance of nature has become established in the course of ages, no single plant species could increase unduly so as to threaten the extinction of the weaker ones, except for a very limited period, as the increased food-supply, and in increasing ratio, would foster the more rapid increase of the ordained destroyers, and cause them to overtake that of the plant at some time or another. Then abundance would be speedily succeeded by scarcity, resulting in the starvation of the majority of those special insects. After a few mutations the whole would again revert to the former state by the free increase of the survivors. These usually representing the strongest and fittest individuals under prevailing conditions, would cause a forward step in development.

The Function of Birds, etc.

As, however, insects and low organisms in general are possessed of enormous powers of reproduction, there would be naturally a constant fluctuation between extremes of abundance and scarcity, constantly threatening extermination of one or the other species. To avoid this a further control becomes necessary to produce comparative stability, or at least to restrict the changes within narrow limits, and to ensure that steady and gradual progress in richness and variety which is only found in regions scarcely invaded by "civilized" man. That control is chiefly exercised by the birds, but materially aided by predatory insects, reptiles and small mammals.

Some birds feed almost exclusively upon insects, each species being more or less restricted to a narrow range by the idiosyncrasies

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of taste, digestibility, habit, etc., others live partly upon insects and partly upon a vegetable diet, a third set is chiefly dependent for its food upon plants, but all the same aids them either against over-production (exhaustion), or securing for them a denser growth of foliage by pruning (like the parrots), while the fourth category, the predatory birds, controls the increase of the others, and by feeding upon the less intelligent, the less well adapted, and the sick and weakly ones, secures a gradual advance to greater perfection of the whole.

Here it must be noted that the reproductory power of birds, reptiles and mammals is incomparably less than that of worms, insects, etc., in general. For while the females of the latter produce from several scores to thousands of eggs each, birds rarely attain to ten, while reptiles as rarely reach a hundred or more per year. It is, therefore, usually very easy to control or exterminate the birds, but impossible to do so in the case of insects, except at enormous loss or expense. Whenever any species of insects appears in injurious numbers, like scales, aphides, locusts, etc, it is an infallible proof that their special control—birds—has been unduly reduced.

Effect of Mammals and Man.

In countries inhabited by civilized people, notably Europeans, the larger animals and man aid very little in the constructive or conservative operations of nature. They rather represent a destructive agency, an ever present and unavoidable danger for all, unless, as in the case of the mammals, controlled by the predatory members, or, of man, restrained by self-control, resulting from reason and moral sentiment, and manifested both in regard to reproduction, and to the protection of all lower life—both vegetable and animal—from the wantoness and avarice of the unthinking and ignorant. Upon that his own prosperity and existence depends either directly or indirectly. In a state of nature, or with uncivilized races, the case is different; the mutual advantages are here normal, or, at least, the destructive tendency very much less. The habitual neglect of the study of the relations between nature and man, and the considerations due to lower life, is a distinctive and very prominent characteristic of modern civilized nations, and therefore the exhaustion of the stores of nature, and the decay and disappearance of the offenders in a not very remote future are apparently inevitable.

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Conclusion.

The following *résumé* presents the ideas I have attempted to press upon the reader in the preceding pages.

1. All terrestrial life depends upon the conservation and storage of the solar energy. Mineral soil is sterile in itself.

2. Plants, especially the larger and more enduring, are the exclusive agents for this, the solar energy being rendered latent in the form of carbon (carbonaceous tissues and compounds, charcoal, mould, coal). Green foliage denotes conservation, bare ground dissipation of solar energy.

3. The nitrogen required by plants is obtained from the atmosphere through protozoic and other lower and higher animal life, but especially by worms, insects, etc.

4. Without a constant and abundant supply of carbonaceous and nitrogenous substances, the fertility becomes sooner or later exhausted, mineral soil itself being sterile.

5. Insects, etc., control plant life, and assist otherwise most effectively in sustaining it.

6. Birds, reptiles, and small mammals control chiefly the insect world, and secondarily, the plants, while also greatly assisting in the distribution and protection of the latter.

7. The larger mammals, and especially civilized man, tend constantly to disturb the balance of nature, the latter most injuriously, even endangering thereby his own future prosperity and existence, besides those of all other life.

J. G. O. Tepper, F.L.S.

AN OLD ARAB VIEW OF DEATH.

We have received the following interesting communication from our valued contributor, Mr. W. F. Kirby.

"Mr. Mead's remarks in the last 'On the Watch-Tower,' on the Passing of J. C. Staples, remind me of the conclusion of a story in *The Thousand and One Nights*, ''Abd-Allah of the Land, and 'Abd-Allah of the Sea,' in which a fisherman entangles a merman in his net, with whom he arranges to exchange terrestrial for marine commodities, and whom he afterwards visits in his submarine abode.

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Theosophists must be constantly disgusted with the ridiculous phrase, 'poor So-and So.' referred to by Mr. Mead, and they may be interested to learn the view taken by the Sea-people of life and death. The story is one of those which belong to the latter part of *The Thousand and One Nights*, which was not translated by Galland, and it is therefore not to be found in the ordinary editions. I quote the passage from Vol. I. of Lane's translation."

He then returned with him to his city, and producing to him a purse, he said to him, "Take this as a deposit, and convey it to the tomb of the Prophet, may God bless and save him." And he took it, not knowing what was in it.

Then 'Abd-Allah of the Sea went forth with him, to conduct him to the land; and he saw on his way, people engaged in singing and festivity, and a table of fish spread; and the people were eating and singing, and in a state of great rejoicing. So he said to 'Abd-Allah of the Sea, "Wherefore are these people in a state of great rejoicing? Is a wedding being celebrated among them?" And he of the Sea answered, "There is no wedding being celebrated among them, but a person among them is dead." 'Abd-Allah of the Land therefore said to him, "Do ye, when a person dieth among you, rejoice for him, and sing and eat?" His companion answered, "Yes. And ye, O people of the land," he added, "what do ye?" 'Abd Allah of the Land answered, "When a person among us dieth, we mourn for him and weep, and the women slap their faces, and rend the bosoms of their garments in grief for him who is dead." And upon this 'Abd-Allah of the Sea stared at 'Abd-Allah of the Land and said, "Give me the deposit." So he gave it to him. Then 'Abd-Allah of the Sea took him forth to the land, and said to him, "I have broken off my companionship with thee, and my friendship for thee, and after this day thou shalt not see me, nor will I see thee." "Wherefore," said 'Abd-Allah of the Land, "are these words?" 'Abd-Allah of the Sea said, "Are ye not, O people of the Land, a deposit of God?" "Yes," answered he of the Land. And the other rejoined, "Then how is it that it is not agreeable to you that God should take his deposit, but on the contrary ye weep for it? And how should I give thee the deposit for the Prophet (may God bless and save him!) seeing that ye, when the new-born child cometh to you rejoice in it, though God (whose name be exalted!) putteth into it the soul as a deposit? Then, when he taketh that soul, how is it that it grieveth you, and ye weep and mourn? Such being the case, we have no need of your companionship." He then left him, and went back to the sea.

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THEOSOPHICAL ACTIVITIES.

American Section.

On the evening of March 26th, Mrs. Besant spoke at Brooklyn, in the Hall of the Y.M.C.A., on "Suffering and Evil: their Causes and their Cure." The audience was a very sympathetic one, and a number of those interested were received by Mrs. Besant and the Countess Wachtmeister the next evening in the parlour of the same fine building, when a Branch was formed.

The good results of the lectures in New York, Brooklyn and Newark, were apparent when, on Sunday morning, March 28th, a number of people met in the Jefferson Hotel and formed a new Lodge. Mrs. Besant then addressed the new members of the Brooklyn and New York Lodges, and said that all Lodges to successfully perform their duty as centres of Theosophical studies and points of contact with the outer world, must extend to each individual member a perfect freedom of thought; the one bond of union being the belief in Brotherhood.

Chickering Hall, on the evening of the same day, again contained an attentive audience, the subject of the lecture was "Materialism undermined by Science."

On Monday Mrs. Besant and the Countess went to Washington, where they were received by members of the Society and were the guests of Mrs. Johnston, who held a well-attended reception in her large and commodious rooms, about 200 people being presented to Mrs. Besant. At the close of this ceremony Mrs. Besant was asked to speak and delivered a short address on Theosophy. The next day the lecture hall was crowded and all were interested in the pictures of Thought Forms which were thrown upon the screen. Mrs. Besant received each afternoon, and intelligent and searching questions were put to her.

The next day, when Mrs. Besant left for Philadelphia, the Countess formed the members into the Washington Lodge, and on Saturday she addressed a meeting at the house of Mrs. Lockwood, who had invited a large number of friends.

On Sunday the Countess lectured to a crowded audience at the People's Church in the morning, and gave another lecture in the Society Temple in the evening.

In Philadelphia the hospitable home of Dr. Emma Brooke had

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already welcomed one of the party. A large number of interested visitors gathered there in the afternoon to talk Theosophy with Mrs. Besant, and after she had given her lecture in the New Century Club before a full house, universal regret was expressed that she could not devote more than one day to this promising field of Theosophic labour. Two meetings were held the following day and a Lodge was formed here ere Mrs. Besant and Miss Willson left. It was touching to find one or two old and personal friends of Madame Blavatsky coming forward to tell of the help that she had given them, and to express their pleasure that her work was being carried on.

The return to New York was on Saturday, April 3rd. The third meeting of the New York and Brooklyn Branches was held on Sunday morning. To assist the future studies of the members Mrs. Besant explained some of the workings of the three great waves of evolution and their action on the different planes. In the afternoon she spoke before a crowded assembly, in the large hall of the Brooklyn Philosophical Society, on the proofs of the existence of the soul. The adverse remarks of some materialistic speakers at the conclusion of her address drew forth an answer in Mrs. Besant's well-known style, in which she gently cut the ground from under her critics' feet and showed that the latest discoveries of science were strengthening the Theosophical position.

A lecture to a good audience in Chickering Hall concluded a very busy day. The following afternoon the Countess joined us as we passed through Philadelphia on our way to St. Louis and the West.

The lime-light pictures of Thought Forms and of the Human Aura thrown on to the screen to illustrate the lectures on these difficult subjects, much impressed the audiences with the reality of the investigations, and proved very useful.

In New York we had heard of floods along the valley of the Mississippi, and as we advanced towards St. Louis, which is built at the junction of the Missouri and the "Father of Waters," more and more flooded ground, and traces of recent heavy rains, could be observed from the railway. The papers had been full of the panic caused by the rising of the river and from this and other causes we had received a telegram that no lecture could be given at St. Louis. We passed on to Kansas City, where two lectures were given by Mrs. Besant in the Academy of Music. Both were very badly attended and little interest in Theosophy was shown, although the papers on the whole gave good reports.

Mrs. Besant and the Countess received each afternoon at the

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Midland Hotel, and when we left a small group of people had been gathered who would meet and form a Lodge in order to study together.

At a little before 10 o'clock on Monday morning we left Kansas City and went on to Topeka, where we arrived soon after noon. We were told that we were the first members of the Society who had visited this pleasant little place, and the interest in Theosophy was shown by the numerous visitors who came to the National Hotel to see Mrs. Besant and the Countess. In the evening the Library Hall was half filled with a superior audience to whom Mrs. Besant spoke on "Theosophy and its Teachings." The morning of the next day was spent in receiving the numerous inquirers, and, before we left, Topeka had a Lodge with twelve members, and showed promising signs of future active work and study.

We are now at La Junta waiting for the train to take us on to Denver.

On the evening of Mrs. Besant's arrival at Denver City, the large reception-room of the hotel was quite filled with people, who flocked to welcome her, and to express their interest in Theosophy.

Each afternoon from 3 to 5 o'clock, when Mrs. Besant and the Countess received, the crowd of enquirers increased, until at last they overflowed into the hall. Three lectures were given in Denver and were pretty well attended—especially the one on the Aura and Thought-Forms, with lime-light illustrations.

Here quite a strong Lodge of thirty-two members was formed, and one of them volunteered to obtain a room for use as a Theosophical Reading-room and centre for enquiry.

The formation of a Lodge much strengthens the work of old members who have become isolated, and who have remained true to the parent Society, often in the face of much trouble and difficulty.

From Denver we went on Monday morning, April 19th, to Colorado Springs. Here, in spite of the natural beauty of the place, all at first seemed cold in regard to Theosophy. But soon an old member or two called, and the first lecture on Theosophy and its teachings produced the usual result, one after another enquirers appeared, and on Wednesday morning a group of eleven people met and formed themselves into a Lodge.

Once more the train was "boarded," and we climbed across the Rocky Mountains, with all their grand and varied scenery; and after a night in the train, descended through the desert on to the well-watered snow mountain encircled plain, on which stands Salt Lake City.

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From many causes this place seemed unlikely soil for Theosophic ideas to take root, and the audiences were small, but once more we found enough people sufficiently interested to form a Lodge for study. This was also the case in Ogden, where after two splendid lectures by Mrs. Besant, setting forth in plain language the nature of man and his high possibilities, a group of people were forming themselves into a Lodge when we left. Thus we leave behind an unbroken chain of Lodges in all the towns visited by Mrs. Besant and the Countess, if we perhaps except Newark, New York, in which the centre had, however, incorporated itself with the New York Lodge.

A. J. W.

European Section.

It was announced last month that an application would be made to the President-Founder by the Dutch Branches to be formed into the Dutch Section of the Society. This application has now been made and the new Section will shortly be constituted. Just before this action was taken another Branch was formed, to be known as the Amsterdam Lodge, in which a number of the oldest members were enrolled. The congratulations of the European Section are due to its younger companion.

The Executive Committee has decided that the Convention of this Section shall be held on Saturday and Sunday, July 10th and 11th, and it is announced that the meetings will take place in the Banqueting Hall and French Drawing-room at St. James's Hall.

Mrs. Hooper visited the Glasgow Centre in April and gave two public lectures on April 18th, the one in the evening attracting a good and attentive audience. On the next day a reception was held, and also a meeting of the Centre at which several enquirers were present.

Mrs. Cooper-Oakley left for Italy shortly before Easter, and is expected back in London towards the end of May. She has visited the Rome Lodge, and stayed some time in that city, holding private and Branch meetings, and visiting various members and others interested in Theosophy. Other parts of Italy have also been included in the tour of which a fuller report will be given on Mrs. Cooper-Oakley's return.

Mr. Mead will be present at the Convention of the Scandinavian Section, to be held at the end of May, and will act as the delegate of the European Section. He will spend some time in Sweden, visiting members and lecturing occasionally.

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Australian Section.

The most important news we have to announce is the formation of the first Branch of our Society in the new colony of Western Australia.

From time to time our branches on this eastern coast of Australia have had to regret the departure of some active worker to the west coast. Mingled with this regret has always been the hope that in the new country some fresh work might be done.

The new Branch, which is located at Perth, the capital of Westralia, starts with fourteen members, some of whom are well-known for their work in the Theosophical Society.

The other branches of this Section keep steadily working along the lines which have been found most suitable, holding weekly Sunday night lectures, debating classes, and conversaziones. The libraries and book depôts also report well-sustained activity and inquiry.

Our Sectional magazine, which up to the present has occupied much the position of a poor despised relation, only to be criticized and condemned, will begin its third year enlarged and greatly improved.

We should like to make it known, that, as the main object of our paper *Theosophy in Australasia*, is to assist in spreading Theosophic ideas throughout the Australasian colonies, and to present them in such a manner as will be likely to interest the average colonial, we shall be thankful for any literary contributions written with the above object in view.

H. A. W

New Zealand Section.

Miss Edger's lectures continue to be well attended and are always interesting.

Mrs. Richmond, President of the Christchurch Branch, has been spending a week or two in Auckland this month, and lectured at the Auckland Branch rooms on Sunday, March 14th, on "The Message of Theosophy," dealing largely with the power of thought, and the consequent necessity for thought control. There was a large audience, and the lecture was followed by questions and discussion. Mrs. Richmond lectures in Wanganni and Palmerston North on her way back to Christchurch.

There is increased activity in connection with the Christchurch Branch. One of the members, Mr. McCombs, has been lecturing in the suburbs, and also at Kaiapoi and Rangiora. Enough interest has been aroused to make it a fairly successful attempt, and to encourage Mr. McCombs to continue his efforts in the districts named.

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Mr. Sinclair of the Melbourne Branch has been visiting Dunedin during the month, and on March 15th gave an interesting account of the work and methods of the Australian Section.

Ceylon Letter.

Col. Olcott arrived at Colombo during the latter part of March. He is engaged in preparing the thirty-third edition of the Buddhist Catechism for the press. The Colonel expects to return to Adyar about the end of April.

Meetings of the Hope Lodge are regularly held at the Musæus School every Sunday afternoon. The members are now engaged in reading *The Growth of the Soul.*

Our stock of books in the Library has considerably increased and the members make good use of them.

The Musæus School and Orphanage close on April 8th for a short holiday and Mrs. Higgins and her staff, accompanied by the children, go to the seaside. The work of this Institution is increasing rapidly and Mrs. Higgins is almost daily receiving new applicants for admission.

The King of Siam is expected here in a few days *en route* to London, and the Buddhist Community is making preparations to welcome him.

S. P.

REVIEWS.

Outline of a Philosophy of Religion.

Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion d'après la Psychologie et l'Histoire, par Auguste Sabatier. [Paris: 1897.]

The history of French Protestantism is a curious one. Introduced by the nobles, who found it a convenient political weapon in their struggle with the growing power of the Crown, it took no permanent root excepting in the belt of country across the southern part of France which had already produced the Albigenses and so many more heretics, as Catholics would call them. We are apt to forget how comparatively short a time this country has been, even nominally, French. Known in the Middle Ages by a general name which expressed an actual difference of language, the Langue d'Oc, the distinction still remains. Everyone who has passed that way, and seen anything more than the railway stations and the big hotels, has had it forced upon him, that in

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a large portion of Southern France the people do not speak French—of Paris, as Chaucer justly distinguishes—at all; just as in North Italy, the mountainous part of Piedmont, the people neither speak nor understand what we call Italian. This difference of speech marks a profound difference of character. I do not myself think the distinction is one so much of race as of climate. It marks a kind of temperate zone, between the colder countries, where the struggle for mere life withdraws the mind from the supernatural altogether, and the warm South where man needs only so much religion as will make him happy in the sun. To walk up and down the streets of Marseille to-day and look at the people you meet, is enough to make you understand the fulness of life and fire which marks off the Marseillais from the colder blooded Parisian, as it did a century ago in the Revolution. And during the great uprising of life and intelligence—the dawn of modern civilisation—which characterised the eleventh and twelfth centuries, this "temperate zone" was the centre of it, for good and for evil. From some part of it came most of the great minds who then ruled the intellectual world; upon it were fought out the great struggles between Faith and Reason, with hard words and harder blows, and the modern world remains to this day very nearly what these struggles left it. Both sides put the whole of their hot hearts into the flight; for many years the Albigenses of Toulouse defied the whole armed power Rome could bring against them; and at a later time the French Protestant pillaged and burnt and murdered, with as full conviction as his Catholic opponent that, he was doing the Lord's work. For long it was almost a matter of chance which should finally prevail. In France, as in England, the heavy hand of the King finally crushed out all opposition. When Henri Quatre "exchanged Paris for a Mass," he settled the course of events, and as in England the Protestant Crown and the Protestant law steadily drove the old religion into the far corners of the land, so in France the desperate defences of such places as La Rochelle and Montauban could only delay the end. But between the rival fighters the physical as well as the intellectual life of the poor humanity for which they fought was fairly trampled out; and when the opening of the sea routes destroyed the brisk trade which had in earlier times made South and Central France the business centres for all Europe, the darkness settled down upon what had been for centuries the real focus of civilisation.

We are so accustomed to think of a Frenchman as being always in extremes—atheist or devotee—that to many of my readers the idea of the actual existence of French Protestants will have a quaint flavour

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almost of absurdity. But France is a much wider country than England, and its central government of much later date than the English; so that we should not be astonished to find that whilst the English Crown, which had been the actual *de facto* as well as *de jure* ruler of all England since William the Conqueror, was able very nearly to stamp out the religion of the people when it changed its own, in France the utmost efforts of the most absolute of kings failed to Catholicise the Protestant districts. Montauban and the district round it is still, like the very similarly situated Canton Vaud in Switzerland, a Protestant country. There has never been much sympathy between English Protestants, who were actually called into existence by the Government, and the French, who have always been oppressed by it; and even the modern Dissenters know little of their French brethren.

There is therefore considerable interest in a work like the present, which gives us from unimpeachable authority and with great literary power, the religious position of a body which may be fairly taken as representative of what Protestantism comes to when worked out by intelligent and learned men free from the influences which have made English religion the curious mixture it is. The Professor states his intentions thus:

This volume comprises three portions, which are related to each other as the three stories of a single edifice. The first treats of religion and of its origin; the second, of Christianity and its essence; the third, of Dogma, and its nature.

Perhaps by an English reader his view will be more easily grasped if we do not follow his exposition in this order. Into his polemic against the Catholic Church, we need not enter at all. His position is that its organisation and the definiteness of its creed, render it almost, if not quite, impossible for it to adapt itself to the ever-changing conclusions of history and criticism, as *his* Protestantism can—"which nobody can deny." I underline the word "his," for in this very first statement he entirely separates himself from the large majority of English and American Protestants, and ranges himself rather with those who are here called Unitarians. English Dissent has always found it difficult to avoid this, and our French professor makes no effort to do so. He himself permits no dogma to stand in his way. His chapters on Miracle and Inspiration and on the religious development of humanity are admirable, and to any one who accepts the usual assumption that this development has proceeded from a primitive savagery (an assumption we Theosophists are at one with more ordinary Christians in denying), entirely convincing. His chapter on the history of the

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Hebrew Race I should like to quote in extenso. In speaking of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, etc., he says, "What modern Christian is there who, at this time of day, takes these stories literally? Who is there who does not venture to see in them a large share of poetry, of allegory, of legend, of the infantine language of an age of ignorance?" It is not, therefore, true to maintain that religion requires us to believe in them as actual facts. (Why *therefore*, M. Sabatier?) . . . The Pentateuch appears to us now as an edifice of composite nature, upon which generations of builders, using the most diverse materials, have continued to labour for more than ten centuries . . . it is not the point of departure but the termination and result of the evolution of Hebraism. The Hebrew history is similarly transformed. You may think, says he, that at least in the Temple of Solomon the worship of the One God, spiritual and universal, was duly carried out. How many objects of astonishment, of scandal, should we not have found on entering it; and what a difference between the historical reality and the picture so lovingly drawn by the contemporaries of Esdras and Nehemiah, the latest editors of the books of Kings and Chronicles! The magnificent prayer put into the mouth of Solomon on the day of dedication, is but a pious fraud. This celebrated sanctuary of Jahveh at Jerusalem was precisely similar, both within and without, to those which were then being raised at Byblos, at Tyre and Sidon. The local god had the first place, but he was not alone there; the gods of the neighbouring tribes were worshipped alongside of him. The editors to whom we owe the Bible in its present shape are puzzled at this open polytheism, and can only explain it by the influence exercised upon the king by his heathen wives. Not in the least; Solomon was as eclectic in his belief as in his manners and morals, and all his people were like him. Jahveh has only become a jealous and exclusive God since he was made by the preaching of the Prophets the only and universal God.

So far so good; but when you have thus reduced the Jews in all respects to the level of the tribes around them, two questions at once arise. First, how came these Jews to *think* themselves a chosen and select race, and to act accordingly with such vigour and consistency down to the present time? Those who have kept themselves up with the latest Theosophic teaching will know *our* answer—that there had been a time, many thousands of years before, when the Jews *were* a chosen people, but that they had failed to answer the purpose of their choice; and will also have learned to recognise scattered here and there in the Law, some of the precepts which were then given them to

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enable them to become what they *should* have been, the founders of the new race of mankind. But for Christians such as M. Sabatier, there is only one resource, to trot out once more the venerable stalking horse or bogey, the Prophets. He is exceedingly, painfully candid about these also; likens them to the Indian medicine men and the Mongolian Shamans, and remorselessly brings up the awkward fact that the great Samuel himself was a regular fortune-teller, and did not disdain to receive a fee of about sixpence of our money for finding lost goods and the like. But this point is best discussed in answer to the second and more important question, How does our author manage still to keep up the old illusion that the history of religion can be confined to that of the Jews? He has elaborately sawn through the branch on which he is sitting; for if the Jews were not in possession of any *exclusive* revelation, no more are the Christians. You may exalt the Prophets to any level you please, exaggerate the extent of their insight and the loftiness of their imagination, as every Christian writer, even M. Sabatier, does most outrageously, but you cannot make them the founders of a new religion. No one can fail, in reading his book, to recognise that in claiming *any* kind of supremacy for the religion (such as it was) of the Jews and the Christians who grew out of them, he is drawing a line differently placed indeed from the Catholic one, but equally imaginary from the point of view of the psychology and history he claims to follow completely. The place where his religion holds him from the full light is best shown in a passage in the preface, when he is dealing with the objection that his view destroys the nature of Sin, as something (in his own words) essentially condemnable. The passage is difficult to translate because of the different meaning of the word "conscience," in the two languages. We English have two words, "consciousness," which is used without any *moral* application at all, and "conscience" which always connotes something we are morally bound to follow. We make a sharp distinction between these, but not only has the French tongue only one word for the two, but the French mind does not seem to make the distinction either. When our author speaks of what is the evidence of his "conscience" it seems needful to warn the reader that neither our English "conscience" nor "consciousness" precisely renders his meaning. He lays down this testimony as including three points. 1. Sin is in the *will* only. 2. This sin arises, however, from a nature *determined* partly by its organic constitution and partly by heredity. So that, as he says "I recognise in myself and in all humanity a *fatality* which subjects me to sin." 3. He continues, "The third affirmation of my conscience is more wonderful and not less certain: this

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fatality of sin, instead of lightening or destroying my responsibility, increases it . . . so that the sentence of condemnation bears at once upon the act and upon its author, and affirms to me, not only that my sin is evil, because it is the transgression of the law; but that I myself am a sinner, and as such liable to punishment. . . . It is this apparent contradiction alone which renders the moral life serious, repentance possible and the regeneration of the heart—the new birth, necessary according to the doctrine of Jesus Christ." So then, all the new science leaves us at last where St. Paul leaves us—"If it had not been for the Law I had not known sin," and to all enquiry "why then the Law?" M. Sabatier has nothing but the old response, "Our imperfect knowledge of God and the ways of Eternal Providence must always end with an act of prostration, of adoration, and of confidence." Surely the Catholic may fairly ask, "Why *should* I take all this trouble to keep up with the new science if this is all you get from it?" and our author will find it difficult to answer.

So much for theory. One word before we leave this work so beautiful and valuable, in spite of its limitations as to practice. What of Christianity is left to be the consolation of souls in trouble? There is a very beautiful treatment of the impossibility of destroying the religious aspiration in man by any argument, and of the still greater need which is felt the higher the education and culture of the race is raised, of something which shall raise man above all this and restore the failing springs of human action "all sicklied o'er," as they now are "with the pale cast of thought." Then we come to his definition. "The essence of religion," he says, "is an intercourse, a conscious and intentional relationship, into which the soul in distress enters with the mysterious Power on which it feels that it and its destiny depend. This intercourse with God is realised by Prayer. Prayer—this is religion in action—the only real religion. . . Where this interior prayer is wanting there is no religion; on the contrary, wherever this prayer rises and stirs in the soul, even in the absence of all form or doctrine whatever, religion is living."

So then, the last word of Christianity, as of science, is that nothing can be known. Pure Bhakti-yoga; *blind* devotion to a mysterious Power, a Will whose intentions are unknown, before which we are to prostrate ourselves in the dark! Did the most confirmed pessimist ever say anything carrying more complete despair than our author in his declaration, "Prayer springing from our state of misery and oppression *delivers us from it.*" *That* is all the deliverance we are to hope for from the Gospel! Why, surely, it is better with the Salvationist to believe

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ourselves "saved" by Faith, for we cannot test that until our death, but the other we *know* to be a lie.

No—so far the Catholic is right, we must have knowledge; and this is not to be found by modern psychology and history, we must first have the key given us. Is it not sorrowful to see the world now, as it was two thousand years ago, "perishing for lack of knowledge," yet refusing to open its eyes to see? All these puzzles which the learning and good will of such men as our author cannot solve *have* their key, if they would look round to find it; but century after century men go on, driving themselves to desperation with imaginary sinfulness and vain fears of the impossible anger of God, encouraging themselves with equally vain hopes of an eternity of useless bliss; the world, all the time, waiting and longing for the new Buddha who shall preach to all men the lesson they will not hear from us, that it is from themselves they suffer and that they are in no wise bound to that Sisyphus wheel under which they are crushed.

M. Sabatier's work marks a great advance towards us, though old prejudices still keep him from full liberation, and we hope to see it before long translated into English. It is a book which must do much good.

A. A. W.

Bhâgavata Purâṇa.

A prose English Translation of Shrîmadbhâgavatam. [Edited and Published by Manmatha Nath Dutt, M.A., M.R.A.S., Rector, Keshub Academy. Calcutta: 1896.]

All lovers of Hindu thought and literature must be grateful to Mr. Dutt for thus rendering accessible to the student unfamiliar with Sanskrit, a work which has been often mentioned by European writers, but seldom studied at first hand, owing to the fact that Burnouf's rendering in French, the only one in a European language, has long been out of print, and is practically inaccessible owing to its high price. But our gratitude to Mr. Dutt would have been vastly enhanced if he had obtained the services of some one with a really thorough knowledge of English in the revision of the text of this translation. Unfortunately he has not done so, and the consequence is that the English reader keeps constantly finding his teeth set on edge by passages in which the English is ridiculously faulty, and often quite unreadable.

The correction of the proofs too has been lamentably neglected and every page is disfigured by misprints, which are anything but a credit to all concerned. It must be confessed also that the frequent and

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erratic substitution of the Bengâlî "B" for the Sanskrit "V" jars unpleasantly upon the reader, while the transliteration of Sanskrit proper names is done absolutely without rule or method in a manner to make even the most patient scholar blaspheme. Again there is only the pretence of an Introduction, not even enough to be of the least assistance to an ordinary reader, an omission greatly to be regretted, for every student is surely entitled to know the methods and principles which a translator has tried to follow, the text he has used, and various other matters. Hence one cannot but regret that Mr. Dutt has not seen fit to comply with this laudable custom, and has thus greatly detracted from the usefulness of his work to close students, as well as to the general reader.

But notwithstanding these deficiencies, every lover of Hindu thought is greatly his debtor, and considering the size of the book, with the very moderate price at which it is sold, one cannot but lose sight of the defects in the translator's work in consideration of the service which he has rendered to us.

Still, before passing on to consider the matter of the Purâṇa itself, one cannot but express a fervent hope that in years to come a real spirit of accurate and careful scholarship will gradually grow up in India among those who engage in this most important and noble task of rendering the treasures of Sanskrit literature accessible to the vast world which speaks the English tongue. Such a spirit will lead them to do their work in a thorough, careful and scholarly manner; to be exact in their renderings, careful even in the minutiæ of transliteration and proof-reading, above all strenuous to ensure the correctness and elegance of the English version which they introduce to the world. For surely it is a shame and a reproach to the sons of India that her treasures of thought and literature should be brought before the world disfigured by a garb of bad English and careless proof-reading.

It is somewhat late in the day to "review" a book which certainly was in existence several hundred years ago at least. Indeed this question of date, even the approximate period, when it was thrown into its present shape, is one of the most difficult and most important questions which arise in connection with the study of any one of these Purâṇas.

For the present, at any rate, the question is wholely insoluble, and even the materials for its preliminary consideration are not yet available in English.

The orthodox canon counts eighteen great Purâṇas, but as the various lists of these given in different works differ, at least apparently,

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among themselves, the number may be decidedly larger. Of these, two only, the Vishṇu Purâṇa and the Bhâgavata Purâṇa, are accessible in translation; the former is an admirable and scholarly version by Wilson and Fitzedward Hall, the latter in Burnouf's French version, and in that now under consideration.

In form all Purâṇas take the shape of narratives; long stories into which other stories are woven, and others again not infrequently into these, and so on. But they play and have played a most important part in the religious life of the Hindu people, for with the two great epics, the Râmâyana and the Mahâbhârata, which are also classed as Purâṇas they contain practically the religious teaching, the moral, ethical, spiritual, social ideals and norms of the great mass of the population. Everyone in India, even quite among the lower classes, however uneducated he may be, is more or less acquainted with the Purâṇas—not as literary works of course, but through hearing stories and tales drawn from them recited and expounded again and again at every festivity, every marriage, every village fair.

The Vedas, including the Upaniṣhads and the great systematic philosophies, were exclusively the property of the "twice-born" castes, the Brâhman, Vaishya and Kshattriya, and these it must be remembered form only a relatively small section of the entire people of India; and even among them, especially in older times when stricter ideas prevailed, very many never qualified themselves for receiving instruction in these loftier teachings, which even now demand for their useful study an intellectual acumen and power of thought far above the average.

It is the Purâṇas then which for the vast majority of Hindus form their scriptures, the text books of duty, the ideals of life, the living religion which entered into, formed and still moulds so much even of their daily and hourly life. They are, therefore, of great importance to the student of comparative religion, and even more so to one who desires to understand the evolution of the human race, and the way in which religion has helped its progress. But a word of caution may not be amiss to a student taking up the study of the Purâṇas, especially if he be familiar with the terse, direct and exceedingly condensed methods followed in so much of the more specially philosophical literature. We must not regard a Purâṇa as in any sense a treatise, a systematic work, following a definite plan and proceeding by regular, logically connected and successive steps. That it is not, and was never meant to be. Whatever may be the truth as to the genesis of the Purâṇas, the whole of this class of Sanskrit works bears quite unmistakably the

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imprint of a root-idea, totally different as to form from that which stands out in the Vaidic and scholastic parts of the literature. This idea is the old and ever living one of imparting instruction by story, tale, allegory and concrete instance. This is the dominant feature of all the Paurâṇic literature, which may thus be described, from one aspect not inaccurately, as a collection of stories and illustrations, strung together by a sort of plot, often of the slenderest description, and generally destitute of any very clearly discernable design or scheme running all through the work, which is therefore often lacking in a consecutive and coherent development from beginning to end. This does not apply, however, in its full force to the two great Indian epics already mentioned, though the many long interludes and episodes which break the narrative in both cases, delay the unfolding of the main plot to an extent which according to Western canons of art would be held tedious and inartistic. But it does apply very largely to the Puraṇas proper, as a brief analysis of the Bhâgavata Purâṇa will clearly show.

The main thread—for it scarcely constitutes a plot—of this work is briefly as follows:

After King Yudhiṣhṭhira, the eldest of the five Pâṇḍava brothers, had conquered in the Great War, he ruled his kingdom in peace for some time. Then, learning of the departure from earth of Shrî Kṛiṣhṇa, he perceived that the Kali or Dark Age was come upon the world, and therefore handed over the kingdom to his son Parikshit and accompanied by his brothers set off on the Great Journey to Heaven as related in the Mahâbhârata.

The Bhâgavata Purâṇa opens with a summary of this state of things, and then goes on to relate how King Parikshit was cursed by the son of a Brâhmaṇa, whom he had wantonly insulted, to die by the bite of a serpent. Learning that his death was to ensue on the seventh day, the king in turn handed over the sovereignty to his son and betook himself to the bank of the sacred Ganges, and summoning about him all the most learned and spiritually wise men in his kingdom, from this assembly he asked for teaching as to what a man on the brink of death ought to do. As he was asking this, the great sage Shuka, son of Vyâsa, of whom it is said that his whole consciousness was so perfectly identified with that of the Deity that he was utterly unconscious of even the slightest sense of difference or separateness between himself and the whole universe, came into the assembly. To him the king addressed his questions, and the Purâṇa is a relation of what passed between them, concluding with the departure of the sage and the destruction of the king's body by the bite of the King of the Serpents.

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This is really the conclusion of the whole; but in its present form the Purâṇa goes on with a sort of short appendix of a number of verses which seem to point to some re-arrangement of the matter, as this addition rather spoils the dramatic character of the conclusion.

Such then is the general thread upon which the Purâṇa hangs, the whole account as it now stands being supposed to be narrated by Suta —in whose mouth the Mahâbhârata is also put—to Shaunaka and a gathering of sages in the Naimiṣha forest, the land of the "Winkless Divinity."

The first Book is introductory and the second consists mainly of a description of the universe supposed to be related by Brahmâ, the Creator, and the Ṛishi Nârada, and of the relation of the divine soul and the human soul to the body.

The third Book gives an account of a conversation between Vidhura, one of the opponents of the Pâṇḍavas, and the sage Maitreya, in which the latter gives an account of the various principles which compose the universe, another account of the creation, the raising of the earth from the waters of space by Vishnu in the Boar Avatâra, the stories of some of the great Asuras, the Manu (Svâyam-bhuva?) and his offspring, concluding with the discourse of the sage Kapila to his mother upon Bhakti, the Sâṅkhya philosophy, Yoga and the means of obtaining liberation.

The fourth Book continues Maitreya's discourse, giving more details of the Manu's descendants, the story of Dakṣha's sacrifice, the story of Dhruva, that of the evil king Vena and the raising up of Pṛithu to rule the world with justice. Its concluding chapters give various genealogies, the story of the Prachetas, the allegory of Puranjara and Nârada's instruction upon the soul and liberation by which Puranjara obtains true knowledge.

In Book five we go back again to King Parikshit and the sage Shuka, and find the latter, in reply to the king's questions, giving accounts of Prîyavrata, Bharata, the seeming fool, and concluding with a description of Jambudvîpa, Mount Meru, the other Dvîpas, the course of the wheel of time. These chapters contain a curious miscellany of astronomical and geographical information, including a description of Naraka and the subterranean regions.

Book six opens with the curious story of how Ajamîḷha, a sinful Brâhman, escapes the emissaries of Yama who came to lead him to punishment, unintentionally pronouncing at the moment of death one of the names of Viṣhṇu, which happened to be that of a beloved son on whom his affections were centred and of whom he was in reality think-

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ing in that last moment. This leads to a long discourse, in which Yama explains the Vaiṣhṇava religion—the Bhâgavata is a Vaiṣhnâva Purâṇa—to his discomfited emissaries. We then return to Dakṣha and his efforts to obtain progeny, and to various stories of the battles and wars waged with varying fortunes between the Devas and the Asuras, ending with the birth of the Maruts.

The story of Prahlâda and his unshakable devotion to Viṣhṇu occupies the seventh Book, in the course of which the duties of men in general, of the various castes of women, and those of ascetics are described at some length, concluding with a chapter upon the duties of householders in general in special relation to place and time, and upon the characteristics of final liberation.

This concludes the first volume of the translation, which contains seven out of the twelve Books which make up this Purâṇa.

The second volume opens with Book VIII., in which is given a description of the Manus Svâyambhuva, Svârochisa, Authami and Tâmasa, the great Churning of the Ocean of Space by the Devas and Asuras, having Mount Mandâra as their churning rod and the serpent Ananta as their rope. More conflicts between the Devas and Asuras follow, and the book concludes with an account of the Dwarf and Fish Avatâras of Viṣhṇu.

In the ninth Book we have a number of different matters treated of, beginning with another account of a Manu, the stories of Harishchandra, of King Sâgara's sacrifice, the descent of the Ganges from heaven, the birth of Râma, his slaying of Râvaṇa, his return to Ayodhya, and his descendants. Then we go back rather suddenly to the birth of Buddha—not Gautama Buddha—but the son of Soma or the Moon, and then down to earth again to take up the story of Parashurâma's destruction of the Kshattriyas. Next follows the story of Puru, an account of his descendants, of Bharata and his descendants, the Pâṇḍavas, with various other genealogies bringing us down to the birth of Shrî Kṛiṣhṇa, which had only been briefly mentioned before.

The tenth Book is far the longest of all. It consists of an account of Shrî Kṛiṣhṇa's birth and life, interspersed with numerous anecdotes and stories, with but little which is definitely religious or philosophical teaching, in form at least. The subject is continued in the eleventh Book, but here there is much more formal teaching. It is indeed practically an outline of the Vaiṣhṇava religion, which fills the whole Book, excepting the concluding chapter, which relates the destruction of the Yadu race and the departure of Shrî Kṛiṣhṇa from earth.

The twelfth Book gives lists of future dynasties that will rule the

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earth, describes the peculiar features of the Kali Yuga, gives the duration of the various Yugas and Pralayas, their description and so on. King Parikshit dies, the Purâṇa comes to its natural conclusion. But as already stated there follows a sort of Appendix, describing the special characteristics of Purâṇas in general, the story of the sage Mârkaṇḍeya, a description of the Virat or Universal Form of Viṣhṇu, a statement of the principles of eternal virtue, and a summary of the whole work. The concluding shlokas give a list of the eighteen great Purâṇas and the number of shlokas contained in each.

B. K.

THE BEAUTIFUL.

"PLOTINUS, in the eight book of the fifth 'Ennead,' after speaking of the beauty that is 'intelligible'—*i.e.*. divine, concludes thus: 'As regards ourselves, we are beautiful when we belong to ourselves, and ugly when we lower ourselves to our inferior nature. Also are we beautiful when we know ourselves, and ugly when we have no such knowledge.' Bear it in mind, however, that here we are on the mountains, where not to know oneself means far more than mere ignorance of what takes place within us at moments of jealousy or love, fear or envy, happiness or unhappiness. Here not to know oneself means to be unconscious of all the divine that throbs in man. As we wander from the gods within us so does ugliness enwrap us; as we discover them, so do we become more beautiful. But it is only by revealing the divine that is in us that we may discover the divine in others."

MAETERLINCK, *The Treasure of the Humble.*

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THEOSOPHICAL
AND
MYSTIC PUBLICATIONS.

COLONEL OLCOTT in the April *Theosophist*, begins the second Oriental series of his "Old Diary Leaves" and opens with an amusing dissertation on the cooking abilities of a military officer to whose house Madame Blavatsky and he were invited. This is followed by the correspondence relating to the government prejudices connected with the Society and the suspicions entertained by officials, the correspondence resulting in a satisfactory settlement. K. Narayansami Aiyer writes on "The Manifestations of Shiva and his Spouse" of which manifestations there are five, illustrating, according to the writer, the development of an ego from the first stage to that of a Jîvanmûkta. An account of Eusapia's *séances* at Choisy-Ivrac is contributed by Col. de Rochas, with illustrations of the room in which the *séance* took place. Col. Olcott gives a list of coming calamities that may be expected, according to several more or less inspired seers, at the conclusion of this cycle, or century, it is not very clear which. We may wait with patience for the horrors, for have we not already passed through several to be calamitous years? An interesting paper by Mr. F. W. Thurston, is on "Hints for developing Mental Power" suggesting that some of the Indian lodges of the Society should start practices similar to those he has been conducting in England, indirectly connected with the Society for Psychical Research. It is questionable whether such a course would be really beneficial.

The Dawn, a recently started Indian magazine of which we have the second issue before us, opens with a statement of its objects and a table of transliterations, followed by a paper on the Vedânta Sutras. Much Sanskrit is scattered over the pages, which are of course more suitable for Indian than for European readers. The number concludes with a lecture by Dr. Turnbull on the future of Hinduism. *The Buddhist*, which has disappeared in its old form, reappears as the supplement to the *Sandaresa*, a Cingalese journal. An amusing note reproduces the complaint of a church missionary, who finds that the Buddhists themselves are now emulating the Christian churches by founding Buddhist schools and even—"to parallel our Christmas"—celebrating Buddha's birthday. We have to acknowledge the receipt of *The Thinker*; *The Theosophic Gleaner*; *The Wealth of India*, dealing entirely with the material side of affairs; *The Journal of the Mahâ Bodhi Society*, with notes on the Wesak Festival of the birth of the Buddha, to be held on May 15th, at the time of full moon; and *Rays of Light*.

The Vâhan promises to be well supplied with correspondence for a short time at least. In this issue there is a letter on a reply in a former issue dealing with karma in the animal kingdom, followed by a lengthy note by C. W. L., protesting, amongst other things, against the idea that suffering is necessary to spiritual progress. In the "Enquirer" a most interesting set of questions is dealt with, A. P. S.

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writing on soul-consciousness and the loss of the soul, and B. K. on the cause of insanity, C. W. L. also contributing a long answer on the influence of the moon on vegetation. The serious part is lightened by a puzzle from an alleged "mathematical contributor" as a reply to a question respecting a statement that "a straight line prolonged indefinitely will end in a circle." The mathematical readers may exercise their brains and knowledge over a solution of the strange formula, but probably the plain man will jump at the proper answer without the use of the calculus or any other formidable system.

One of the most interesting articles that *Mercury* has published is the opening one in its April issue, on "The Eye the Mirror of the Body." It is headed "Occult Correspondences." Some students, we are afraid, have, after painful experience, come to the conclusion that most "occult correspondences" are among the deepest delusions of the great mâyâ, but we have some particulars here which should be capable of ready proof, though their bearing on Theosophy may not be very obvious. The information is taken from a medical book published in 1890, and written in German, an English translation of which is in preparation. The alleged discovery is that every part of the body is directly connected to a corresponding part of the eye, so that the latter can be mapped out into definite areas each representing a portion of the body. An injury, by disease or accident, to the body, or any nervous disturbance, will, it is said, be at once impressed on the corresponding point of the eye, in a visible manner. The map given is as complete as a phrenological bust or chart of the "bumps," but the very completeness is apt to arouse some suspicion as to the basis of the system. However, that is a matter for experts, and we may hope to hear more of the subject. This is followed by a short but excellent paper on the Vedas by a "Brahmachârin" and one on "The Theosophy of Tennyson"

The Mercury Press has just issued a small pamphlet comprising an article by Mr. Fullerton on "Joining the Theosophical Society," and "How the Divine Nature reveals itself through Physical Nature" by Count Wachtmeister.

We are glad to notice that the next issue of *Theosophy in Australasia* will appear in a new and improved form. It has hitherto been somewhat meagre in proportions and not very attractive in appearance, but served well enough the purpose for which it was started, that of giving news to the members of the Society. It is now hoped that its influence may be extended. The chief article in the present issue is on "The Soul," in which some evidences of its existence are given.

In "Under the Bodhi Tree," of our French journal, *Le Lotus Bleu*, Luxâme meditates on the problems of life, and supplies ethical pabulum to his readers. H. de Castro contributes some notes on recent discoveries in Babylon, and Dr. Pascal concludes his useful article on Pantheism.

The fresh translations in *Sophia* are "Letters to a Catholic Priest" by Dr. Wells and "The Baron's House," the ghost story by Mrs. Hooper, published in LUCIFER last year. John Friar writes or invents an account of a curious dream or nightmare of a symbolical description.

Our Dutch *Theosophia* opens with a little sermonette on "Will and Idea" by Afra, founded on a text from *The Theosophy of the Upanishads*. The translation of the *Bhagavad Gîtâ* concludes in this number. A new Dutch book dealing with Theosophy has just been published entitled *First Acquaintance with Theosophy*. The form of the book is conversational, a number of characters taking part. The chapter-headings are as follows: "First Reports," "A Little Information," "The Theosophical Society," "Reincarnation," "Discourses on the Foregoing" and "Theosophical Contemplation of Life." The book is of course intended chiefly for beginners and we hope that it may be widely circulated.

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Nova Lux, for April, contains the first part of an article by Decio Calvari on "The Ego and its Vehicles." The present instalment is mainly a study of *The Secret Doctrine*, with illustrative quotations from some of the Upanishads, and deals with the subject from a philosophical point of view. Two Italian pamphlets have just been published, one containing translations of "In the Shadow of the Gods," by Thos. Williams, and the other "Ignorance and Science" by Amo, one of our French writers. The first paper has evoked a criticism from a Roman Catholic priest which is printed in the second pamphlet referred to, followed by an answer by Mrs. Besant. The critical letter contains little real matter, the main objection being that the ideas contained in the article criticised led towards Pantheism. One or two interesting quotations from Catholic writers are given, showing that some of the views, such as "thoughts are real things," were admitted by them. Mrs. Besant does not criticise in her reply but gives a general sketch of some of the Theosophical concepts of spirit and matter, and of Deity. The get-up of the pamphlets is admirable and we hope that some of the more instructive Theosophical literature will be translated and appear in as attractive a form.

Borderland for April, is especially interesting, and not the least attractive portion is that occupied by the communications of Julia. This time they are on what is familiarly known to Theosophists as Yoga, a vague term used to cover a multitude of things, but in this case the Yoga is fairly definite. Instructions are given as to the method of producing or forming a living image of any person desired, making objective any shape. The instructions are excellent, and though they contain nothing that can be fresh to any intelligent student of Theosophy they are clear and well expressed. The possible dangers are, however, but slightly considered, but Mr. Leadbeater, in a letter to Mr. Stead, who forwarded him a proof of the communication, briefly points them out. The dangers are sufficiently obvious to anyone acquainted with the class of people who will inevitably form a large part of the experimenters. The addresses of Dr. Lodge to the spiritualists and of Mr. Crookes to the Society for Psychical Research, are reproduced and Mr. Crookes forms the "Borderlander" for the quarter. Among other interesting matter may be mentioned Miss X. on "Fairies or Spooks?," "Hauntings of To-day," "The Prayer Telephone," and an account of modern Indian Magic.

In *The Coming Day* there is an article on Theosophy, taking up Mrs. Besant's fourteen "proofs of Reincarnation" given in her manual. The proofs are criticised in a very unfavourable manner and the eccentricities of two prominent writers in the earlier days of the Society are utilized to give point to the criticism.

We have also to acknowledge the receipt of *Book-Notes*, *Light*, *The Agnostic Journal*, *The Metaphysical Magazine*, with the usual array of articles on philosophical and mystical subjects; *Cæsar Virgin and the Virgin's Son*, from the United States, a queer pamphlet or sermon by Nathaniel + S : : I : :, a formidable array of signs which sufficiently indicate the quality of the production; *The Sphinx*, a very heavy number; *Theosophische Rundschau*; *The Grail*, or *Isis* in a new and not much improved form; *Sbornik pro Filosofii Mystiku a Occultismus*; *Ourselves*; *Modern Astrology*, with most of the articles continued; *Theosophy*, *The Theosophical Forum*, *The Vegetarian*, *The Second Coming*, a "Manifesto of the Christian Symbolists"; *Current Literature*; *The Literary Digest*; *Food, Home and Garden*; *The Mystical World*; *The Vegetarian Review*; *The Irish Theosophist*; *L'Hyperchimie*; a catalogue of second-hand books from Messrs. Sotheran & Co., and the Report of the First Annual Convention of the New Zealand Section of the Theosophical Society.

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