

THE VĀHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of Branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document. G. R. S. MEAD, General Secretary.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers, to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. VII.

LONDON, AUGUST 1, 1897.

NO. 1.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

CONVENTION REPORT & RULES.

With this issue of THE VĀHAN the Report of the Seventh Annual Convention of the European Section and the Rules, as revised by the Convention, are sent.

ACTIVITIES.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following sums have been received up to July 20th: H. D., 7s.; Anon. £2 5s.; Mrs. Marshall, £20; Miss Bowring, £1; F. E. Bristowe, £1; A. E. J., 9d.; A. F., 5s.; Dr. Drzewiecki, 5s.; G. Graham, £1; J. Byng Paget, 5s.; London Lodge, £5; Mrs. Heymanson, 15s.; Miss Claxton, 2s. 6d. Total £32 5s. 3d.

New Branch.

July 2nd, 1897. Charter granted this day to Mrs. Terrell, Mme. Gaçon, C. de Lamotte, Mme. Mialle, Mlle. A. Flachat, Mme. Rateront, Mme. Berthe Erhard and H. de Castro, to be known as the Nice Branch of the Theosophical Society.

The Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following is a list of the books contained in the series of texts and studies of early Christian literature which has just been presented to the Reference Library, and which was noticed in last month's VĀHAN:

TEXTE UND UNTERSUCHUNGEN DER ALTCHRISTLICHEN LITERATUR.

I, 1 & 2. "Die Überlieferung der griechischen Apologeten des Zweiten Jahrhunderts in der alten Kirche und im Mittelalter." Adolf Harnack.

I, 3. "Die Altercatio Simonis Judaei et Theophili Christiani nebst Untersuchungen über die antijüdische Polemik in der alten Kirche.

"Die Acta Archelai und das Diatessaron Tatian's." Adolf Harnack.

"Zur handschriftlichen Überlieferung der griechischen Apologeten." Oscar von Gebhardt.

I, 4. "Die Evangelien des Matthäus und des Marcus aus dem Codex purpureus Rossanensis."

Oscar von Gebhardt.

"Der angebliche Evangeliencommentar des Theophilus von Antiochien." Adolf Harnack.

II, 1 & 2. "Lehre der zwölf Apostel nebst Untersuchungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts."

Adolf Harnack.

"Nebst einem Anhang: Ein übersehenes Fragment der Διδάχη in alter lateinischer Übersetzung." Oscar v. Gebhardt.

II, 3. "Die Offenbarung Johannis eine jüdische Apokalypse in christlicher Bearbeitung."

Eberh. Vischer.

II, 4. "Des heil. Eustathius, Erzbischofs von Antiochien, Beurtheilung des Origenes betreffend die Auffassung der Wahrsagerin."

I. "Könige (Sam.) 28," etc. Alb. Jahn.

II, 5. "Die Quellen der sogenannten Apostolischen Kirchenordnung, nebst einer Untersuchung des Lectorats und der anderen niederen Weihen." Adolf Harnack.

III, 1 & 2. "Leontius v. Byzanz und die gleichnamigen Schriftsteller der griechischen Kirche." Fried. Loofs.

III, 3 & 4. "Aphrahat's des persischen Weisen Homilien." Georg. Bert.

"Die Akten des Karpus des Papyrus und der Agathonike." Adolf Harnack.

IV, 1. "Tatiani oratio ad Graecos."

Ed. Schwartz.

IV, 2. "Athenagorae libellus pro Christianis. Oratio de resurrectione cadaverum."

Ed. Schwartz.

- IV, 3. "Die Apologie des Aristides."
Edgar Hennecke.
- V, 1. "Der pseudocyprianische Tractat de aleatoribus."
Adolf Harnack.
- V, 2. "Die Abfassungszeit der Schriften Tertullian's."
Ernst Noeldechen.
"Neue Fragmente des Papias, Hegesippus u. Pierius."
C. de Boor.
- V, 3. "Das Hebräer-Evangelium, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Kritik des Hebräischen Matthäus."
Rud. Handmann.
- V, 4. "Agrapha. Aussercanonische Evangelienfragmente."
Alfred Resch.
"Das Evangelienfragment von Fajjum."
Adolf Harnack.
- VI, 1. "Die Textüberlieferung der Bücher des Origenes gegen Celsus in den Handschriften dieses Werkes und der Philokalia."
Paul Kotschau.
- VI, 2. "Der Paulinismus des Irenaeus."
Johs. Werner.
- VI, 3. "Die gnostischen Quellen Hippolyts in seiner Hauptschrift gegen die Häretiker."
Hans Stähelin.
"Sieben neue Bruchstücke der Syllogismen des Apelles. Die Gwynn'schen Cajus—und Hippolytus—Fragmente."
Adolf Harnack.
- VI, 4. "Die ältesten Quellen des orientalischen Kirchenrechtes."
Hans Achelis.
- VII, 1. "Die Johannes-Apokalypse."
Bernh. Weiss.
- VII, 3 and 4. "Apollinarios von Laodicea. Sein Leben und seine Schriften. Nebst e. Anhang, Apollinarii Laodicensi quae supersunt dogmatica."
Johs. Dräseke.
- VIII, 3. "Die Katholischen Briefe."
Bernh. Weiss.
- VIII, 4. "Die griechische Übersetzung des Apogeticus Tertullian's. Medizinisches aus des ältesten Kirchengeschichte."
Adolf Harnack.
- IX, 1. "Untersuchungen über die Edessenische Chronik."
Ludwig Hallier.
"Die Apologie des Aristides."
Richard Raabe.
- IX, 3 and 4. "Die Apostelgeschichte."
Bernh. Weiss.
- X, 1. "Textkritische und quellenkritische Grundlegungen der Evangelien."
Alfred Resch.
- X, 2. "Paralleltexte zu Matthäus und Marcus."
Alfred Resch.
- X, 3. "Paralleltexte zu Lucas."
Alfred Resch.
- XI, 1. "Das Kerygma Petri."
E. von Dobschütz.
- XI, 2. "Acta SS. Nerei et Achillei."
Hans Achelis.
- XI, 3. "Das Indulgenz—Edict des römischen Bischofs Kallist."
Ernst Rolffs.
- XI, 4. "Textkritische Studien zum Neuen Testament."
Wilhelm Bousset.
- XII, 1. "Der Chronograph aus dem 10. Jahre Antonins."
Adolf Schlatter.
"Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur."
Adolf Harnack.
- XII, 2. "Tertullian's 'Gegen die Juden.'"
E. Noeldechen.
"Die Predigt und das Brieffragment des Aristides."
Paul Pape.
- XII, 3. "Ignatius von Antiochien als Christ und Theologe."
Eduard Freiherrn von der Goltz.
"Griechische Excerpte aus Homilien des Origenes."
Erich Klostermann.
- XII, 4. "Urkunden aus dem antimontanistischen Kampfe des Abendlandes."
Ernst Rolffs.
"Zur Abercius-Inschrift."
Adolf Harnack.
- XIII, 1. "Eine bisher nicht erkannte Schrift des Papstes Sixtus II. vom Jahre," 257/8.
"Zur Petrusapokalypse, Patristisches zu Luc. 16, 19."
Adolf Harnack.
"Eine bisher unbekannte Version des ersten Teiles der Apostellehre. L. E. Iselin in Richen."
A. Heusler.
- XIII, 2. "Die Psalmen Salomo's, zum ersten Male mit Benutzung der Athoshandschriften und des Codex Casanatensis."
Oscar v. Gebhardt
- XIII, 3. "Die griechische Übersetzung der Viri Illustres des Hieronymus."
Georg Wentzel.
- XIII, 4. "Das Edict des Antoninus Pius."
Adolf Harnack.
"Eine bisher nicht erkannte Schrift Novatian's vom Jahre," 249, 50.
Adolf Harnack.
- XIV, 1. "Hieronymus Liber de Viris Illustribus."
Ernest Cushing Richardson.
"Der sogenannte Sophronius."
Oscar von Gebhardt.
- XIV, 2. "Die Sprüche Jesu, die in den Kanonischen Evangelien nicht überliefert worden sind."
James Hardy Ropes.
- XIV, 3. "Textkritik der Paulinischen Briefe."
Dr. Bernhard Weiss.
- XIV, 4. "Die Palästinischen Märtyrer des Eusebius von Cäsarea."
Bruno Violet.
- XV, 1. "Monarchianische Prologe zu den vier Evangelien."
Peter Corsen.
- XV, 2. "Der Process und die Acta S. Apollonii."
G. Theodor Klette.
- XV, 3. "Julian von Eclanum sein Leben und seine Lehre, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Pelagianismus."
Lic. Albert Bruckner.
"Über den dritten Johannesbrief."
Adolf Harnack.
- XVI, 1. "Die Sacra Parallela des Johannes Damascenus."
Lic. Dr. Karl Holl.
"Hippolytstudien."
Hans Achelis.
- The following books also have been acquired for the Library:—
Friedrich Creuzer's Symbolik und Mythologie, Dr. Georg Heinrich Moser, Leipzig, 1822; *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. III, H. P. Blavatsky, London 1897; *The Self and its Sheaths*, Annie Besant, Benares, 1895; *First Steps in Occultism*, H. P. B. and M. C., London, 1895; *Old Diary Leaves*, H. S. Olcott, New York, 1895; *Annie Besant: An Autobiography*, London, 1893; *The Rationale of Mesmerism*, A. P. Sinnett, London, 1896; *Nightmare Tales*, H. P. Blavatsky, London, 1892; *Theosophical Essays*, Annie Besant, London, 1895;

Select Works of Plotinus, translated by Thomas Taylor, London, 1895; *A Modern Panarion*, H. P. Blavatsky, London, 1895; *Fremstilling af Norden's Mythologi*, K. F. Wiborg, M.A., Copenhagen, 1843.

Headquarters' Lending Library.

The subscription to the Circulating Library at 19, Avenue Road, is: one year, 10s.; six months, 6s.; three months, 3s. 6d.; postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian.

The Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings discontinued during August.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at Avenue House, Avenue Road, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD LODGE. Meetings discontinued for the summer.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Wednesdays at 3.30 p.m., informal meeting for enquirers, and Sundays at 11 a.m., for study.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: August 1st, *Heaven and Hell*, Miss Shaw; August 8th, *The Two Angels*, Baker Hudson; August 15th, *The Ancient Mysteries*, C. W. Leadbeater; August 22nd, *Clairvoyance*, C. W. Leadbeater; August 29th, *What is Truth?* Hodgson Smith. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 8 p.m., at No. 1, James Street.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings discontinued until October.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 33, Belgrave Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m. No meetings from August 2nd to 16th.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 3, Hackins Hey, on alternate Sundays, at 6 p.m.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings discontinued during August.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings discontinued during August and September.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. General meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Private class on Fridays, at 8.30 p.m. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, Bath House, Hampstead Heath.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings discontinued during August.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m., at 39, High Street.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 35, Albert Road, on Thursdays at 8 p.m.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Friday evening, at 7.30 p.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at the Foresters' Hall, The Octagon, on Fridays at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Meetings for enquirers at Boston Villa, Crescent Road, on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

ROME LODGE. Meetings discontinued during August and September.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Mrs. Bestwick's, Cambridge Arcade, every Thursday at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH CENTRE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thortonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

North of England Federation.

The next meeting of the North of England Federation will be held at The People's Hotel, Harrogate, on Saturday, August 14th, at 3 p.m. All members of the Society are cordially invited to attend. Mr. C. W. Leadbeater will preside.

W. H. THOMAS, *Hon. Sec.*

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCLXII.

W. J.—Referring to Question 357 on the very interesting subject of lunar influence on vegetation, what lines of investigation were pursued by the Trinidad committee there mentioned, and to what conclusions did they come?

C. W. L.—I am not in possession of the full accounts of the committee's proceedings, but only of extracts, so I cannot fully answer this question; but I know that the chairman put before it four queries, on the replies to which he considered that the entire question depended. These were:—

1. What is the moon's influence on the temperature?
2. What is the action of the moon's light on vegetation?
3. Has the moon any influence on the diurnal variation of electricity?
4. What influence has the moon on gravitation in the process of vegetation?

A fifth question, perhaps more important than all the others, would be, "What influence has the moon upon the astral currents?" But this the learned chairman of the committee did *not* ask, though perhaps science may find itself forced to move in that direction presently. Treating these questions from the data hitherto accumulated it seems that to the first one (as to the moon's influence on temperature) a fairly accurate scientific answer—on the physical plane—can be given. The experiments of Melloni and Professor Forbes, and the later and much more elaborate ones of Piazzzi Smythe, Lord Rosse, and M. Marie Davy, may be considered to have all but settled the question of the amount of purely physical heat that we receive from our satellite. Although it is computed that the actual temperature of that part of the surface of the moon which is opposite to us exceeds 500° Fahrenheit when the orb is full, yet its rays under the most favourable circumstances cannot raise the temperature on the surface of the earth by more than one five-thousandth part of a degree. So that any influence that the moon may exercise over vegetation can hardly be attributed to the amount of physical heat derived from it.

To the second question, as to the action of the moon's light, a satisfactory answer is not so readily obtained. Scientific men vary as to the exact proportion in strength of the light of the full moon to that of the sun; Dr. Wolastan puts it at one in eighty thousand, and Zöllner at one in six hundred and ten thousand; but at any rate all agree in considering the former to be but an infinitesimal fraction of the latter, so it is evidently not the *amount* of light received from the moon that causes the difference said to be observable in its action at its various phases.

It is an axiom of physiological botany that the entire life of the plant depends on the action of light on the cells that contain chlorophyll, this being the essential condition under which new organic compounds are formed out of the elements of carbon dioxide and water, but I am not aware that the exact amount of light necessary to induce this action has ever been ascertained.

The coloration, however, is said to begin when the light is barely sufficient to read by, and as in the tropics at least it is quite possible to read ordinary type by the light of the full moon, there is evidently a possibility of some action here. But even then it is extremely difficult to estimate it, as most plants have the property of storing up chlorophyll energy, and therefore continue to grow and produce green leaves for more than twenty-four hours after being put into absolute darkness.

This of course shows that moonlight is not necessary for the life of plants, but when Sir William

Robinson asserts that it can be of no benefit to them and produces no effect on them, I think he is going further than is strictly warranted by logic. Numerous well-attested facts tend to show that moonlight sometimes produces very decided effects upon men and animals who are exposed to it, and why may it not therefore affect plants also? But because scientific men cannot explain its exact mode of action, they are too often disposed to ignore or even deny the facts.

To the question whether the moon has any influence on the diurnal variation of electricity, science can only reply that no connection has yet been traced between the two; but the subject of vital electricity is so imperfectly understood as yet that it is unsafe to dogmatize. The life-processes going on in a vegetable—the movements of fluids of different chemical properties in adjoining cells, the diffusion of salts from cell to cell, their decomposition, the evolution of oxygen from cells containing chlorophyll, the formation of carbon dioxide in growing organs, and the process of transformation—must all produce electric currents, but to get at these and estimate their variations is at present practically impossible; so no action can be proved here.

The fourth question, "What influence has the moon on gravitation in the process of vegetation?" might better have been preceded by another enquiry, "Has gravitation any influence upon the process of vegetation?"

The reader will recollect the experiment of Schultze and Molat, who by an ingenious arrangement of mirrors reflected solar rays directly from *below* on to damp moss on which seeds were sown in a room from which all other light was carefully excluded. The result seemed to show that the action of plants is governed entirely by light, and not at all by gravitation, for the roots grew upwards into the dark, while the stems grew downwards towards the light. To those who have studied occult physics, and therefore know how utterly the laws of what is generally called gravitation have been misunderstood, this result will not appear surprising.

But it seems probable that in reality the influence of the moon upon both vegetable and animal life depends almost entirely upon its effect upon the various forms of ether, and upon the reaction on to the physical plane of the various astral influences which it sets in motion; and these have not yet been sufficiently studied in the West to enable us to give an answer on the subject with anything like scientific accuracy.

QUESTION CCCLXIII.

M. L.—Does not the continuous forming of an auric shell, a process so often recommended, make a person unsympathetic and repellent to others who must feel the barrier, and prevent him responding to the thoughts of others? Is it not possible to be positive to any evil influence without such a shell?

S. M. S.—An answer to this question will, I think, be more easily arrived at if we consider for a moment the nature of the protective “shell” to which reference is made, and what it is that we mean by “sympathy.”

It seems to be the case that the shell is formed of astral matter, out of material supplied from the astral body or aura of the man. That being so, such a shell, supposing it to be effectively made, would shut out evil influences coming to the man from its own plane, the astral, and from the plane below it, the physical. But it does not seem to be possible that it could shut out influences and impressions coming from a higher plane than its own, any more than a brick wall could impede an astral body; and for the same reason—that denser matter is not able to “block” matter that is finer than itself. So that a protective shell formed of *astral* matter would not prevent our “responding to the thoughts of others,” because thoughts are generated on the *mental* plane by the mind-body of the man, however much they may be mixed with emotions of various kinds on their journey downwards.

Again, sympathy, which is the quality which makes it possible for us to respond to the thoughts of others, comes, in its essence, from a plane higher still than the mental, and whatever the extent of its un wisdom in the case of most of us when it comes to practice, it is none the less the germ of that which will in the future make all things possible. That, surely, cannot be bounded by a shell formed of astral matter.

There is, undoubtedly, a way of putting up a barrier between ourselves and others, of damming up within ourselves, as it were, the tiny rivulet of compassion which is to grow and grow till it is wider than the sea; but here comes in that ever-recurring question of motive, and such a course would hardly be possible to one who is anxious to avoid becoming thoughtless and indifferent.

With regard to the last section of the question, as to whether it is not possible to be positive to evil influences without the formation of a shell, we must always remember that this process does not render the *man* invulnerable, but only helps to ward off evil influences coming to him by way of his physical and astral bodies. Undoubtedly the strongest, as well as the safest, shield is purity of body and of mind in its very widest sense; but until this is attained, these lower aids are valuable to those who are able to make use of them. They do help to break down some of the lesser obstacles which so thickly beset our path towards the goal which, though very dimly as yet, we all are seeking—the privilege of being helpers in a way which at present is beyond our realization.

There is also, I think, a slight misapprehension shown by the questioner. The “continuous forming of an auric shell” is not recommended. This would be quite inconsistent with that absence of the thought of self, which after all is the chief qualification needed.

B.K.—This question as put seems to me based upon a misconception of the real nature of sympathy. Helpful sympathy is a flowing out or going forth of the inner life towards the person sympathized with; it is not a passive, essentially receptive attitude at all. Hence the existence of a “shell” has not really any bearing on the question: since, so long as the flow of life is from within outwards—as it always must be when sympathy in any real or useful sense is felt—it is clear that no influence from “outside” can upon that plane find entrance, or penetrate inwards against the outflowing current of sympathy. But such an outgoing current cannot be steadily or constantly maintained except by the most exalted spiritual natures: in the enormous majority such a current is not merely intermittent, but in most cases requires the immediate presence of and contact with the object of sympathy in order to call it forth. At such times when there is no outflowing current and therefore nothing to impede the access to the person's inner nature of harmful and undesirable influences—at such times a “shell” is a useful and necessary protection; for just as we do not leave the doors of our houses wide open day and night for all and sundry to come in and take up their quarters in our home circles, but keep our doors shut and require visitors to knock and ask admittance—just so and for reasons even more imperative and serious do we need to keep vigilant guard upon the various avenues of entrance to our inner natures and to exercise a close scrutiny and strict selection upon the different thoughts, desires, emotions and impressions which are ceaselessly surging up against us and seeking to take up their residence within the portals of our body.

The formation of a “shell” no more prevents one from being perfectly aware of what is going on outside the shell, than the presence of glass in our windows prevents our seeing the people passing in the street. The misconception on which the question is based seems to me one form of a very common delusion, *viz.*, the idea that in order properly to understand anything one must let oneself be mastered by it, or passively receive and accept it. As a matter of fact, it is by no means in this passive, receptive manner that the *vérité vraie* can be perceived, for such an attitude allows far too great an opening for our own personalities to colour and distort our perceptions. It is rather by a firm, strong and essentially positive holding steady and motionless of our natures that clear and true insight is attained; and the essential characteristic of such a power is, that nothing coming from outside can affect or disturb one's nature except with the conscious consent of the inner man. And this is just the same result as the forming of a shell is intended to bring about; but as the growth of the ego must have reached a very advanced stage for this to be the normal, habitual state of things, we need not be ashamed to avail ourselves of such devices as the forming of a protective shell while striving upwards towards that point.

A. A. W.—I think our friend somewhat mistakes the meaning and use of the auric shell. It is strictly a defence. A knight in armour is not rendered "unsympathetic and repellent" simply because he has an iron pot on his head and a steel corselet over his heart; and whenever he wants he can take them off and be as other men. But there *is* something which has an effect very like what M. L. describes. I remember Mrs. Besant explaining how possible and convenient it was to think of several things at a time, so as to be able to carry on your meditations whilst conversing with a visitor, and so on; and I instantly recognized the source of a discomfort I (who am rather sensitive to such matters) had often felt in company. There are people who *never* talk to you with their whole attention, and whom nothing can completely thaw out. However kind and good they may be, you never feel that you know what they are really thinking of you, and are instinctively relieved when you get safely away. But when this is more than a mere habit it is not an auric shell which restrains their sympathies, but something deeper and more serious. To the last part of the question I would say—certainly, it *is* possible, and most desirable, to make oneself positive to all evil influences without a shell. May I tell another of my old Egyptian tales? A holy man was watching two monks in choir, both saints. He saw the devils come against one, and he fought them bravely and they could not penetrate his "shell." He was victorious; but from the mouth of the other monk flames came forth and *burnt* the devils, so that they dared not come near him. But when the fire comes to burn so strongly in M. L.'s heart as *that* means, I think he will not need to ask questions in the VĀHAN. I promise him for my part that I will come, as in the old Vedic times, with sacrificial fuel in my hands, to see if he can give me a spark from his abundance—"O si sic omnes!"

L. Ll.—If a shell were made with the motive merely of safeguarding the maker it might very probably impress those who approached him, if they were at all sensitive, with a vague repulsion. But if the maker distinctly held in his mind the thought of service to others, if he willed to protect himself only for the sake of helping, the shell could scarcely prove any barrier between himself and those whom he designed to aid. And if he endeavoured to keep himself always in an attitude of eagerness to serve all, the shell, so far from awakening antagonism, could but evoke readier response, by clearing away impediments from between himself and others. For a shell is not a dead wall, a passively resisting rampart; it is matter in a state of rapid vibration. Its vibrations actively expel from their neighbourhood anything unfavourable.

A message of help, a stream of influence, can be projected in any desired direction from inside the shell, which might be compared to the cocoons of some species of *Lepidoptera*, allowing anything to

pass out from within but permitting nothing to pass in from without.

It *is* possible to be positive to any evil influence without a shell. All that is necessary is to be perfectly pure. Nothing noxious can approach the completely purified man; a force radiates from him which drives back the waves of evil upon their source.

QUESTION CCCLXIV.

B. S. C.—*If there is such a great difference between the astral body of a disembodied and that of an embodied entity functioning on the astral plane, how is it that the regular inhabitants cannot tell at a glance whether a visitor is embodied or disembodied?*

B. K.—If we exclude *disembodied* human beings from the category of "regular inhabitants" of the astral plane, then I believe that the questioner is wrong in his assumption that the other classes of its inhabitants do not distinguish "at a glance" between the astral bodies of embodied and disembodied human beings. It seems to me that what has been written on the subject implies this, as do also many stories, both in ordinary literature and in legend or folk-lore.

In regard to disembodied human entities, I should think that they do not thus distinguish simply for want of knowledge, so that though they probably do perceive the difference they do not know how to interpret it. It is like the symptoms of some definite physical condition which may be perfectly plain in their significance to the trained eye of a doctor, but quite meaningless to an ordinary observer. For it must be remembered that the average disembodied person on the astral plane knows as little of the meaning of what he sees as a layman of the symptoms of disease, or a baby of its physical surroundings. Just as the baby has to learn the physical world into which it is born, so has the ordinary person to learn the new world into which he is born through the gateway of death; unless indeed he has led an active and waking life on the astral plane during life and so learnt that "other world" while his body lay asleep—whether or not he happens to remember in waking consciousness what he has there experienced.

QUESTION CCCLXV.

W. J. B. D.—*In the Growth of the Soul, p. 64, "the immensely powerful argument" for individual reincarnation, is an expansion of the idea of the injustice involved if there is no reincarnation, pp. 64-6. In what way is the general argument on these three pages inapplicable to animals? If the answer to question 344 (March VĀHAN) is satisfactory, does not the above argument break down?*

A. P. S.—The reason why the argument in favour of individual reincarnation in the case of

human beings, advanced on p. 64 of *The Growth of the Soul*, does not apply to the case of animal life, will be found on p. 446 of the same book. The soul-consciousness gradually evolving through the animal kingdom is shared at each stage of the process by a considerable number of animals. "Each animal it (the common soul of that division of the animal kingdom) ensouls draws equally on the common stock of knowledge and experience; one consciousness shares the fresh experience of each. When one animal of a given family, for example, suffers, the common soul suffers. Just as, in the case of a human being, if the right hand is injured the *man* suffers, though his left hand or foot may not be suffering."

We are still far from understanding the whole subject thoroughly. Why it should be necessary that *any* suffering should be endured by consciousness at the early animal stage of its evolution, is one of many mysteries concerning the design of the cosmos, which we must be content to reserve for consideration until we are at least on the intellectual level of the Adepts. But there is nothing in the point raised that in the least degree impugns the coherence of the teaching we have already acquired, and are already able to understand. The passage I have quoted deals sufficiently with that. A brief *Transaction of the London Lodge*, issued in 1889, explained that point quite clearly, and then for the first time. Since then, though the phenomena of animal life and consciousness remain a vast congeries of intricate mysteries, they do not any longer constitute a stumbling-block in the way of our proper comprehension of the Theosophical teaching which we have been able to acquire concerning human reincarnation and karma.

QUESTION CCCLXVI.

T. R.—Seeing that it is impossible for most of us to master all the Occult Sciences in one life-time, which would you recommend us to study first?

B. K.—H. P. B. pointed out in her article on "Occultism and the Occult Arts" that one who desires to become a *real* occultist ought not to trouble himself about those incidental appendages to true occultism usually denoted by the term occult sciences. She points out there that all these—Astrology, Palmistry, Alchemy, Ceremonial Magic and the rest—are nothing more than very indirect, roundabout and imperfect methods of trying to get at that full and true knowledge of nature which belongs to real occultism, and is gained with greater and greater fulness as step after step is taken along the Path of Initiation. She also calls attention to the fact that the acquirement of any or all these occult arts and sciences is only *for the current life*; and that all one carries over into the next birth is an aptitude for their re-acquisition; while on the true Path every bit of advance once gained is won for ever.

This, then, was the teaching of H. P. B.; and its soundness has been experimentally verified by each and every student of occultism who has

made any real progress on the Path. Each has proved by experience, for himself or herself, that such is the fact and that the one essential thing in the pursuit of true occultism is the training and purification of heart and mind, self-discipline, self-mastery, self-knowledge.

These being the facts, the direct answer to the question can only be: None. No true occultist would ever advise an aspirant to the Path to divert his attention from the real goal by centreing it upon any of the "occult sciences" so-called.

Not, of course, that there is any harm in taking up the study of astrology, palmistry, etc., incidentally, as a kind of relaxation or side interest, where leisure and energy are to spare. We sometimes need relaxation, and it is quite as legitimate to seek it in such studies as in the pursuit of modern science, which attracts some of us, in reading a novel, or in riding a bicycle. But as no true aspirant would ever consider any such occupation as the serious work of his life, so neither would he do more than devote superfluous time and energy to the pursuit of any of these branches of the great trunk of occultism.

QUESTION CCCLXVII.

W. B.—It has been stated that mediumship is injurious to health; why should this be so?

C. W. L.—When that statement has been made it has generally had reference primarily to what is called physical mediumship—the sitting for materializations and sensational phenomena of all sorts. I do not know that mere trance speaking injures the body quite so much, though considering the feebleness of the platitudes that are usually the staple of the communications it might certainly be thought likely to weaken the mind!

Let us consider what it is that is required for a physical medium. When an entity on the astral plane, whether it be a dead man or a nature-spirit, wants to produce any result on dense physical matter—to play on a piano, for example, to cause raps, or to hold a pencil to write with—he needs an etheric body through which to work, because astral matter cannot act directly on the lower forms of physical matter, but requires the etheric matter as an intermediary to convey the vibrations from the one to the other—much in the same way as a fire cannot be lighted with paper and coals alone; the wood is needed as an intermediary, otherwise the paper will all burn away without affecting the coal.

Now that which constitutes a man a physical medium is a want of cohesion between the etheric and physical vehicles, so that an astral entity can very easily withdraw a good deal of the man's etheric body, and use it for his own purposes. Of course he returns it—in fact, its constant tendency is to flow back to the medium, as may be seen from the action of the materialized form—but still the frequent withdrawal of part of a man's body in this way cannot but cause great disturbance and danger to health.

We must remember, too, that the etheric double is the vehicle of prâna, the life-principle which is perpetually circulating through our bodies, and that when any part of our etheric double is withdrawn, that life-circulation is checked and its current broken. A terrible drain of vitality is then set up, and that is why a medium is so often in a state of collapse after a séance, and also why so many of them in the long run become drunkards, having first taken to stimulants in order to satisfy the dreadful craving for support which is caused by this sudden loss of strength.

It can never under any circumstances be a good thing for the health to be constantly subjected to such a drain as this, even though in some cases the more intelligent and careful "spirits" try to pour strength into their medium after a séance in order to make up for the loss, and thus support him without absolute break-down for a much longer period than would otherwise be possible.

In case of materialization dense physical matter, probably chiefly in the form of gas or liquid, seems frequently to be borrowed from the body of the medium, who perceptibly decreases in size and weight; and of course that is a further source of serious disturbance to all the functions.

Of three mediums with whom I used to have sittings fifteen years ago, one is now blind, another died a confirmed drunkard, and the third, finding himself menaced by epilepsy and paralysis, escaped with his life only by giving up séances altogether.

A. M. G.—There is a good deal of dispute among Spiritualists as to the facts, many declaring that mediumship is not injurious. In the case of "trance" mediumship the causes of injury are not obvious and the disputes among those who may be supposed to know something about the matter are puzzling to the enquirer. One at times has pointed out some old person as "a medium for forty years, sir, and stronger than ever," and one looks in consternation at the example that is given as a normal, healthy man. It is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rule with regard to the matter, but one thing seems to me to be certain—that the *worst* judge is the medium himself.

It is quite true that many people have been mediums for a long time without apparent physical damage, but I have met very few who would be regarded by most intelligent observers as quite normal, healthy people, physically or mentally. It happens not infrequently that when a person first develops mediumship, he becomes much stronger. I have seen a woman in a very weak condition controlled for the first time, go away

from the *séance* immensely stronger and better in health, and this improvement may continue for some time. But I have also seen not a few cases of mediumship long continued and constantly practised, in which every sign of mental and bodily degeneration was visible. For practical evidence one may look through the pages of spiritualistic journals and see at intervals subscriptions got up for some broken-down medium, and the terrible nature of the break-down is generally marked most plainly on the features.

I am writing here more particularly of "trance" mediums, as it is supposed that this class of mediumship is less dangerous than the physical. This may be so, but the practical effect in many cases is quite as bad. I remember one woman who was rather proud of the fact that she was liable to go under control at any time. She would wake her husband up in the middle of the night and her "control" would talk to him; or at tea, in the midst of general conversation, she would break out, under the influence of "Daisy" or "Rosie," into some chatter or solemn exhortation.

There does not seem much ground for the idea that the medium is likely to take on the character of the evil entities that may work through him. In fact the opposite is often the case. It is the "spirit" that is affected. The danger does not lie as much there. It lies, it seems to me, in the general nervous and mental state brought about by yielding to the power of another. Leaving aside all discussion as to possible astral influences it must be true that long continued resignation of the brain and body to the will of another weakens the power of the person to control his own brain and body. Lack of control over the brain we generally call insanity and any weakening of that control must lead in the same direction. We cannot draw any hard and fast line between mediumship and normal condition on the one hand or between mediumship and insanity on the other, and the old (and still living) idea that insanity is demoniacal possession points out to us that such has been the belief of the past.

The subscription to the VÂHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 26, Charing Cross, S.W. No back numbers can be supplied.

All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.

THE VÂHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. VII.

LONDON, SEPTEMBER 1, 1897.

NO. 2.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

ACTIVITIES.

There is not much to report in the way of activity for the last month owing to the holidays. A number of branches have suspended their meetings until September; the majority, however, have continued them with admirable fortitude. The General Secretary represented the European Section at the first Convention of the new Dutch Section, recently held at Amsterdam. The convention was a decided success as may be seen from the report in the August number of *Lucifer*. Mr. Mead also visited several of the Dutch branches, and made the acquaintance of a number of members in various parts of the country and also in Belgium, during his visit to the Continent. The rest of the Headquarters' staff have been generally scattered abroad. Mr. Leadbeater has been up north to the Federation meeting, and making a tour round some of the branches. Miss Cooper has been spending some weeks in Sweden near Göteborg, and helping some of the members. Mr. Glass has gone to Germany for a much-needed rest and cure. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley is spending some weeks in Germany, Austria and Russia, where she will meet a number of members, with the especial object of visiting some libraries in which she hopes to find additional information concerning the interesting societies of last century which were more or less imbued with theosophical ideas.

Mrs. Besant expects to be home once more by September 29th, after her long and eminently successful American tour. With her will return our Librarian, Miss A. J. Willson, and Mr. J. C. Chattopādhyāya, who has been doing excellent work in the United States.

The editors of *Lucifer* give notice that with the next issue (the first number of Vol. XXI.), the title will be changed to *The Theosophical Review*. The price will remain unaltered; the form, type, and paper will be improved, and the size of the magazine enlarged to ninety-six pages.

Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been presented to the Library:

Eenrondige Schets van de Theosophie, Afra, Amsterdam, 1897; *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*, translated and annotated by Peter Shaw, M.D., London, 1733; *The Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1888; *Mormon Doctrine*, Chas. W. Penrose, Salt Lake City, 1888; *A Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, Salt Lake City, 1893; *The Life of Brigham Young*, Salt Lake City, 1893; *La Messe et ses Mystères*, J. M. Ragon, Paris, 1895; *La Paix pour la Vie*, E. Saint-Laune et Henri Ner, Paris; *La Bhagavad Gītā*, translated by Émile Burnouf, Paris, 1895; *Le Vase Sacré*, Émile Burnouf, Paris, 1896; *La Lévitiation du Corps Humain*, Albert de Rochas, Paris, 1897.

By the generosity of a member who desires to remain anonymous, the Library has been furnished with new carpets and curtains, and the chairs, sofas, etc., have been re-covered. The General Secretary desires to express the thanks of the members to the thoughtful friend who has so generously ministered to their comfort.

Miss Lloyd who has been kindly acting as Librarian during Miss Willson's absence, has kept the whole of the Library in apple-pie order, and made many improvements in arrangement.

Headquarters' Lending Library.

The subscription to the Circulating Library at 19, Avenue Road, is: one year, 10s.; six months, 6s.; three months, 3s. 6d.; postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian.

Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following sums have been received to August 20th: Mrs. Wilkinson, £3; Stanley Bright, 6s.; Miss Bowring, £1; W. Kingsland, £1 15s.; H. D., 7s.; G. Graham, £1 2s. Total, £7 8s.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Sept. 12th, *The Astral Plane—Scenery*; Sept. 26th, *The Astral Plane—Inhabitants*. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD LODGE. Meetings discontinued for the summer.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Sept. 14th, *Spinoza*, Miss K. M. Wood; Sept. 28th, short papers on Brotherhood. Wednesdays, at 3.30 p.m., informal meeting for enquirers, and Sundays at 11 a.m., for study.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Sept. 5th, *Man and his Bodies*; Sept. 12th, *Vibrations*, John Lumley; Sept. 19th, *Reincarnation*, Louisa Shaw; Sept. 26th, *Science and Religion*, C. N. Goode; Lodge meetings on Fridays at 8 p.m., at No. 1, James Street.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings discontinued until October.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 33, Belgrave Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 3, Hackins Hey, on alternate Sundays, at 6 p.m.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays at 8.30 p.m.: Sept. 2nd, *The Vegetable Monad*, C. W. Leadbeater; Sept. 9th, *Life and Form*, Bertram Keightley; Sept. 16th, *Our Duty to our Neighbour*, Miss Ward; Sept. 23rd, *The Use and*

Abuse of Ancient Authority, G. R. S. Mead; Sept. 30th, *Fairy Tale and Fact*, Mrs. Hooper.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings discontinued during September.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. General meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Private class on Fridays, at 8.30 p.m. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, Bath House, Hampstead Heath.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m., at 39, High Street.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor) on Thursdays at 8 p.m.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Friday evening, at 7.30 p.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at the Foresters' Hall, The Octagon, on Fridays at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Meetings for enquirers at Boston Villa, Crescent Road, on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 40, Via Lombardia, on Thursdays at 6 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Mrs. Bestwick's, Cambridge Arcade, every Thursday at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH CENTRE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thortonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horie, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

Northern Federation.

Mr. Leadbeater presided at the meeting of the Northern Federation at Harrogate on the 14th of August, and has since visited several of our branches in that part of England. His work began with the delivery of an address on "Magic" to the Harrogate Branch on the evening of the 13th. On the 14th, there was a meeting of the Council of the Federation at 2.30, followed by a general meeting at 3, when reports from the various branches were given by the delegates. After this Mr. Leadbeater lectured on "The Christian Creed," and at the evening meeting discussions were held upon the subjects of "Theosophical Orthodoxy" and "Rights and Duties."

On the 15th, Mr. Leadbeater lectured at the People's Hotel on "The Ancient Mysteries," and on the 17th, visited the Manchester Branch and gave an address on "Clairvoyance." The next day a meeting was held of the two Branches in Bradford, and the subject chosen for the lecture was "The Aura." On the 19th, Mr. Leadbeater was at Middlesbrough, where the address on "Clairvoyance" was again delivered, as it was also on the 22nd, before a large audience of the general public at Harrogate. At the Harrogate Branch

meeting on the 20th, he spoke upon "The Fourth Dimension," and the tour concluded with a visit to Leeds, where a lecture was given to the Lodge upon "The Aura." Wherever the lectures were open to the public, or where invitations had been issued to friends and sympathizers, the meetings were very well attended, and in many cases crowded to excess.

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCLXVIII.

N. T.—The devout Christian gets comfort from the idea that he is personally watched over and guided by God. The usual idea of karma withdraws this support, and many feel on losing faith in a personal deity that they are too weak to stand alone, and are liable to despair. What consolation can Theosophy afford such people?

E. G.—N. T. should read Mr. Leadbeater's article on "Invisible Helpers" in *Lucifer* for Nov. and Dec., 1896. Many instances are there given of the help flowing out to us from the invisible world—of "the great helpful agencies of nature." Indeed, in the very first words of the article N. T. will find the direct answer to his question already suggested. "It is one of the most beautiful characteristics of Theosophy that it gives back to people in a more rational form everything which was really useful and helpful to them in the religions which they have outgrown."

The question was also answered by Mrs. Besant in a lecture she gave some time ago on the subject of Prayer, when we were shown that, upon analysis, the thought of prayer included several different efforts, and that each effort reached a different class of entities. Speaking of one kind of prayer, the desire for mental and moral qualities and for spiritual powers, we were told, if I remember rightly, that a great number of spiritual beings were always seeking to help the races of men, looking into their hearts and minds to see where there might be an inthrowing of thought and strength—the measure of the inflow depending upon the power to receive—upon the degree to which men set open the windows of the soul.

Of course the help that comes to man can only be in accordance with his karma, that is, in proportion to effort put forth, but surely such teaching gives support rather than withdraws it. "Nothing can touch us that we have not wrought, nothing can injure us that we have not merited. . . . Only our own deeds can hinder us; only our own will can fetter us," writes Mrs. Besant in the concluding paragraph of her manual on Karma. Is not this belief more calculated to give one courage to face the difficulty of living than that other, urged by the orthodox, which resolves itself into a belief of dependence upon the capricious will of a being external to ourselves?

N. T. should, moreover, understand that although the extended field of observation is as yet open to

but few workers, Theosophy pursues the scientific method in gathering in and classifying facts and forming judgment on the basis of this classification quite independent of individual prejudice. New facts and discoveries may upset opinions previously held and so, with some, cause doubt and despair, but, on the other hand, there is the great joy to be found in the opening up of a wider vista and the pointing to larger connections and the growing insight, consequent thereon, into the many distracting and often heart-breaking problems before the mind of man to-day.

E. A. B.—This feeling is perhaps natural at first, and an inevitable stage for many persons, but only because the real meaning of karma is imperfectly understood. When it is recognized not as a blind relentless force, but as the expression of the living will of God in relation to us, ceaselessly acting with the absolute justice which *is* absolute love, we begin to understand how truly we "live and move and have our being" in the one Divine Life. Any sense of loss belongs merely to the stage of transition from one outgrown conception to a higher one not yet fully grasped; when once grasped it brings a fuller and deeper trust than before, because satisfying the reason as well as the religious need. And as we further begin to realize that while we do not and cannot "stand alone," it is in our own hands to mould the karma of the future by the use we make of the present, we feel that there is no place for despair. Sooner or later we *must* come into harmony with this Divine "Living Will" and however weak now, every effort will bring us nearer to that end.

A. A. W.—The querist has raised a very wide subject, on which much may and should be said. The cry of the man in the Bible, "Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I left?" is one we cannot but sympathize with most deeply. It is quite true that many *are* thus too weak to stand alone; it is no use to tell them that they *must* learn to stand alone, and the sooner they begin the better. But what is not so generally recognised is that it is their religion that has *made* them thus, as it were, bedridden and helpless. To the majority of those around us religion has never been anything but a comfortable cushion to sleep on. Every attempt of the Higher Ego to rouse them to action has been at once put down as "self-righteousness"; every fear of consequences checked as "want of reliance on the merits of the Redeemer"; the "Sacrifice of the Cross" has been made, instead of an encouragement to them to take up *their* cross as He bade them, a mere opiate to lull them asleep in the belief that by it they are "saved." And when Theosophy comes with the cry which Religion ought to have uttered, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead!" they naturally find it hard to be disturbed in their peaceful slumbers. What can we say to them? If any one is foolish enough to look back over his life and seriously believe it could not have been much better watched over and guided than it has been,

or weak enough to have been bullied into admitting that it is his own sins which have done all the mischief, or soft enough to imagine that all which has gone wrong can be set right by some mystic "washing in the blood of Jesus" as the phrase goes; what *is* there in Theosophy which can make him so perfectly comfortable? For my part, I don't know what consolation, to use the querist's words, Theosophy *can* afford such people. It is a *man's* religion, and does not deal in soothing powders and lollypops. I have been used to say that I would never try to interfere with these simple folk who were thus happy in their childish way; but I am not quite sure if this is right. For after all, we too look forward to a judgment to come; and we must not blink the truth that to pass at that judgment it cannot be enough that we have lived lives of happiness, or even of goodness. The question then will be, and can only be, "Are we alive, awake, enough to pass onwards?" It is a wide gulf which only strong souls can spring over; and, alas, even a long life as a devout Christian (except in rare instances), leaves the soul weaker than it began, not stronger. I am afraid our duty is to try to wake these good souls, even though we make them unhappy; to tell them, with all loving sympathy, that their limbs are numbed with long lying, and that they will have a long and hard time before they are able to stand alone with any comfort; that there is no help for it and that we will do all we can to make the suffering endurable. But it is an almost hopeless task, for the consolations which Theosophy *has* to give, are just what they have been trained all their lives to look upon as "the devices of Satan." The real hope, to be, some time in the course of ages, *worth* God's taking to Himself, is something every devout Christian would repudiate with horror.

It is, however, quite true that those who embrace the hopes of the Theosophist with full belief may often find it hard for a long time to change their habit of thought, so many years accustomed at every lifting of the heart to say affectionately "My God!" and that the attempt to do so is a trouble, not entirely unlike despair. Well, why should we make it? H. Heine has a story of a Paris Socialist of the '48 who said to him "Oh, no, we don't want to abolish property; we only want to give it a new definition!" This too is all we need for our purpose. We have been used to look up to the Logos, the manifestation of the ever invisible, infinite God, and to call Him Jesus Christ. All that Theosophy asks of us is to understand that other nations have other names for Him—that we must not limit Him to the existence of the man who bore that name in Syria two thousand years ago. He said to His disciples, "Before Abraham was, I am," and we do not rightly worship Him unless we know Him to be also the Indian Krishna and many another name beside. But our "personal God" He remains still, unchanged. He spoke to us of His and our Father in Heaven; and our Father in Heaven, our Higher Self, still remains for our love and worship as before. Not a thought or dream of His watchful care and love for us, His

lower selves, can be overdrawn. The old puzzle of Christianity, how He could need us and what good we could do Him, has its solution in the new doctrine; for we are in truth a part of Him—He needs the experience we bring back from our earth lives to Him, and He is incomplete, till, at the end of the Manvantara, the sparks are all reunited to the Flame. For angels we have the vast company of those who stand above us though below the Divine level, all occupied in our service, in helping us on our upward way. I do not understand how anyone who realizes all this can feel that he is standing alone or be tempted to despair. If such there be, the only explanation that I can suggest is that he has not yet got rid of the fatal poison of the Christian doctrine of Grace, and cannot understand how he can live unless there be some "personal God" to love him undeservedly, to give him powers he has not merited, and rewards he has not earned—one whom he may thank as Dr. Watts, "that I have food while others starve, Or beg from door to door." And for him, I repeat, Theosophy has no consolation, only stern warning and rebuke.

QUESTION CCCLXIX.

H. C.—*Is the eighth sphere identical with Avichi, and how far do they correspond with the ordinary western conceptions of hell?*

C. W. L.—They are by no means identical, since one is a state and the other a place, but though they are connected with different planes they may be said to be in a certain way complementary the one to the other. It is difficult to see why these horrors should exercise such a fascination over the minds of students, but since questions upon them are continually coming in, it is as well that an endeavour should be made to lessen the confusion which appears to exist in connection with this gruesome subject.

All who have even an elementary acquaintance with Theosophical literature are aware that when after death the man is withdrawing into himself, a certain amount of struggle takes place at the conclusion of his astral existence. The ego endeavours to draw back into himself all that he put down into incarnation at the beginning of the life which has just closed—to recover, as it were, the principal which he has invested *plus* the interest of the experience which has been gained and the qualities which have been developed during that life, or, as we sometimes put it more technically, to merge the lower manas entirely in the higher.

But when he attempts to do this he is met with very determined opposition from his own lower nature—from the kâmic elemental which he himself has created and fed. With the final disintegration of his astral body that creature (for it may certainly be regarded as a quite definite though temporary creature) ceases to exist as a separate entity, and becomes merged in the elemental essence of the plane; and though it can hardly be described as intelligent it has a very strong instinct of self-preservation which leads it to resist such extinction with all the force at its command.

In the case of all ordinary mortals it attains a certain measure of success in its efforts, for so much of the mental faculty has during life been governed by the lower desires and prostituted to their service (or in other words the lower manas has been so seriously entangled by *kāma*) that it is impossible for it to be entirely freed. The result of the struggle is therefore that some proportion of the *mānasic* matter is retained in the astral body after the ego has completely broken away from it, and thus comes into existence what we call "the shade"—an entity which may have quite a considerable astral life before, by the final loss of its fragment of manas it degenerates into the completely unconscious "shell." (See Manual V.)

When a man has during life completely conquered his lower desires and succeeded in absolutely freeing the lower manas from the *kāma* there is practically no struggle, and the ego reclaims in full both principal and interest; but unfortunately there is also an opposite extreme where he is able to reclaim neither. It is possible (though happily not easy) for a man so to intensify the lower part of his nature that the *whole* of the manas put down into incarnation is entangled by *kāma* and torn away from the real ego. Of course no ordinary wickedness could compass this result; it can be achieved only by a man who deliberately kills out all the higher impulses of his nature and makes himself a monster of selfishness.

Now that the central point of our immersion in matter is past the whole force of evolution is pressing upwards towards unity, and the man who is willing to make all his life an intelligent co-operation with nature gains as part of his reward an ever-increasing perception of the reality of this unity. But on the other hand it is obvious that men may set themselves in opposition to nature, and instead of working unselfishly for the good of all may debase every faculty they possess to purely selfish ends; and of them also, as of the others, the old saying is true: "Verily I say unto you, they have their reward." They spend their lives in striving for separateness, and for a time they attain it; and no more awful fate than such attainment can ever befall any human being.

This extraordinary development of selfishness is the characteristic of the black magicians, and it is practically among their ranks only that men can be found who are in danger either of *avīchi* or the eighth sphere. Many and loathsome are their varieties, but they may all be classed in one or other of two great divisions. They both use such occult arts as they possess for purely selfish purposes, but these purposes differ. In the commoner and less formidable type the object pursued is the gratification of sensual desire, and naturally the result of a life devoted to nothing but that is to centre the man's energy entirely in the desire-body; so that if the man who works on these lines has succeeded in killing out from himself every unselfish or affectionate feeling, every spark of higher impulse, until nothing is left but a remorseless, ruthless monster of lust, he finds himself after death neither able nor desirous to rise

above the very lowest subdivision of the astral plane. The whole of such manas as he has is absolutely in the grip of *kāma*, and when the struggle takes place the ego can recover none of it and finds himself very seriously weakened in consequence.

But what is left upon the astral plane in this case is no feeble and colourless shade; it is the entire personality of the man, intelligent, active and strong for evil—a demon of the most terrible type—a monster for which there is no permanent place in the scheme of evolution to which we belong. The natural tendency of such a creature is therefore to drift *out* of this evolution, and to be drawn by the irresistible force of law into that astral cesspool which in earlier Theosophical writing was called the eighth sphere, because what passed into it stood outside the ring of seven worlds and could not return into their evolution. There, surrounded by loathsome relics of all the concentrated vileness of the ages that are past, burning ever with desire, yet without possibility of satisfaction, this monstrosity slowly decays, its *mānasic* matter being thus at last set free—never, indeed, to rejoin the ego from which it has torn itself, but to be dissipated among the other matter of the plane, to enter gradually into fresh combinations, and so to be put to better uses.

The creature may indeed postpone its terrible fate, but only by methods even more detestable—by the awful living death of the vampire, or by seizing upon and obsessing the body of some very degraded human being. But fortunately for the world such expedients are only temporary.

Meanwhile the ego—the real man through whose weakness this monster has been formed—is so enfeebled that he is thrown far back in his evolution, and has to begin his next life at a much lower level. In some cases he might find himself once more in the savage life which he left behind many centuries ago; in others it has been stated that he might even be incapacitated from taking further part in this scheme of evolution, and might therefore have to wait in a kind of condition of suspended animation for the commencement of another.

But there is another type of the black magician, in outward appearance more respectable, yet really even more dangerous because more powerful. This is the man who, instead of giving himself up altogether to sensuality of one kind or another, sets before himself the goal of a more refined but not less unscrupulous selfishness. His object is the acquisition of an occult power, higher and wider indeed, but to be used always for his own gratification and advancement, to further his own ambition or satisfy his own revenge. In order to gain this he adopts the most rigid asceticism as regards mere fleshly desires, and starves out the grosser particles of his astral body as perseveringly as does the pupil of the Great White Brotherhood.

But though it is only with the higher *kāmic* matter that he allows his lower manas to become entangled, the centre of his energy is none the less entirely in the personality, and when after death

the time of the separation comes, the ego is able to recover no whit of his investment. For him, therefore, the result is much the same as in the former case ; but the fate of the lost personality is very different. The comparatively tenuous kâmic integument is not strong enough to hold it for any length of time upon the astral plane, and yet it has entirely lost touch with the devachanic plane which should have been its habitat. An entity with no ego behind it has no power to experience the ordinary devachan ; and, besides, the whole effort of the man's life has been to kill out such thoughts as find their fruition in the devachanic state.

His one endeavour has been to oppose natural evolution, to separate himself from the great whole, and to war against it ; and as far as the personality goes he has succeeded. It is cut off from the light and life of the solar system ; all that is left to it is the sense of absolute isolation—of being alone in the universe. That is what for it takes the place of devachan ; and it is said that in all the world there is no experience so appalling. This is the state of avichi—"the waveless" ; for only by entering that state can a man be shut off from the great wave of the life of the Logos in which we live and move and have our being. The end of it is disintegration—the invariable end of that which has cut itself off from its source ; but through what stages of horror the lost personality passes before that is reached, who shall say ?

Yet be it remembered that neither of these states is eternal—that neither of them, except by vivid sympathy, touches the true ego—that neither of them can in any case be reached except by deliberate, life-long persistence in absolute evil.

Some tradition of these may well be mirrored in some of the nightmares of ordinary religion about hell ; yet it is more probable that most which has been written in the various scriptures upon that subject, really refers to the fate of a man who finds himself upon the lowest subdivision of the astral plane, ever tortured by the physical desires to the gratification of which he devoted his earth-life, yet no longer able to satisfy them because he has lost his physical body.

But this suffering is karmic, and not without its use in evolution, since by it the ego gradually acquires wisdom enough to avoid its cause. The blasphemous, unutterably wicked, and wholly unnecessary horror which the churches have introduced into the tradition is the lying statement that such suffering is eternal—a statement absolutely unwarranted by any saying of their teacher Christ, even in the mutilated gospels which alone have come down to us. (See *Salvator Mundi*, by Rev. Samuel Cox.)

QUESTION CCCLXX.

A. J.—When a picture of the far-distant past is disinterred by an investigator from the akâshic records, how is it possible for him to fix its date accurately ?

C. W. L.—It is sometimes rather tedious work to find an exact date, but the thing can usually be

done if it is worth while to spend the time and trouble over it. If we are dealing with Greek or Roman times the simplest method is usually to look into the mind of the most intelligent person present in the picture, and see what date he supposes it to be ; or the investigator might watch him writing a letter or other document and observe what date, if any, was included in what was written. When once the Roman or Greek date is thus obtained, to reduce it to our own system of chronology is merely a matter of calculation.

Another way which is frequently adopted is to turn from the scene under examination to a contemporary picture in some great and well-known city such as Rome, and note what monarch is reigning there, or who are the consuls for the year ; and when such data are discovered a glance at any good history will give the rest. Sometimes a date can be obtained by examining some public proclamation or some legal document ; in fact in the times of which we are speaking the difficulty is easily surmounted.

The matter is by no means so simple, however, when we come to deal with periods much earlier than this—with a scene from early Egypt, Chaldæa, or China, or, to go further back still, from Atlantis itself or any of its numerous colonies. A date can still be obtained easily enough from the mind of any educated man, but there is no longer any means of relating it to our own system of dates, since the man will be reckoning by eras of which we know nothing, or by the reigns of kings whose history is lost in the night of time.

Our methods, nevertheless, are not yet exhausted. It will be remembered by those who have studied the subject of akâshic records that it is possible for the investigator to pass them before him at any speed that he may desire—at the rate of a year in a second if he will, or even far faster still. Now there are one or two events in ancient history whose dates have already been accurately fixed—as, for example, the sinking of Poseidonis in the year 9564 B.C. It is therefore obvious that if from the general appearance of the surroundings it seems probable that a picture seen is within measurable distance of one of these events, it can be related to that event by the simple process of running through the record rapidly, and counting the years between the two as they pass.

Still, if those years ran into thousands, as they might sometimes do, this plan would be insufferably tedious. In that case we are driven back upon the astronomical method. In consequence of the movement which is commonly called the precession of the equinoxes, though it might more accurately be described as a kind of second rotation of the earth, the angle between the equator and the ecliptic steadily but very slowly varies. Thus, after long intervals of time we find the pole of the earth no longer pointing towards the same spot in the apparent sphere of the heavens, or in other words, our pole-star is not, as at present, α Ursæ Minoris, but some other celestial body ; and from this position of the pole of the earth, which can easily be ascertained by careful observation of the

night-sky of the picture under consideration, an approximate date can be calculated without difficulty.

In estimating the date of occurrences which took place millions of years ago in earlier races, the period of a secondary rotation (or the precession of the equinoxes) is frequently used as a unit, but of course absolute accuracy is not usually required in such cases, round numbers being sufficient for all practical purposes in dealing with epochs so remote.

QUESTION CCCLXXI.

H. M.—Since we believe Theosophy to be the highest good, how is the fact to be explained that we see around us many highly-developed persons, of greater intelligence or greater devotion than the average members of our Society, who yet seem entirely incapable of appreciating its teachings?

C. W. L.—It seems to me that the answer to this question is to be found in the necessity for a balanced development. The perfect man—the adept, as we call him—is essentially the well-balanced man. He has all the magnificent intellect of the scientific man, and all the heart-whole devotion of the best type of religious man, but both of them raised to an infinitely higher power; and he has also the discrimination which enables him to direct both of them aright.

But we down here, who are as yet so far from being adepts, are mostly very unequally developed, and though none of these qualifications is so strong in us as it should be we shall generally find that one of them has grown somewhat in advance of the others. It is almost inevitable that this should be so, and though this inequality is in many ways dangerous, it is at any rate better to have one quality in excess of the rest than to have developed none at all, which is the position of the vast majority of mankind.

The really religious man, whose noble devotion leads him to live a life of beautiful unselfishness, has developed within himself a splendid and most necessary quality; and if not in this life, then in some life to come he will certainly learn where that devotion is really due, and how the wonderful force which it generates can best be applied. Meantime as far as that quality goes he is an example for us, and we may learn from him.

Equally necessary factors are the keen intellect and the unwearied perseverance of the man of science, and equally worthy of our imitation; and assuredly he will one day learn in what direction powers so transcendent can most profitably and usefully be employed. It must never for a moment be supposed that either of these men is wasting time in following out his particular line of development, one-sided though it may be; for all these faculties have to be evolved, and if we have them at present only in a lesser degree, most certainly we shall some day have to spend time in acquiring them,

Still, though we may be behind many in both these respects, we have yet learned one thing, for lack of which both the religious man and the scientific man progress less definitely than they might. We have learned something of the grand old wisdom-religion, of the reality which lies behind all outer manifestation; and so marvellous is the result of this knowledge that it enables us not only to use our forces to the best advantage, but also in many cases to grasp at once the real meaning of much in the studies both of science and of religion which still remains dark even to such men as those of whom we have been speaking. And this wisdom they on their part will one day have to acquire.

Another way of putting the same idea is to say that a person's power of assimilating Theosophy depends upon his acquaintance with it or ignorance of it in his last incarnation. If he has studied along these lines before, his higher self—his true ego—has already built these truths into himself to a greater or less extent; and though he may not always be able to impress them definitely on the personality without assistance, when they *are* presented to that personality he can at least give that definite certainty that these things are so, which we call an intuitional grasp of Theosophy.

On the other hand, if a man has not yet met with the facts underlying life, but has spent several lives mainly in developing one of the other sides of his character, Theosophy awakens at first no special response in him, and is very likely to be hastily rejected as seeming to disagree with what is the dominant factor in his life. Inequality of development is the key to this mystery, as it is to so many others in the world around us.

QUESTION CCCLXXII.

Q. K.—What is the effect of hashish upon (1) mental development (2) the memory. (3) What states would it induce and (4) what effect would it have upon real progress? (5) Would it induce or prohibit recollections of former lives?

B. K.—1. Upon mental development proper, *i.e.*, the mind-body, hashish produces a bad effect by re-action from the brain upon which it primarily acts. Upon the brain its action is partly stimulant, partly narcotic, the stimulating action showing itself first. The effect at first is to enormously enhance the sensitiveness of the brain, both to ordinary sense-stimuli and to physical processes in the body which usually fall below the level of intensity needed to attract our notice. It induces a state in many ways resembling the hyperæsthesia, or exalted sensibility so often observed in certain mesmeric and hypnotic conditions. The faintest sound is heard as a mighty roar, a mere glimmer of light seems like a vivid flash of lightning; the sense of time and space is altered too, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another, and the brain works with either enormous rapidity and vividness or else with quite abnormal sluggishness and dull-

ness, the occurrence of these contrasted states seeming to depend on the magnitude of the dose in relation to the specific idiosyncrasy of the taker at that time.

The next stage is the narcotic effect; sleep supervenes and the wasted brain tissues undergo repair, for the exaltation experienced in the former stage is attended with tremendous waste of brain substance and the tissues of the higher nerve centres. This waste is only repaired slowly, so that the result of habitual indulgence in hashish is progressive enfeeblement and degeneration of the brain and entire nervous system.

During the coming on of the exaltation the will seems more powerful than usual; then before the maximum is reached it becomes paralysed and one loses all control over one's sensations or thoughts—at this stage most horrible nightmare-like experiences are often observed until the unconsciousness of the narcotic stage supervenes.

If the habit of taking the drug is set up the will becomes enslaved to it, as in the case of the morphia, opium and alcohol habits, with the same lamentable results.

2. The memory during the exaltation stage is greatly quickened and its clearness and vividness enhanced—as in the corresponding hypnotic and mesmeric states. On awakening after the sleep, the effects vary largely in different people—as indeed do the details of all the stages and states—but often at first the memory is more vivid and clearer than usual, this condition dying away after a few hours, when the full tide of the reaction has set in. In the long run the memory suffers as do all the mental and moral powers on this plane, as well as in the mind body in consequence of the reaction from this side.

3. The physical states have been outlined. What psychic states, if any, will be experienced depends *wholly* upon the actual development of the individual, upon the particular direction of his attention at the time, and lastly, upon the state of the brain itself.

4. The effect upon *real* progress would be emphatically and decidedly bad. The use of hashish, or any other drug, is one of the “laukika”

methods of provoking psychic experiences in the body and is one of the worst and most fatal of them all, for it does not even strengthen the will-power or purify the body, which the haṭha yoga methods at least do.

5. It would *per se* have no bearing upon recollections of former lives. Its action is to stimulate and sensitize the brain—for the moment—and what etheric or astral reflections or experiences might be transmitted no one can predict. But as the real memory of former lives is in and belongs to the ego proper, it would entirely depend upon how far the mind and astral bodies had been purified and brought under the control of the ego, as to whether it could transmit its own knowledge and register it on the brain even when sensitized by the action of a drug like hashish.

Finally, it may be as well to remark that the “hashish” of the East is a very different thing from what is called “hashish” in the West. The latter is usually an alcoholic extract of *cannabis indica* made according to the B.P. formula. Such a preparation, though sometimes used as a drug by our medical men here, is *not* “hashish,” and one is not very likely to get any such results as those alluded to above from taking it, unless either a very heavy dose be taken or the experimenter is unusually sensitive to the action of the drug; while its action on the brain—when taken in any quantity—is far more deleterious even than that of the Indian preparation, on account of the presence of the alcohol, which interferes with its normal action, and to the absence of other ingredients which regulate its operation and minimize the subsequent reaction.

The subscription to the VĀHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 26, Charing Cross, S.W. No back numbers can be supplied.

All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.

THE VÂHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

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Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

LITERARY NOTES.

STUDENTS of the origins of Christianity have of course read the translation of the recently found fragment of the Logia, just published by the fortunate discoverers, Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt (Frowde; 1897. Price, boards 2s., paper 6d.). The most recent work published on this previously entirely conjectural subject, is *The Oracles of Papias* (Longmans; 1894. Price 6s.) by an anonymous writer, whose scholarship, however, is unquestionable. The full title is: *The Oracles ascribed to Matthew by Papias of Hierapolis, a Contribution to the Criticism of the New Testament, with Appendices on the Authorship of the De Vita Contemplativa, the Date of the Crucifixion, and the Date of the Martyrdom of Polycarp*. Though the writer's main theory—that the Logia were a collection of Messianic prophecies from the Old Testament—is completely set aside by the new discovery, his book presents us with the best marshalling of material on the subject of the Logia known to English scholarship.

"The Acts of John," of which the text and translation are given by Dr. James in Vol V., No. 1, of *Texts and Studies* (Price 7s. 6d.), carries us back by a direct line of Gnostic tradition to the Essenean environment of Jesus, and preserves for us the only known indubitable trace of the relationship between Jesus, the pupil, and his Master, the Christ. The Essene Gnostic tradition is the main trace along which search should be made by Theosophical students. A very important factor to take into account is the literature current in Judæa from 100 years before to 50 years after the accepted date. It gives us the setting of the picture we are studying. In this connection it will be useful to read

Books which influenced Our Lord and his Apostles (A Critical Review of Apocalyptic Jewish Literature), by John E. H. Thomson (Edinburgh: Clark; 1891. Price 10s.). The writer is ludicrously orthodox with regard to all canonical books, but with regard to extra-canonical scriptures is exceedingly useful; his connecting together Gnosticism and Essenism, and making the latter responsible for Jewish Apocalypics, is a stroke of genius. He overshoots the mark of course, but supplies us with material which we can work up in our own fashion with the help of our Theosophical studies.

Dean Farrar's last work is an apology for the Bible. *The Bible, its Meaning and Supremacy* (Longmans; 1897) is of great interest as showing the position taken up by the preacher of Eternal Hope with regard to the critical school. He admits the method and many of the results unreservedly, he chants aloud the praises of the divine prerogative of reason in no uncertain tones, yet finally resorts to mere apology, and this because he holds to the "something" behind in Christianity with the feverish grasp of faith, and not the firm grip of knowledge of sacred things. His book nevertheless is eminently readable and deserves study.

The most important work which has appeared for many years in the Orientalistic world is indubitably Dr. Paul Deussen's translation of sixty Upanishads of the Veda—*Sechzig Upanishads des Veda* (Leipzig: Brockhaus; 1897). A review and article on this most valuable addition to our literature, by Mr. Bertram Keightley, will be found in the last number of *The Theosophical Review*.

Professor C. de Harlez has published a précis of Buddhist doctrine, entitled *Vocabulaire Bouddhique Sanscrit-Chinois* (Leiden: Brill; 1897. Price,

gulden 1.75), a review of which will appear in the next number of the Review.

Those who are interested in the Kabalah of the Eliphas Lévi school, may be glad to learn that the treatise of Trithemius, *De Diis Secundis*, has been translated into French (Paris: Chamuel; 1897). Tarophiles may be warned that *Ye Book of ye Cards* (Roxburghe Press; 1897) is an unnecessary production.

Students of Christian mysticism will find a new translation of the tracts on Divine Names and Mystic Theology, and also the Letters of the Pseudo-Dionysius in the Rev. John Parker's recent work *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite* (Oxford: James Parker; 1897). The translator's knowledge of the critical side of the subject is, however, a minus quantity.

Lucifer, as already announced, has changed its name to *The Theosophical Review*: its size and general get up are altered, so that it now looks very much like *The Nineteenth Century*. The first number of volume xxi is supported by contributions from such well-known writers in the movement as Mrs. Besant, Messrs. Sinnett, Leadbeater, Leightley, Wells and Mead, Mrs. Hooper, and Miss Arundale. Mr. Leadbeater's article on "The Christian Creed" is of great interest, and promises matter of still greater interest; Mr. Sinnett's "Future Theosophical Prospects" is the written form of his excellent address to the last convention. Mrs. Besant writes on "The Theosophical Movement." The rest of the articles according to the names above quoted are: "The Law and the Logia in East and West"; "The New Dawn"; "Some Outlines of Valentinian Æonology"; "Fairyland and the Underworld"; and "The Bhagavad Gîtâ and the Gospels." It would be difficult to find another magazine with so interesting a title-list for students of Theosophy.

ACTIVITIES.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to September 20th: W. J. Long, £10; T. Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.; Miss Bowring, £1; A. F., 5s.; W. Thomas, £1 1s.; G. Graham, £1; B., £12 10s.; G. R. S. Mead, £1; F. S. Pitt-Taylor, 5s.; P., 5s. 6d. Total, £27 9s.

Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been acquired by the Reference Library:

Practical Vegetarian Cookery, by Countess Wachtmeister and Kate Buffington Davis, San Francisco, 1897; *Practical Astrology*, by Alan Leo, London, 1897; *Traité des Causes Secondes*, by Jean Trithème, Paris, 1897; *On the Outer Rim*, by George E. Wright, Chicago, 1897; *Elidiorhpa*, by John Uri Lloyd, Cincinnati, 1897.

Headquarters' Lending Library.

The subscription to the Circulating Library at 19, Avenue Road, is: one year, 10s.; six months, 6s.; three months, 3s. 6d.; postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian.

Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoon, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Rome Lodge.

The Branch has changed its quarters and its Library from 40, to 31, Via Lombardia, and re-opens with public meetings in October. Visitors to Rome will always find at this address Mrs. Lloyd or another representative, who will give them any information they may require.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Oct. 10th, *The Astral Plane—Inhabitants*; Oct. 24th, *The Heaven of Creeds*. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD LODGE. Meetings discontinued for the present.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Oct. 12th, *First Fruits of Introspection*. On the other Tuesdays at 8 p.m., for the study of Hindu Philosophy, and Sundays at 11 a.m., for study, and from 4 to 9 p.m., for enquirers.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Oct. 3rd, *The Sermon on the Mount*, Hodgson Smith; Oct. 10th, *The Christ Within*, W. Bell; Oct. 17th, *Selves and other Selves*, Miss Ward; Oct. 24th, *The Purpose of the Theosophical Society*; Oct. 31st, *Our Teachers*, Mrs. Bell. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., at 67, Station Parade, for the study of *The Path of Discipleship*.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at 72, Prospect Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 33, Belgrave Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 3, Hackins Hey, on alternate Sundays, at 6 p.m.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays at 8.30 p.m.: Oct. 7th, *The New-found Sayings of Jesus*, G. R. S. Mead; Oct. 14th, *The Guardian Angels of Humanity*, Mrs. Besant; Oct. 21st, *The Vedānta Philosophy*, B. Keightley; Oct. 28th, *Scenes from the Life after Death*, C. W. Leadbeater.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. General meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Private class on Fridays, at 8.30 p.m. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, Bath House, Hampstead Heath.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m., at 39, High Street.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor) on Thursdays at 8 p.m.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Friday evening, at 7.30 p.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at the Foresters' Hall, The Octagon, on Fridays at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Meetings for enquirers at Boston Villa, Crescent Road, on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 31, Via Lombardia, on Thursdays at 6 p.m.: Oct. 7th, *Sound*; Oct. 14th, *Fire*; Oct. 21st, *The Birth of the Soul*; Oct. 28th, *The Growth of the Soul*.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Mrs. Bestwick's, Cambridge Arcade, every Thursday at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH CENTRE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thorntonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCLXXIII.

S. H. B.—*In Buddhist books we frequently read that thousands of persons became Arhats in consequence of some sermon delivered by the Buddha; are we to take this as mere Oriental exaggeration, or if not where are all these Arhats now?*

C. W. L.—Whether exaggeration has or has not crept in where statements as to definite figures are made, it is impossible to say; it seems by no means improbable, although on the other hand there can

be little doubt that the number of those who attained adeptship during the earthly life of the Buddha was really very large.

We often get a very distorted idea of the work of the Buddha because we persist in regarding it solely from our personal point of view. We are apt to look upon the preaching of the Law and the founding of a great religion as his principal and indeed his only function, because it is by virtue of that that he comes into relation with the present age of the world to which we ourselves belong. We forget that he is the *fourth* Buddha of this world-period, and that his incarnation as Siddhartha Gautama was only the last of a number of lives devoted to the teaching of humanity.

During all those previous Bodhisattva-lives he had linked to himself karmically by ties of the deepest affection and gratitude vast numbers of people whom he had taught and helped. These men would of course be among the flower of the fourth root-race, and would naturally therefore pass on into the first subdivision of the fifth. At a time when the majority of them were in incarnation there the Buddha would take his final birth among them, and the tremendous force of his magnetic influence would act upon their inner nature as sunlight upon the growing plant, rapidly developing into Arhatship all those who by his previous efforts had been brought to the threshold of the Path.

Certainly he preached his law not only to them but to all the world, and thus laid a firm foundation for the work of his successor Maitreya, who will himself incarnate again and again among men, teaching and preaching as and when he may see to be best for his great purpose, until the time comes when he also takes the final Buddha-birth and passes away from this world for ever, "bearing his sheaves with him" in the shape of the host of men of the fifth race who will by that period have attained adeptship under his careful guidance.

It has always been known that the birth of a great Adept as a Buddha is his last upon earth, as is repeatedly stated even in the exoteric books. (See the well-known declaration of Gautama when he had attained the Buddhahood, "Anekajāṭisaṃsāraṃ," etc. Nidānakathā, 278; also Milindapañha iv, 5, 8, and many other places.) But we have been too apt to look upon that birth as the beginning of his great work for man, instead of what it really is—its culmination; and thus we have missed the true significance of many points which would otherwise have been most luminous.

But although the Buddha, having once attained, can never again take human birth, it appears to be possible for him to retain a certain connection with the world which he has taught for so long. We have been given to understand that it is not the ordinary rule that he should do so, as his future work lies upon far higher planes of which we know nothing; but it seems that Gautama's action in this respect differed somewhat from that of his predecessors, and that his connection with earth was not entirely severed when he left it in physical form.

As regards the second part of the question, it would be impossible for us to trace those Arhats in

their progress through the higher realms of nature, even if we had any right to pry into the lives of the Holy Ones in order to gratify idle curiosity. But we know that beyond the position of the Arhat lies the futher stage of the Asekha, "the one who has no more to learn" as regards our own planetary chain, and we are told that when man has reached this level, and so attained his spiritual majority, he assumes the fullest control of his own destinies, and makes choice of his future line of evolution among several possible paths which he then sees opening before him.

Naturally we cannot expect to understand very much about these, and the faint outline of some of them, which is all that can be sketched in for us, conveys very little to the mind, except that most of them take the Adept altogether away from the earth-chain, which no longer affords sufficient scope for his evolution. This latter fact may be taken as suggesting an answer to the enquiry as to where the immediate followers of the Buddha may be working at the present time, or at any rate as explaining why they are not now to be found upon earth.

One of the paths which they may take is that of those who, as the phrase goes, accept Nirvâṇa. Through what incalculable æons they remain in that sublime condition, for what far greater work they are preparing themselves, what will be their future line of evolution, are questions upon which we know nothing; and even if information upon such points could be given it is almost certain that it would prove entirely incomprehensible to us at our present stage.

Another class chooses a spiritual evolution not quite so far removed from humanity, for though not directly connected with the next chain of our system it extends through two long periods corresponding to its first and second rounds, at the end of which time the Adepts of this line also appear to accept Nirvâṇa, but at a higher stage than those previously mentioned.

Others join the Deva evolution, whose progress lies along a grand chain consisting of seven chains like ours, each of which is to them as one world. This line of evolution is spoken of as the most gradual and therefore the least arduous of the seven courses; but though it is sometimes referred to in the books as "yielding to the temptation to become a god," it is only in comparison with the sublime height of renunciation of the Nirmâṇakâya that it can be spoken of in this half-disparaging manner, for the Adept who chooses this course has indeed a glorious career before him, and though the path which he selects is not the shortest, it is nevertheless a very noble one.

Yet another group are the Nirmâṇakâyas—those who, declining all these easier methods, choose the shortest but steepest path to the heights which still lie before them. They form what is poetically termed the "guardian wall," and, as *The Voice of the Silence* tells us, "protect the world from further and far greater misery and sorrow"—not indeed by warding off from it external evil influences, but by devoting all their strength to the work of pouring down upon

it a flood of spiritual force and assistance, without which it would assuredly be in far more hopeless case than now.

Yet again there are those who remain even more directly in association with humanity and continue to incarnate among it, as our own Masters are doing. But it would seem that only a certain comparatively small number adopt this course—probably only so many as are necessary for the carrying on of this physical side of the work. Perhaps only a few of the leaders of the Great White Brotherhood, as we know it now, belonged to the army of Arhats who attained that level under the direct influence of the Buddha. The majority of his advanced disciples have probably chosen some of the other possible lines of evolution.

QUESTION CCCLXXIV.

The following questions have been put in regard to the âkâshic records and other points, the answers to which may be of general interest.

(a) *Are the âkâshic records imprinted everywhere, eternally (as long at least as the âkâsha itself lasts); and why does not the heaping up of the successive pictures produce confusion?*

Or

(b) *Are the records localised, on the other hand, around their place of origin, and must the investigator mentally transport himself thither in order to find them?*

(c) *Are the astral images or pictures localised at the spot where they have been produced?*

(d) *Do the astral auric impressions which give rise to ordinary memory possess great durability?*

(e) *Is forgetfulness due to the disintegration of these images or to some disturbance or difficulty of vibration in the physical brain-cell which corresponds to them?*

(f) *Do good psychometrists read the âkâshic records, or merely see astral pictures?*

B. K.—(a) This question seems to imply some little confusion in the mind of the questioner, very probably due to taking the similes which have been used to illustrate the facts as literal representations of the facts themselves. The fundamental point which must be grasped in relation to the âkâshic records is that when studied, as they usually are by investigators, on the mânasic plane they are merely the reflections or reproductions in the matter of that plane of something from a much higher one; that something, we have reason to believe, being really *the conscious memory of the Logos of our system*. The âkâshic records therefore must not be thought of as a series of pictures or reproductions of events existing continually either on the astral or on the mânasic plane, superposed one upon the other or following each other in succession, like a stack of photographs or the ribbon of the cinematograph. But if not of this nature, what then are these "records"? Here one is confronted by the ever-recurring difficulty of in any, even the smallest, degree making intelligible the facts of a higher plane in terms of the experience of a lower. Hence

these phrases, "records," "ākāshic pictures," etc., etc., already applied in our present instance, and the misunderstandings which have arisen through the materialising of these similes. So another attempt must be made, and this time under safeguard of a most emphatic declaration that whatever may be said can, in the very nature of things, be at best but the very faintest and remotest shadow of the living actuality.

In the first place then it seems, in investigating the past by means of the so-called ākāshic records, that it is the conscious memory of the Logos which forms their ultimate source. At any rate what the investigator appears to do is—by some action on his part which it is literally impossible to describe down here—to allow the memory of the Logos to reflect itself in the matter of the mānasic plane and so reproduce before his vision not only all that happened on the physical plane but all that accompanied it on the astral or mānasic planes as well. When the investigator ceases his action, the whole thing disappears and the matter of the mānasic plane resumes its ordinary condition. It should, however, be stated that the scenes as reproduced in the matter of the mānasic plane from the memory of the Logos are *objective* and will be as clearly visible and tangible to any other entity, self-conscious on that plane, who happens to turn his attention to what is going on as to the original investigator himself.

As to the latter part of this question, it will be obvious from what has been said that, since the records do not exist as "pictures" or "images" in the matter of the mānasic plane, there can be no heaping up or consequent confusion among them.

(b) This question is also answered by the above ; since the system *is* the Logos and lives in Him, His memory is everywhere and locality has nothing to do with the investigator's getting at any special matter he is in search of.

Thus far we have been considering the ākāshic records proper, those which have been used in the various investigations from which so much of our more recent theosophical information has been derived. But to prevent misapprehension it is perhaps well to say a word about certain other orders of memory, quite at the other end of the scale to that of the Logos, which have attracted attention and which may in a certain sense be also made use of as "records," and which indeed do seem to play that part in some classes at least of psychometric experiments. To begin with, the broad general law is that which is of necessity involved in the very possibility of "experience," namely that the outpoured life of the Logos in its every state and phase is capable of receiving and retaining impressions, *i.e.*, of acquiring experience. This being true of all, is true of the atom, which is merely a centre of life, so that we have an "atomic" memory. Next, since the combinations of the atoms into the molecular structures which form the various sub-planes of our plane are produced by the action of the out-poured life—the first out-pouring of the Logos—we shall have a "molecular memory" distinct from the atomic. And the bearer

or carrier, the seat and storehouse of this molecular memory, will be the life-wave of the first out-pouring. Further on again we shall have a cellular memory and various phases and degrees of memory associated with more and more complex organic structures, up to and including the physical body of man, the carriers or seats of which will be the various kinds of monadic essence belonging to the second out-pouring ; while higher still we have the human memory, *i.e.*, the perdurable memory of the causal body, *ultimately* dependent on the third out-pouring of the Logos as its seat or carrier.

Now, hard though it may be to realise the fact, it must be borne in mind that all these are *actual* memories each retaining the impress of all that has reached it from its surroundings. Thus for instance we shall—can, indeed—find in the essence which constitutes the ensoulment of (say) a vegetable cell forming part of the trunk of a tree, the impressions more or less clear or ghostly of all that ever occurred within a certain range of that cell, since it came into existence as a cell. And these impressions or memories would be and are practically recoverable from each cell of that tree so long as the cell holds together. But when the cell ceases to exist as such, *i.e.*, when broken up by fire or actual decay, then the monadic essence ensouling it is set free and returns to the block to which it belongs, and that set of memories or records could then only be found as part of the whole series which had been stored up in that block of essence ; though short of the possibilities of adept vision such recovery is hardly possible.

Now it is with these cellular or molecular memories that psychometrists often get in touch, and it is the pictures or memories impressed upon the cellular or molecular monadic essence which often furnish them with their visions. But in such cases it is *not* with the true ākāshic records in any sense that we are concerned.

(c) As regards the astral pictures often seen by clairvoyants, some rather careful distinctions must be drawn. In the case of any given vision at least four possibilities present themselves : (1) What the clairvoyant sees may be a more or less distorted reproduction on the astral plane of some scene or fragment of a scene, from the true ākāshic records, *i.e.*, from the memory of the Logos. How and why such reproductions, or "reflections" as they are sometimes called, occur, it would lead us too far to enquire at present, as a very large range of possibilities is involved. (2) The vision may be due to unintentional, almost unconscious psychometry, *i.e.*, to the clairvoyant getting momentarily into touch with some phase or other of the molecular or other orders of memory already referred to. (3) It may be due to reflection or refraction in the astral light analogous to the physical processes by which the scenes and objects visible in a mirage are produced. (4) Lastly, it may be a case of the following type. We have all read of houses, rooms and even places in which sensitive people are almost invariably haunted by scenes of horror which seem to reproduce themselves before their eyes. These scenes are repro-

ductions of events which have actually occurred at the place in question, and on investigation it appears that the impressions which give rise to them have been made on the astral counterparts of the *solid objects* around, *e.g.*, the walls and furniture of a room, the materials of a house, the rocks, earth, trees, etc., of a place. This appears to be a case of impression where the images are superposed and confused, and require careful attention and sorting out, if accuracy of detail and succession is to be attained. Images of this class are of course very definitely localised, and to investigate them the seer must transport himself, physically or otherwise, to the spot in question.

(d) In ordinary memory several factors are more or less conjoined. First we have the molecular and cellular memories belonging to each of our bodies; those of the mind body forming practically the main element in our "personal" memory. It is by means of these that we "recall" the past in most cases. But *we*, *i.e.*, our Egos clothed in the mind body, are also in direct touch with the true records, *i.e.*, with the memory of the Logos, since *we*, in a very special sense, are rays or facets of Him. This element also plays a part, even in ordinary memory, which however it is impossible to describe now in more detail.

QUESTION CCCLXXV.

E. W.—Is there any real astronomical basis for the assumption so universally made that the approaching conjunction of the planets must necessarily produce disastrous effects, or is it to be supposed that it will cause a conflict on higher planes?

C. W. L.—There is no astronomical basis whatever for any such assumption. When it is stated that a number of planets are in conjunction, what is meant is that, as seen from the earth, those planets are roughly in a line one behind the other—not absolutely in a line, of course, or a series of occultations would ensue, but all lying in the same general direction. It therefore follows that such attraction as they exert upon the earth will be acting in one direction instead of in many directions, as is usually the case; and it may seem at first sight that such action might be sufficient to produce considerable disturbance. But when we remember that the mass of all the planets taken together is less than one seven hundred and fortieth part of the mass of the sun, and further that all the great outer planets must, when in conjunction with the sun, be on the other side of him and consequently at their greatest distance from the earth, we shall realize that any effect that may be produced even by the attraction of all the planets combined must be absolutely infinitesimal. From the astronomical point of view, therefore, there is not the slightest reason for apprehension.

Turning to the astrological side of the question, the position is somewhat different. The idea that the planets themselves have any influence over human affairs may of course be dismissed as

childish, but there is another theory of astrology which is entitled to more respect—that which regards these planets as merely indicators of the position of spheres of influence which may possibly produce certain effects in this world.

To the materialist such a suggestion would probably seem, if anything, rather more ridiculous than the other, but the student of occultism knows better than this, for he cannot but be aware that influences of some sort certainly do exist which make his work easier or more difficult at one time than another. As to what these are, how they work, and in what way they are connected with the planets, we have no exact information; but some occultists have thought that the whole solar system, when looked at from a higher plane, in reality originally consisted of a number of vast spheres of influence (probably representing qualities or powers of the Logos of the system), and that, in the gradual condensation of the great glowing nebula, the location of the physical planets was determined by the formation of vortices at certain points of intersection of these spheres with one another and with a given plane. It seems impossible, with the knowledge at present at our disposal, to construct any mathematical figure which will satisfy the requirements of this hypothesis; but if anything like this theory be true, the planets would indicate by their position the arrangement of these great spheres at any given moment.

Now these spheres of influence appear to differ widely in quality, and one way in which this difference shows itself is in their action upon the elemental essence. It may have, and quite probably has, other and more important lines of action of which we know nothing; but this at least forces itself on our notice—that each such sphere produces its own special effect upon the manifold varieties of elemental essence. One will greatly stimulate the activity and vitality of certain kinds of essence, while apparently checking and controlling others; the influence of another sphere will be strong over quite a different set of essences, while not apparently affecting the previous set in the least. We may have all sorts of combinations and permutations of these influences, the action of one of them being in many cases either greatly intensified or almost neutralized by the presence of another.

But, it may be asked, how far can these influences affect human beings? How far can they dominate the will of man? The answer to the last question is emphatic; they cannot dominate man's will in the slightest degree, though they may in some cases make it easier or more difficult for that will to act along certain lines. It must be remembered that elemental essence enters very largely into the composition of both the astral and mental bodies of man; consequently any unusual excitation of one or more classes of such essence, or sudden increase in their activity, would undoubtedly affect to some extent either his emotions or his mind, or both.

It is obvious that these influences would work

very differently on different men, because of the variety of elemental essence in their composition. In no case could a man be swept away by them into any course of action without the consent of his will, but he might evidently be helped or hindered by them in any effort that he chanced to be making. The strong man has little need to trouble himself as to the influences which happen to be in the ascendant; his weaker brother may find it worth his while to know at what moment this or that force can most advantageously be applied.

Clearly such an influence is in itself no more good or evil than is electricity or any other force of nature, but like electricity it may be helpful or hurtful according to the use that is made of it; and just as certain experiments would be more likely to be successful if undertaken when the air was heavily charged with electricity, while certain others under such conditions would most probably fail, so an effort involving the use of the forces of our mental or emotional nature would more or less readily achieve its object according to the influences which predominate when it is made.

These factors therefore may be put aside as *une quantité négligeable* by the man of determination; but since the majority of the human race still allow themselves to be the helpless sport of the forces of desire, and have not yet developed anything worth calling a will of their own, their feebleness permits these influences to assume an importance to which they have intrinsically no claim.

For example, they may occasionally bring about a condition of affairs in which all forms of nervous excitement are considerably intensified, and there is consequently a general sense of irritability abroad. Under such circumstances disputes would arise far more readily than usual, even on the most trifling pretexts, and the large number of people who are always on the verge of losing their temper would relinquish all control over themselves on even less than the ordinary provocation.

It may even sometimes happen that such influences, playing on the smouldering discontent of ignorant jealousy, may fan it into an outburst of popular frenzy from which widespread disaster may ensue. So were the Parisians moved in 1870 to rush about the streets crying "À Berlin!" So has arisen many a time the fiendish yell of "Deen! deen!" which so easily arouses the mad fanaticism of a murderous Mohammedan crowd.

The ancient astrology of the early Chaldeans seems to have devoted itself chiefly to the calculation of the position and action of these spheres of influence, so that its principal function was rather to form a rule of life than to predict the future; or at least such predictions as it gave would be rather of tendencies than of special events. Modern astrology appears to devote itself largely to the latter line of prophecy, but in so far as it is a true science it must also be based upon the calculation of the position of these spheres. I have not made sufficient study of astrology to feel myself competent to write upon the subject, but I take it that no reasonable astrologer would deny the power of

a man's will to modify the destiny marked out for him by his karma. Karma may throw a man into certain surroundings or bring him under certain influences, but it can never force him to commit a crime, though it may so place him that it requires great determination on his part to avoid that crime. Therefore it seems to me that all astrology could do would be to warn the man of the circumstances under which, at such and such a time, he would find himself, and that any definite prophecy of his action under those circumstances could only be based upon probabilities.

We have also to bear in mind that in astrology we are not, so far as I can see, dealing with assured laws of nature, whose action we can clearly comprehend, but are rather applying empirically certain traditional estimates of the quality of these various spheres of influence; so that we have here another possibility of inaccuracy introduced into any calculations that may be made.

So far as we can judge there is no reason whatever in nature why a conjunction of planets in one particular sign of the zodiac should threaten us with unpleasant results, though the various exponents of astrological mysteries seem to agree in the statement that tradition has always regarded such an event as of evil omen. Whether that tradition has any foundation we shall know better in two months' time; and, since no effort of ours can alter the disposition of the stars, the best thing we can do in the meantime is to forget all about the matter. Far too often in history the dejected dwelling of the superstitious and therefore cowardly populace on gloomy prognostications has itself brought about their fulfilment. If plague, pestilence and famine, battle, murder and sudden death are to come upon this unfortunate world they must come, and it is assuredly unnecessary to add to their horror all the terrors of exaggerated anticipation; and since it is not suggested that we can do anything to avert the expected calamity it seems hardly in good taste to insist upon it, and as it were gloat over it, in order that if it arrives the prophet may have such satisfaction as may be derived from remarking "I told you so," to say nothing of the danger which the prophet runs of having made himself look exceedingly foolish if, as seems most probable, nothing special should happen after all.

It will be seen from what has been said above that such an idea as "a conflict on higher planes," even supposing for a moment that such a thing is ever possible, is entirely inappropriate in this case. The action of the various spheres of influence is by no means the same, and as far as their effect on the elemental essence is concerned they sometimes neutralize one another, but to speak of "conflict" between what are after all qualities or powers of the same great Logos is neither seemly nor reasonable.

This answer cannot be better concluded than by referring the questioner to the words recently written on this very subject by one whom all Theosophists hold in affectionate reverence: "Why should the fulfilment of predictions trouble us, or adverse omens cause us any despondency? Calm,

firm and serene should be the hearts of all Theosophists, for the strong hands that guide the destinies of the world are not strangers to us."

QUESTION CCCLXXVI.

A. L. B. H.—In what sense is the principle of vicarious atonement accepted by or involved in the work of the Invisible Helpers and Buddhas of Compassion? If not at all, how are the strong to bear the burdens of the weak? If it is, what are the limits of its activity?

G. R. S. M.—The divine spark is incarnated in man "to benefit and be benefited in turn," as the Gnostics taught. Without good-doing, good will not be done to you. You cannot do good without being benefited in exact proportion. The Self "lives by giving." "He who gives me preserves me," say the Upanishads. What need then is there of further words, of puzzling over vicarious atonement and other theological verbiage? "Give and it shall be given to you," says the Logion of the Christ; help and you shall be helped; hinder and you shall be hindered. This is the karmic law.

QUESTION CCCLXXVII.

A. P. W.—In reading the editorial in the December number of THE VÂHAN, under the heading "The Indian Famine," the question arose in my mind, very naturally I think, as to why those mighty beings, united with the suffering millions by the closest ties and possessing great power over the nature spirits, should permit the distress spoken of? If "karma" be the answer, then may I ask why you seek to neutralise national karma by appeals for relief? If relief be desired by the "powers that be" they could bring it at will, as I understand their powers.

G. R. S. M.—"Why did not God kill the Devil?" The question dives deep into the great Why of the universe. The first problem we have to solve is the question: Is a famine necessarily evil? When millions of people were destroyed in the great deluge of Atlantis, was this evil? The answer seems to be: It was doubtless considered evil by the people who were perishing, but was indubitably a great good for the progress of humanity. I do not assert definitely that the famine in India was a "visitation on the people for their sins," to use Biblical phraseology, although many Hindus believe that this was the case, but I do believe generally in the theory of the reciprocity of moral and physical causation. On general principles, then, national disasters are the result of moral as well as physical causes. The linking together of these causes and effects is in the hands of the Lord of the great karmic law. He alone is the arbiter of human destiny, and He alone can see fully the eternal wisdom of this great unerring law of cause and effect, and how it alone can finally bring about the salvation of mankind.

But famine arising, each who has the heart can mitigate its rigours according to his knowledge and powers. This is no interference with karma, for karma cannot be interfered with. It is a law.

The result follows the cause unerringly. Good follows good, evil, evil. The seed time is ever present. He who does not sow good is a fool.

To turn to A. P. W.'s question, then. How do we know that the Masters did not help, are not helping, according to their knowledge and powers? Their pupils did and are; are the teachers less than the scholars? But the Masters are not omnipotent and omniscient. The Lord of destiny, the Lord of the Law, is also their Lord. They must obey; all must obey.

No, karma is not the answer; we are tired of the "blessed word Mesopotamia," no matter in what protean garb it presents itself. But even were we not, we should not juggle with the meanings of words, and say first of all "karma is a law," then "karma is a mass of something," and then "karma is bad." Many imagine that because the Logion, "As a man sows so will he reap," is employed more frequently as a deterrent from evil than as an incentive to good, that the sowing refers exclusively to tares and not to good seed. The sooner we get this elementary error out of our minds, the better shall we be able to understand the first axiom of the doctrine of karma.

QUESTION CCCLXXVIII.

E. J. G.—What is the "will"; is it a product of the lower or higher manas; or is it something different from manas? It seems to me to have control over the mental faculty—for one can control both good and bad thoughts by the will-power, as it must be patent to any one that he can think or will to think base thoughts just as well as good ones.

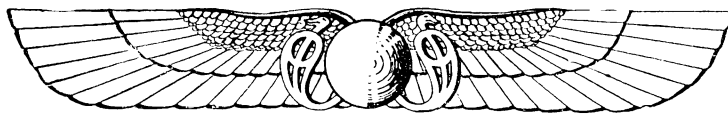
G. R. S. M.—I have heard it said that if the higher ego is the rider, then it is will; but if the lower, then it is desire. This seems at first to throw some light on the subject, or at any rate suggests a contribution to the settling of Theosophical nomenclature. Thus we might say: as the individuality is to the personality, so is will to desire.

But immediately the question arises: What is, then, the "something" which appears as will or desire, according as it is manifested through the higher or lower "I?" It is the something that lies back of the "I," of which the "I" is a vehicle. It can make or unmake the "I," for it is the further "I," the potential ground of our being. Both the "I" as vehicle and the "I" as Self are this something. What is then this something? "The Self is the friend of the self, and the self is the Self's enemy," or again, "The self is the friend of the Self, and the Self is the self's enemy." This is the old secret.

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Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

LITERARY NOTES.

TEXT-BOOKS are axes which cut both ways, but the rush of modern times imperiously demands them. We have had seven Manuals and now we have a text-book, and a very good text-book, to put into the hands of the enquiring public. *The Ancient Wisdom* (T. P. S. ; 5s. net) is the title chosen by Mrs. Besant for her last contribution to theosophical literature. Eight ninths of the 432 pages of text are occupied with an exposition of the main features of the world-old science in terms of the latest theosophical research, while the first fifty pages are devoted to an Introduction which shows that this science is the underlying unity in all the great religions of the world, that Theosophy is no new thing, but only a new robe for the eternal virgin of Truth. The twelve chapters of the book deal with (1) the physical plane, (2) the astral plane, (3) kâmaloka, (4) the mental plane, (5) devachan, (6) the buddhic and nirvânic planes, (7 and 8) reincarnation, (9) karma, (10) the law of sacrifice, (11) man's ascent, (12) building a kosmos. The ground covered is often familiar, and naturally so, but there is much that is new. The general method of treatment is novel, and in the chapter on the law of sacrifice we have a modification of Mrs. Besant's previous point of view. This is perhaps the most beautiful chapter in the book, and the divine joy of sacrifice, of giving that all may live, is eloquently dwelt upon.

But the great advantage of the book, and one in which it stands at present unrivalled, is that it gives a succinct and logical account of the main features of the great science of divine things, or rather, of such main features as the beginner can be expected to follow intelligently. The exposition is clear and lucid, except in one or two passages near the beginning where the text-book nature of the work has forced upon the author a brevity

which is inadequate. But if the time cries aloud for text-books it must have them, and if the science of life eternal will not tuck into a book of a few hundred pages, baby time must not grumble.

The work is adorned, not with any pictures, thank Heaven ! but with a most ample index ; it is well printed and bound, and crammed with interest from the first word to the last.

We write as an old student of Theosophy, and therefore as one incapable of forming a mere outside opinion ; but we are not surprised to read the remark of a reviewer that if what Mrs. Besant says is true, it amounts to a "new revelation." The term "revelation" is fortunately not yet included in our modern theosophical glossaries, but we do recognise in Mrs. Besant's statements, which are made on first hand evidence, yet one more confirmation of the old, old truths taught by the pupils and masters of the sacred science throughout the ages.

The appearance of the thirty-third edition of our President-Founder's *Buddhist Catechism* (London : T.P.S. ; 1897) should be quite sufficient to convince even the most carping critic that it has supplied a "long-felt want," while the additional fact of its translation into no less than twenty languages should further persuade him that that want amounted to almost the dimensions of an aching void. The little work is endorsed by the highest Buddhist ecclesiastical authority in Ceylon, Mahâ Thero Hikkaduwe Sumaṅgala, who not only guarantees its agreement with the Canon of the so-called Southern Buddhist Church, but recommends it warmly to all teachers in Buddhist schools. In fact the Sinhalese translation of the *Catechism* forms the basis of the religious instruction, not only of the children in the hundred schools established in the island under the auspices of the Theosophical Society, but also of the populace of Ceylon.

Following out his original plan, Colonel Olcott has added more questions and answers to the text. Though the nature of some of these additions, in

striving to bring Buddhistic ideas into line with modern scientific research, is foreign to the idea of a purely doctrinal catechism, which alone is familiar to religious circles in Europe, it will no doubt be of great utility in directing the minds of the young into a healthy channel of thought.

An appendix contains an account of the efforts made by our President-Founder to bring about a reconciliation of the numerous Buddhist sects, and also his draft of the fundamental bases of belief, to which already the representatives of the Buddhists of Japan, Burmah and Ceylon, and the Maghs of Chittagong have agreed.

Colonel Olcott makes no pretensions of being an Orientalist, but he has done more for living Buddhism than the best of scholars.

The last number of *The Theosophical Review* contains the important announcement that with the November issue the price will be reduced to 1s. Not only, then, has the review been enlarged by eight pages, making ninety-six pages in all, but it has been reduced in price by a third. Single numbers will be now 1s. net (post free 1s. 2½d.) and the subscription price, which will go back to the September issue (the first of volume xxi.) will be 12s. So great a change, involving so large a financial risk, would not have been made except in the interests of Theosophy, and but for the conviction of the editors that they can count on the willing co-operation of the members of the Society to make its leading periodical a success, seeing that it is published for the good of the whole movement and not for private benefit. The October number is replete with interest, containing an admirable article on the Christian Creed by Mr. Leadbeater, papers on the Geometry of Nature by Mr. Glass, and on the Wisdom myth of the Gnostics by Mr. Mead, also the introduction to a treatise of Plotinus by Mr. Ward. Besides a long "Watch-Tower" and a mass of reviews there are also articles on the Bhagavad Gītā and the Gospels by Miss Arundale, on the Theosophic Use of the Imagination by Mr. Firth, and on the Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness by H. Dhammapāla. A strong and happy note is sounded by Mrs. Besant in her paper on the Ceasing of Sorrow, and fitly brings our short notice of the contents to a close.

ACTIVITIES.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following sums have been received to October 20th: T. Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.; Miss Marsden, 10s. 6d.; H. D., 4s.; H. Dharmapāla, £2; M. U. Moore, 10s.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; G. Graham (monthly), £1; Mrs. Wilkinson, £2 os. 6d.; H. S. Winter, 5s.; A. F. P., £5; Pax, 10s.; F. Krüger, 13s. 3d.; Mrs. Besant, £5. Total £18 15s. 9d.

Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been acquired for the library:—

Lectures on Rāja Yoga, by Swāmi Vivekānanda,

New York, 1897; *Lectures on Karma Yoga*, by Swāmi Vivekānanda, New York, 1897; *Regeneration, the Gate of Heaven*, Boston; *The Buddhist Catechism*, H. S. Olcott, revised edition, Madras, 1897; *The History of Mohammedanism and Its Sects*, W. Cooke Taylor, LL.D., London, 1851; *Books which Influenced our Lord and His Apostles*, John E. H. Thompson, B.D., Edinburgh, 1891; *Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, Rabbi Issa'char Baer, Paris, 1897; *The Vedānta-Sūtras*, Part 2, translated by George Thibaut (vol. xxxviii. of *The Sacred Books of the East*), Oxford, 1896; *The Ancient Wisdom*, Annie Besant, London, 1897.

Headquarters' Lending Library.

The subscription to the Circulating Library at 19, Avenue Road, is: one year, 10s.; six months, 6s.; three months, 3s. 6d.; postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian.

Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoon, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Mrs. Besant's "At Home."

On Saturday, Nov. 20th, Mrs. Besant will be "At Home" from 3.30 to 5.30 p.m. to members of the Blavatsky Lodge and their friends.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Nov. 7th, *The Heaven of Creeds*; Nov. 21st, *The Heaven of Theosophy*. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD LODGE. Fortnightly meetings at the Royal Hotel, Darley Street. Short addresses by members.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *Reincarnation*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: on the other Tuesdays at 8 p.m., for the study of Hindu Philosophy, and Sundays at 11.30 a.m., for study, and from 4 to 9 p.m., for enquirers.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month, and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Nov. 7th, *The Making of Character*, W. H. Thomas; Nov. 14th, *Psychometry*, A. Osborne Eaves; Nov. 21st, *Scenes from the Life after Death*, C. W. Leadbeater; Nov. 28th, at 3 p.m., *Esoteric Christianity*, and at 7 p.m., *Brotherhood, the essential Basis of Society*, Mrs. Besant. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., at 67, Station Parade.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at 72, Prospect Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 33, Belgrave Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 3, Hackins Hey, on alternate Sundays, at 6 p.m.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays at 8.30 p.m.: Nov. 4th, *Seeking the Self*, Mrs. Besant; Nov. 11th, *A recently discovered Legend of the Christ*, G. R. S. Mead; Nov. 18th, *The Functions of the Gods*, Mrs. Besant; Nov. 25th, *The Brothers of Asia*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley. Sunday evening meetings at 7 p.m.: *The Self-Conscious Evolution, or the Process of Rational Self-Development*; Nov. 21st and 28th, *The Physical Virtues*.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: Nov. 1st, *Evolution, Scientific and Theosophical*, A. M. Glass; Nov. 15th, *Our Present Work*, Hon. Otway Cuffe; Nov. 29th, *The Relation of Man to Animals*, W. C. Worsdell.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. General meetings at No. 3 Room, Morley Hall, The Triangle, Hackney, on Fridays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Private class on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, 15, Worsley Road, Hampstead Heath.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor) on Thursdays at 8 p.m.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Friday evening at 7.30 p.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at the Foresters' Hall, The Octagon, on Fridays at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Meetings for enquirers at Boston Villa, Crescent Road, on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 31, Via Lombardia, on Thursdays at 6 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Mrs. Bestwick's, Cambridge Arcade, every Thursday at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH CENTRE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thorntonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

Mrs. Besant's Lectures.

Mrs. Besant opened her work for the European Section in the Blavatsky Lodge on October 14th, with a lecture on "The Guardian Angels of Humanity." The hall was crowded to excess, and numbers of people, after waiting outside for long, were obliged to go away disappointed.

She lectured three times at Manchester, on Oct. 17th, to very large audiences, and on the 16th and 18th held meetings for members, students, and enquirers. The following are her November lectures: 4th and 18th, Blavatsky Lodge; 7th and 14th, Queen's Hall, Langham Place (7 p.m.); 15th, Croydon Public Hall; 22nd, Lyncroft Gardens (by invitation only); 27th and 28th, Harrogate; 29th and 30th, Bradford.

A Tour in the West.

At the invitation of the South-Western Federation Mr. Leadbeater has recently paid a flying visit to some of its branches. On the 18th he lectured on "Clairvoyance" to a very good audience at Bath, and on the 19th the Bristol Lodge-room was crowded to hear an address on the somewhat recondite subject of "The Fourth Dimension." It was felt that this was *perhaps* rather a severe tax upon the endurance of those unacquainted with Theosophical ideas, though the members of the Lodge, who had themselves selected the subject, appeared to enjoy the lecture greatly. An afternoon drawing-room meeting had previously been held.

The largest gathering of the little tour, however, came together at Plymouth on the 20th, to hear an address upon a question of far more general interest, "Life after Death." In this case, indeed, the meeting-room was seriously overcrowded, and it is to be feared that many who wished to attend were unable to find even standing-room.

The meeting at Exeter next day was held in the afternoon. The audience was small but appreciative, and it is to be hoped that the zealous and persevering efforts of our few earnest members there will soon be encouraged by some additions to their number. On the whole our prospects in the beautiful West country are decidedly better than they were a year ago.

Blavatsky Lodge.

The meetings of the Blavatsky Lodge were resumed on Sept. 2nd, when an unusually small audience assembled to hear Mr. Leadbeater's interesting lecture upon "The Vegetable Monad." On Sept. 9th Mr. Bertram Keightley delivered a much appreciated lecture upon "Life and Form." Miss Ward spoke on Sept. 16th upon "Our Duty to our Neighbour," a theme which gave rise to some little discussion.

Mr. Mead, in his lecture upon "The Use and Abuse of Ancient Authority," defended the sacred scriptures of the world alike from their destroyers and their devotees.

On Sept. 30th the members had the pleasure of welcoming back the President of the Lodge, who took the chair for the first time since her departure from England over a year ago. The title of the lecture on this date, given by Mrs. Hooper, was "Fairy Tale and Fact." It dealt with the probable origins and hidden meanings of the fairy and folk tales so closely interwoven with the growth of nations: a subject very suggestive, and worthy of extended research. On Oct. 7th Mr. Mead described and commented upon the newly-found Sayings of Jesus, throwing much light on the "Logia" which have recently excited so great attention in the critical world.

On October 14th crowds assembled to hear Mrs. Besant's lecture upon "The Guardian Angels of Humanity." So great, in fact, was the influx of strangers, that many members had to be turned away.

Important Notice.

Owing to the overcrowding of the hall on the evenings of Mrs. Besant's lectures, by which much disappointment is occasioned to both members and visitors, a proposal to admit members of the Society only on these occasions will be laid before the annual meeting of the Blavatsky Lodge on October 30th.

It being probable that this resolution will be carried, associates and ticket-holders will do well to ascertain, before Mrs. Besant's lecture on November 4th, whether or not they can be admitted on that evening.

S. MAUD SHARPE, *Hon. Sec.*

North London Branch.

No public meetings are now being held by this Branch, these having been temporarily discontinued, partly owing to the difficulty of obtaining a suitable room for Sunday evenings. Two meetings each week for members and their friends are held at the library of the Branch. One of these, held on Monday, is engaged in the study of Mrs. Besant's new work, *The Ancient Wisdom*, and the other, on Wednesday evening, is devoted at present to Buddhism. A few of the most reliable books are taken as the basis of study, and are divided amongst some of the members, who are

expected to give a digest of the essential parts. Up to the present the scheme has worked in a satisfactory manner, and it is hoped that it may be continued so as to include some of the other religions.

A. M. G.

Athene Branch.

The annual business meeting of the Athene Branch was held on Tuesday, September 28th, when the following were elected as officers for the ensuing year: President, H. Saville; Treasurer, Albert Saville; Secretary, Miss Annie Gale; Librarian, Mrs. Atkinson.

The "Lucifer Reading Circle" in connection with this Branch has just completed its first year of existence, and now enters upon its second under the title of "*The Theosophical Review Reading Circle*." Seven members form the circle, two of whom are not members of the Society.

The members of the Athene Branch will meet every Tuesday evening during the autumn and winter months at 25, Hanover Square, at 8 o'clock, for the study of the Manuals, beginning with *Reincarnation*.

ANNIE GALE, *Hon. Sec.*

The Paris Branch.

Public lectures on Theosophy will be given on Sundays, from November, 1897, to April, 1898, inclusive. They will take place at 2.30 p.m., in the Salle des Mathurins, 36, rue des Mathurins. The first meeting will be held on November 7th, the subject being a general outline of the teachings of Theosophy.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SIR,

May I be permitted to offer a suggestion to the readers of the VĀHAN.

I am confident that, even among those who are really anxious to keep in touch with Theosophic thought and who gladly welcome any light thrown on the problems with which they are endeavouring to grapple, comparatively few preserve their VĀHANS and have them bound.

For those who do not do so there is another plan which, while not burdening them with the preservation of an unnecessary matter of merely passing interest, such as "Activities," and so forth, will yet preserve for future reference all the valuable information which is to be found in the "Enquirer"; I say advisedly "valuable," for I think there can be no doubt but that much which now appears in the VĀHAN under that heading is of very great value indeed to the student. The questions are mainly those which in some shape or another are in all our minds, and many of the replies are contributed by those best qualified to deal with them.

My suggestion is a very simple one, and it merely

is, that these questions and answers should be cut out and pasted in a newspaper-cutting book and be kept carefully indexed. The student would then have always at hand a very useful store of information, to which he could refer at any time when one of those constantly recurring questions again cropped up.

If such a book of cuttings would be useful to an individual student, it would, I think, be simply invaluable to a Branch.

In all cases, of course, two copies of the issue would be required, so as to allow for cutting, but there probably would not be much difficulty in getting hold of an extra copy, and it is always possible to subscribe for one.

Yours truly,
OTWAY CUFFE.

There is a limited supply of back numbers of THE VĀHAN from Jan., 1896. Any Branch desiring to carry out the above suggestion, and unable to procure copies from its members, may do so by applying to me.—G. R. S. MEAD,

General Secretary.

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCLXXIV.

(Continued.)

The following questions have been put in regard to the akâshic records and other points, the answers to which may be of general interest.

- (a) *Are the akâshic records imprinted everywhere, eternally (as long at least as the akâsha itself lasts); and why does not the heaping up of the successive pictures produce confusion?*
Or
- (b) *Are the records localised, on the other hand, around their place of origin, and must the investigator mentally transport himself thither in order to find them?*
- (c) *Are the astral images or pictures localised at the spot where they have been produced?*
- (d) *Do the astral auric impressions which give rise to ordinary memory possess great durability?*
- (e) *Is forgetfulness due to the disintegration of these images or to some disturbance or difficulty of vibration in the physical brain-cell which corresponds to them?*
- (f) *Do good psychometrists read the akâshic records, or merely see astral pictures?*

B. K. (continued).—As to the durability of the various impressions, it must be borne in mind that, speaking with strict accuracy, every impression made on the life of the Logos is *eternal*; i.e., whether made on that life in its atomic, molecular, cellular, or some higher phase, it is as undying and unfading as is that divine life itself. But though this is true, yet for our practical purposes it need not be taken into consideration, further than to bear in mind that if this were not so, all the rest would be not only

impossible but mere nonsense. Practically then, from our point of view, the impressions of any order of memory are available, i.e., recoverable, so long as that form persists, i.e., those of the atomic memory so long as that particular atom exists; of the molecular so long as that particular molecule persists; of the cell so long as that particular cell is not disintegrated; of an organism so long as that organism endures as a unit; of our mind bodies as long as these last, i.e., until they disintegrate after the devachanic period following each life is completed; of our causal bodies for the whole duration of the Manvantara and beyond.

It may be well to bear in mind that the expression "astral auric impressions" in the question, is misleading, and though very often employed, must not be taken materially and literally or it will lead to serious misconception.

(e) Forgetfulness has many causes, of which a few may here be mentioned. (1) Failure in transmission from the mental body to the physical brain, due to some defect or obstruction either in the astral body, in the etheric body or in the dense brain. This is generally the case where we feel that we know something, say a familiar name, word or face, but cannot "recall" it, i.e., bring it through into our physical consciousness. (2) Failure of the ego to recover or recall the matter on the mental plane, due either to some defect in the mind body, to lack of attention, or to feebleness of the original impression.

As there are no "images" in the ordinary sense to disintegrate, the theory on which the question seems based fails. The nearest approximation in fact would seem to be the disintegration and death of some particular cell on whose memory the event in question had been very vividly impressed, so that the recovering of it along that particular line would be impossible, and the difficulty of picking it up from the memory of some other cell almost insuperably great. This would mean that unless the individual in question could raise his consciousness so as to bring through the memory from his touch with that of the Logos, he could not succeed in recalling that particular incident.

(f) Outside the ranks of actually instructed students of occultism no psychic or psychometer, however "good," can read the true "akâshic records," because, unless taught, he cannot know *how* to go to work in order to do so. But a good psychometer can get at past history by putting himself *en rapport* with some molecular or cellular memory containing the impressions in question, though of course his visions are apt to be far from reliable or trustworthy, owing to his inability to control, guide or check what he sees.

(The conclusion of the above answer was omitted by error in the make-up of our last issue.—ED.)

QUESTION CCCLXXIX.

S. O.—*On looking keenly at any exposed portion of the human body (say the face or hand) I frequently see multitudes of tiny forms, such as dice,*

stars, double pyramids, etc., pouring rapidly out from it; surely these can hardly be thought-forms, yet if not, where am I to place them, as they do not seem to correspond with anything on the astral plane of which I have read?

C. W. L.—Such forms certainly belong neither to the thought-plane nor to the astral, but are purely physical, though of exceeding minuteness. What the questioner sees is simply the physical emanation from the body which is always taking place—the waste matter, consisting largely of finely-divided salts, which is constantly being thrown out in this manner. The cubic, octohedral and star-like shapes mentioned are readily recognizable by any one who possesses what has sometimes, though perhaps inaccurately, been called “etheric sight”—that is to say, sight capable of observing physical matter in a state of exceedingly fine subdivision, though not yet capable of discerning the still subtler matter of the astral plane.

These emanations constitute what has been referred to as the health-aura, for in the case of a healthy man as they leave the body they are combed out into straight lines by the outrush of the spare prāṇa or vitality which he is constantly radiating from himself in all directions, in the same kind of way as river-weeds are held rigid in parallel lines by the strength of the current. In illness, extreme fatigue or weakness, the man's stock of vitality falls lower, and consequently such emanations hang about the man in a chaotic cloud, since the outpouring of prāṇa is insufficient to reduce them to order and sweep them away with it as usual.

The character of these tiny particles varies, however, from many other causes than loss of health; any wave of emotion will affect them to a greater or less extent, and they even respond to the influence of any definite train of thought. In a recent publication by Dr. Marques, Professor Gates is reported as saying:

(a) That the material emanations of the living body differ according to the states of the mind, as well as to the conditions of the physical health.

(b) That these emanations can be tested by the chemical reactions of some salts of selenium.

(c) That these reactions are characterized by various tints or colours, according to the nature of the mental impressions.

(d) That forty different “emotion products,” as he calls them, have already been thus obtained.

If the questioner will endeavour to systematize her observations she will no doubt find herself able to confirm some of these discoveries, which have been made by a method of investigation so entirely different from that which she is using, and results of very considerable interest might be obtained by work along that line.

A fuller and more detailed work upon the aura, including some study of thought-forms and cognate subjects, will presently be issued, and no doubt the questioner will find in that very much that will be of deep interest to her in connection with her own observations.

QUESTION CCCLXXX.

S. O.—*I also frequently see animated particles of some kind quivering with intense rapidity and dashing about in the air before me, and these seem to be of several different kinds, some of the most active being tiny serpentine forms; is this a dawning perception of the elemental essence of the astral plane?*

C. W. L.—This question, like the one preceding it, shows the possession of much increased physical power, not of astral. The description given is by no means a bad one, and quite sufficiently proves that what the questioner has seen are realities, and not figments of the imagination. but it applies to physical molecules of gas, and not to astral elemental essence. The active serpentine forms, for example, are obviously molecules (though a chemist would call them atoms) of oxygen, and if the questioner will refer to *Lucifer* for November, 1895, she will no doubt recognize in the drawings there given an attempt to represent what she has seen. Very probably the other molecules there shown would prove recognizable also, while she can hardly have failed to notice the curious corded-bale-like molecule of carbon, or some of the very complicated and ingenious combinations which represent the heavier metals.

It is eminently desirable that those who are still in the earlier stages of the development of the higher sight should be exceedingly careful in their observations, and should compare and test them in every possible way, in order to avoid serious mistake. It is unfortunately only too common for a person who gains for the first time a glimpse of astral or even of etheric matter to jump at once to the conclusion that he is at least upon the devachanic level, and holds in his hand the key to all the mysteries of the entire solar system. All that will come in good time, and those grander vistas will assuredly open before him one day; but he will hasten the coming of that desirable consummation if he makes sure of each step as he takes it, and tries fully to understand and make the best of what he has before desiring more. Those who begin their experiences with devachanic vision are few and far between; for most of us progress must be slow and steady, and the safest motto for us is *festina lente*.

QUESTION CCCLXXXI.

L. D.—*What kind of evil doing in past lives is the karmic cause of insanity?*

A. B.—Insanity appears to be the karmic result of grave crimes committed against knowledge and bringing serious ills to others. That which may be termed ordinary wrong doing, committed from ignorance, heedlessness, or under the blind impulses of passion, works itself out in the ordinary sufferings of life, and by these the ego learns the existence of law and the folly of setting himself

against the evolutionary process. But there are crimes committed against light and against knowledge, especially those which drag back a soul progressing in the higher life, and these may bring about insanity as a karmic consequence. Let us suppose that an ego has definitely entered on the pathway which leads to discipleship, and is within measurable distance of that condition; another ego—prompted by envy, by lust, or by any other evil feeling, or by some deeper motive into which the mental element largely enters—allures or tempts the rapidly advancing soul, shakes it from its balance, and thus causes it to fall from the point it had attained, and perchance entails on it many a weary incarnation ere the lost ground is recovered; such a criminal reaps as harvest the appropriate fruit of insanity, during which his own ego, tethered to a body physically incapable of serving it as its vehicle, or expression, suffers on the astral plane all the tortures of impotent longing to progress, a sentence, as it were, of penal servitude, cut off from human association and from the joy of activity. Thus fettered, the ego learns that it is an evil thing and bitter to hinder the growth of another soul, and experiences in his own person the delay he has induced for another. It seems not unlikely that Jesus had this penalty in mind in his impressive warning to any who should cause to offend "one of these little ones," whose "angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Quoth the Teacher: "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (See Matt. xviii. 6, 10.) The loss of a physical body is a light thing compared to the being bound to a physical body which is dead to every higher impulse.

QUESTION CCCLXXXII.

A. T.—It is said that tendencies in one life become intensified in the next. If this is so, what happened when the millions of Atlantean egos, who had been addicted to black magic and the grossest sensual practices, reincarnated?

*A. P. S.—*This is a pretty problem which has occurred to other enquirers before now. The tendency of the Atlantean black magician undoubtedly lurks in his karma, but owing to the sudden and complete extinction of the physical plane knowledge on the subject, when the whole continent was finally destroyed, the entities in question have no means of recovering the lost arts by means of which their tendencies might have been translated into action. This view of the matter has, to begin with, the advantage of justifying the tremendous destruction of life which took place at the submergence of Poseidonis. Without that the human family would have continued under the influence of the "downward tendency" and the fifth race would have been infected with the diseases of its old predecessor. As regards the individual entities the tendency, during the growth of the fifth race, has a chance of wearing off under the influence of new

tendencies. Our evolution is the product of the aggregate tendencies in our nature. These do not all press in the same direction, but the predominant tendencies sweep away the others, some suffering attending the process when good ones sweep away the evil, so that the karmic law is justified even if the evil tendency never again comes into manifestation.

The Atlantean black magician problem has ramifications, of course, on each side, so to speak, of this explanation. A good deal of mischievous sorcery and witchcraft in the Middle Ages might probably be traced to Atlantean tendencies manifesting themselves in spite of the impediments put in their way by the general ignorance of the world at large in reference to occult arts. That ignorance, however, prevented the general diffusion of black magic in the intellectual classes, who are now turning their attention to other matters. Then it is possible that the aptitudes for magic arts that may be thought of as lurking in the karma of a good many people at the present day—a bequest from the Atlantean period—may not be so much extinguished by their incarnations in the fifth race, as ennobled and dignified by the acquisition of new motives as their spiritual evolution advances. In this way it is conceivable that some entities who shared the destruction of Poseidonis in a moral condition which would then have rendered their free development a source of danger to themselves and others, may by the time they recover, in new incarnations, touch on the physical plane with the arts they have lost, be especially well qualified to exercise occult power in the service of true progress.

QUESTION CCCLXXXIII.

C. E. B.—Granted that reincarnation is a fact, and is intended as the method of human evolution, what is it that gives a man the upward tendency? Why should he not be just as bad in the next life as in this?

*A. B.—*There are two forces—one attracting and one driving—which constantly play on man and cause his upward evolution. (1) The attractive force is the drawing power of the One Self, whose life-essence forms the spirit in man. As water rises to its own level, the spirit in man rises to the divine spirit—a clumsy way of imaging the indrawing force whose presence is evidenced by the ever-repeated cries of man in search for God. "My soul is athirst for God, for the living God." Enfolded in ignorance, and by ignorance feeling itself as separate, the soul thus expresses its longing for union with That which is really its innermost life:

Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.

This fundamental unity acts in the world of manifestation as a steady, up-drawing force. (2) The driving force is the suffering caused when the soul flings itself against the law.

The world is an evolving organism, and the

Logos has given it birth for a definite purpose ; for the carrying out of this purpose evolution is the means, and the whole world is set for evolution. The law of its being is a law of growth ; as we watch the development of a plant or of an animal, we see its various parts developing along certain definite lines of growth, and it gradually acquires a likeness to its parent organism ; if growth be forcibly prevented along any one of these lines, a monstrosity results, and, if the creature be sentient, pain accompanies the frustration of its orderly evolution. Man is no exception. He has reached a stage of his evolution in which mental and moral capacities are developing, and if he sets himself against his own orderly progress along these definite lines of growth, he dashes himself against the laws of his being, and pain is the inevitable result. Impelled by passion, he may do this again and again, but when death has deprived him of his body, he suffers all the cravings of his encouraged passions, but has lost the instruments for their gratification. The folly of thus laying up for himself inevitable sufferings dawns on him, however slowly, and he realises that continually to do the things which bring on him misery in this and in other worlds is the act of a fool. Suffering chastises him when he goes against the law ; happiness suffuses his being when he lives in harmony therewith, and develops his nature harmoniously. Inevitably, sooner or later, he accommodates himself to his surroundings, submits to the law, and treads the upward path.

QUESTION CCCLXXXIV.

B. T.—Pantheists believe in "A diffused, mindless Presence," and in man's direst necessity send him to an impersonal force for consolation, though what he cries for is a Person, who can understand him, sympathise with and help him. To that need Pantheism can make no answer. Can the same be said of Theosophy—that is to say, are Theosophists Pantheists ?

G. R. S. M.—So far we have not yet come across a formulated creed for the Theosophists, and we have no expectation of seeing it for many a manvantara to come. The wisdom-teaching of the great religions, however, finds room for pantheism, polytheism and monotheism in its infinite cosmos. The God beyond being, the Logos and the hierarchies of powers have all a place in that great tradition. The One, the Many, the All—monotheism, polytheism, pantheism—are all true concepts, in so far as they are reflections of the truth, and all false, in so far as none of them can express the whole truth. The Bhākta—he who treads the path of devotion—finds his highest concept in a personal God, and seizes on the Logos idea in the wisdom tradition wherever found, and converts it into the supreme principle. The Gñānin—he who treads the path of knowledge—seizes on the ideal of the God beyond being and refines the personality of the Logos into an abstraction. The Karma-Yogin,—the follower of the path of ceremonial—worships the Gods and angels and believes that there

is no salvation without intermediaries. The Theosophist studies the three types of mind and tries to profit by his study. He says : These are the planks of the raft, the truth is on the further shore.

QUESTION CCCLXXXV.

J. E. C.—If the ape-like man of the Third Race was so much more etheric than the man of the Fifth Race, how could he have suffered from a lack of elasticity or a contraction of the muscles of his limbs which compelled them to be bent like a monkey's ?

B. K.—The statement in *Atlantis* to which the question no doubt refers, gives also its answer. The Third Race man there described is expressly stated to belong to one of the *last* sub-races of the Third Root Race, and as by that time the Fourth Root Race period was already well in operation and all on earth had of course reached the degree of density corresponding to that period, it is clear that the then existing Third Race men were no more "etheric" than are their latest descendants, the Australian aborigines, to-day.

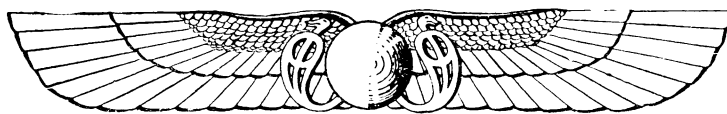
Further, the question contains an incorrect inference, namely, that the bent position of the knee and elbow joints, and the fact that they could not be straightened, was due to *muscular contraction*. This seems highly improbable ; since the similar condition observable in the anthropoid apes to-day is due to the formation of the *bones* at these joints and not to any contraction of the muscles. Hence it seems most likely, since the Third Root Race was analogous to the "men" of the Third Round, who were "ape-like," that they would reproduce the most prominent of the peculiarities which belong to the bony structure of that type, and among these one of the most marked consists in the bones of the elbow and knee joints being so formed that these limbs cannot be entirely straightened.

The questioner should remember that on this earth and in this Round the human form ran rapidly through all the stages of evolution which it had traversed slowly and in detail in the previous Rounds. This is the clue to the re-appearance of many antiquated and long disused peculiarities of structure, even in our present Fifth Race bodies ; but *why* this happened, what was the reason for this summary repetition of previous stages, we do not know with any clearness at present. It seems at any rate fairly general, since it holds good to-day of the embryonic stages through which the foetus passes, both in the case of man and animal.

The subscription to the VĀHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 26, Charing Cross, S.W. No back numbers can be supplied.

All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.

THE VÂHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. VII.

LONDON, DECEMBER 1, 1897.

NO. 5

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

ACTIVITIES.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following sums have been received up to Nov. 20th: T. Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Tweedie, £3; Mrs. Kilburn, 10s.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; Mrs. Jay, £8 10s.; Dr. Crow, £1; Hodgson Smith, £2 10s.; Mrs. Hunt, £1; A. F., 5s.; G. Graham (monthly), £1; B. Old, £1 3s.; Mrs. Williams, 100 lire; H. D., 7s.; Miss E. Carttar, 5s. Total £20 12s. 6d., and 100 lire.

New Branch.

Nov. 22nd. Charter granted this day to Edith Ward, Mary Pope, G. H. Whyte, Kate E. Whyte, Annie S. Tweedie, Eleanor Tisdale, Harriot M. Kluht, Louise Jarvis, Kate Behnke and Louie Walker, to be known as the West London Branch of the Theosophical Society.

New Centre.

A centre has been formed at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N. W. Meetings are held on Monday evenings at 7.30, under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Leo. Mrs. Besant lectured at the above address on Oct. 22nd, and Mr. Mead on the 29th.

Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been placed in the library:—

The Ancient Wisdom, by Annie Besant, London, 1897; *Le Congrès de l'Humanité*, by Marius

Decrespe, Paris, 1897; *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad nach bisher grösstentheils unbenutzten Quellen*, bearbeitet von A. Sprenger, Berlin, 1869 (6 vols.); *Texte und Untersuchungen II. 2. Jovinianus. Die Fragmente seiner Schriften, die Quellen zu seiner Geschichte, sein Leben und seine Lehre*, by Wilhelm Haller, Leipsic, 1897; *Texts and Studies. Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature*, Vol. I., Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4. Vol. II., Nos. 2, 3. Vol. III., Nos. 1, 2, 3. Vol. IV., Nos. 1, 2, 3. Vol. V., No. 1. Cambridge, at the University Press, ed. by J. Armitage Robinson, B.D.; *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Le Page Renouf (part 6); *Science and Health*, by Mary B. G. Eddy, Boston, U.S.A., 1896; *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, lectures by Charles Bigg, D.D. (Clarendon Press), 1886; *Theosophic Correspondence between Saint Martin and Kirchberger*, Baron de Liebistorf, 1792-97, trs. by E. B. Penny, London, 1863; *The Woman's Bible*, Part I., *The Pentateuch*, New York, 1897.

Donation.

A sum of £4 has been given by an anonymous donor to be spent on literature.

ISABEL COOPER-OAKLEY.

Headquarters' Lending Library.

The subscription to the Circulating Library at 19, Avenue Road, is: one year, 10s.; six months, 6s.; three months, 3s. 6d.; postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian.

Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoon, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Dec. 7th, *Thought-Forms*, E. G. Palmer; Dec. 21st, "*What think ye of Christ?*" E. A. Bellairs: on the other Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of Hindu Philosophy, and Sundays, at 11.30 a.m., for study, and from 4 to 9 p.m., for enquirers.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month, and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Dec. 5th, *Norse Mythology*, Baker Hudson; Dec. 12th, *Man's Higher Bodies*; Dec. 19th, *Hurry and Worry*, F. A. Johnson; Dec. 26th, *The Birth of the Christ Child*, Miss Shaw. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 p.m., at 67, Station Parade.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 33, Belgrave Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 3, Hackins Hey, on alternate Sundays, at 6 p.m.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: Dec. 2nd, "*What think ye of Christ?*" Mrs. Besant; Dec. 9th, *Physical Development*, C. W. Leadbeater; Dec. 16th, *The Vedānta*, J. C. Chatterji; Dec. 23rd, *The Deathless World*, G. R. S. Mead; Dec. 30th, No meeting.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: Dec. 13th, *The Angel of Light*, Miss Lloyd; Dec. 27th, No meeting.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. General meetings at No. 3 Room, Morley Hall, The Triangle, Hackney, on Fridays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Private class on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m. at Milfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, 15, Worsley Road, Hampstead Heath.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

LONDON, WEST HAMPSTEAD CENTRE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays at 7.30 p.m.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square, on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor) on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.: Dec. 2nd, *Education through Error*, E. Outhwaite; Dec. 16th, *The Norse Gods*, Baker Hudson: alternate Thursdays, study of *The Astral Plane*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Friday evening at 7.30 p.m.

PARIS. Monthly lectures conducted by Com. D. A. Courmes, at the Salle des Mathurins, 36, rue des Mathurins, on Sundays, at 2 p.m.: Dec. 5th *The Planes of Nature*. Meetings for enquirers at 3, rue du 29 Juillet (office of *Le Lotus Bleu*), on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, at 2.30 p.m. Mrs. Besant will lecture on Dec. 15th.

PARIS. ANANTA LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays at 8 p.m., alternately at 38, and 58, rue de Veneuil.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at the Foresters' Hall, The Octagon, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Information to be obtained from Miss Hunter, 5, Royal Road, Ramsgate.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 31, Via Lombardia, on Thursdays, at 6 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Mrs. Bestwick's, Cambridge Arcade, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH CENTRE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thorntonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

Mrs. Besant's Lectures.

Mrs. Besant's lectures at Queen's Hall were inconveniently overcrowded, and have brought in enquirers and members. Mrs. Besant also lectured at the Blavatsky Lodge on "Seeking the Self," and on "The Functions of the Gods"; to the Woman's Progressive Union; at Croydon, Harrogate and Bradford; she spoke at the Sesame Club after Prof. Rhys Davids on Buddhism, and at the Christo-Theosophical Society after Mr. Burrows on Evolution; she also held three drawing-room meetings and seven "At Homes."

For December Mrs. Besant's engagements are: 2nd, Blavatsky Lodge, "*What think ye of Christ?*" 3rd, Willesden Green (drawing-room); 5th, Queen's Hall, "Proofs of the Existence of the Soul"; 6th and 7th, Bournemouth; 10th, Pioneer Club; 11th, London Lodge; 12th, Queen's Hall, "Prayer: what it is and what it is not"; 13th to 16th, Paris; 17th to 19th, Nice; 20th and 21st, Toulon; 26th, Queen's Hall, "The Christ, historic and mystic."

Blavatsky Lodge.

THE annual business meeting of this Lodge was held on Saturday evening, October 30th, when there was a larger attendance of members than has often been the case. The work of the Lodge during the past year has been most satisfactory, and its membership is steadily increasing. There were shown to be over 200 active members on the books at the end of September.

The Treasurer's report proved the Lodge to be in a financially flourishing condition, and, at Mrs. Besant's suggestion, the greater part of a rather large balance has already been disposed of in ways considered by the Council to be in the best interests of the work.

In consequence of the overcrowding of the Lecture Hall on the occasions of Mrs. Besant's lectures, the Lodge decided that only members of the Lodge and of the Society can in future be present at them.

Within the past month, members have had the privilege of listening twice to lectures from Mrs. Besant—on November 4th her subject being "Seeking the Self," while on the 18th she took as her title "The Functions of the Gods." It is difficult to say which of these was most full of information and of suggestion. In the former, Mrs. Besant began by explaining and limiting, for the sake of clearness, the word Self; and told her hearers that although there is the Supreme Logos, the One Existence, He is not the Self who is the goal of our present evolution. Coming much farther down, there is the Logos of our Solar System, a system of seven Planetary Chains, and even He is not at present the Self for us. The utmost we can do is to look to the Logos of our own Planetary Chain as our goal. Mrs. Besant then explained that the finding of that Self means the attuning of our consciousness to His, so that when our chain shall have accomplished its evolution, and its Logos withdraws all things into Himself, we shall be able to hold our consciousness in the midst of those tremendously rapid vibrations instead of being swept into oblivion; and at the appointed time come forth again with the memory of all that has gone before.

Mrs. Besant's lecture on the "Functions of the Gods" may almost be said to have been a continuation of that just referred to, so much did one help to illuminate the other. We were reminded that the word "God," in its fullest sense, applies only to the One Existence, which can but be named, but that, below It, all old religions have taught the existence of a great hierarchy of beings, to whom the name Devas or Gods has been given—beings who in their various grades have each their place and work, and exist for the carrying out of the Will of the Logos.

Mrs. Besant then went on to tell something of these greater and lesser Gods, beginning with the Logos of our own Planetary evolution.

The remaining lectures have been given by Mr. Leadbeater, who described "Scenes from the Life after Death;" Mr. Keightley, who gave the first of two lectures upon the Vedānta; and Mr. Mead,

who spoke upon a "Recently discovered Legend of the Christ," quoting largely from a most important document which he has himself re-translated, and upon which he offered much valuable information.

On Saturday, November 20th, Mrs. Besant was "At Home" to members of the Lodge and their friends, and a very pleasant afternoon was spent in questioning and general talk. S. M. S.

Blavatsky Lodge Classes.

There are three classes now running at the Headquarters, 19, Avenue Road, N.W.

On Monday evenings at 8: for the study of the Vedānta. Conducted by Mr. Jagadisha C. Chatterji.

On Friday afternoons at 4.15: for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Conducted by Mrs. Parker.

On Saturday afternoons at 4.15: for the study of *The Secret Doctrine*. Conducted by Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

These classes are open not only to members of the Society, but also to visitors.

Paris.

The activity in Paris is now much greater than it has ever before been. The Ananta Lodge holds regular weekly meetings, and Mons. Courmes, who conducts *Le Lotus Bleu* in conjunction with Dr. Pascal, has originated a series of public lectures on the first Sunday of each month. The first was given in November, and was attended by about 120 people. Mons. Courmes gave a lecture on the general teachings of Theosophy, and Mons. Gillard, the President of the Ananta Branch, followed with an address on the spirit in which the Theosophical teachings should be taken.

The office of *Le Lotus Bleu* is also open to enquirers on three afternoons each week, Mons. Courmes attending to these meetings. Mrs. Besant will lecture in Paris on December 15th, and her visit is expected to give a further stimulus to public interest.

Bradford Lodge.

On account of structural alterations at the Royal Hotel, this Lodge has been obliged to suspend its meetings until suitable rooms can be found. Meanwhile communications may be addressed to Mr. J. Midgley, Central Coffee Tavern, Westgate, Bradford.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR SIR,

Allow me to express, on behalf of the Rome Lodge, our sincere thanks for the gift of £6 from the Blavatsky Lodge.

We propose to employ it for publishing a small Journal devoted solely to the spreading of Theosophy. As we had no money and only a few promises of subscriptions, the gift is most welcome, and the sympathy which prompted it is warmly appreciated by us.

DECIO CALVARI, *Hon. Sec.*

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCLXXXVI.

M. T. M.—What was Christ, according to esoteric teaching?

A. B.—Jesus was a Hebrew, and became a member of the Essene community. He was of singularly pure and gentle nature, so pure that he was chosen as the vessel for a special out-pouring of divine wisdom. At the time represented in the gospels as that of his baptism, this outpouring took place, and he thus became, during his public ministry, the Word revealing divine truth. He is now one of the Masters, and is concerned specially in aiding those who seek the spiritual life along the Christian path. "Christ," on the other hand, is not an individual name but a generic title, applied to all Initiates who have reached a certain degree. The Christ is the "Son of the Father," in theosophical parlance Buddhi, the divine wisdom and compassion, the reflection of the second Logos, or the "Word made flesh." The awakening into activity of this principle in man belongs to the first great Initiation, when mystically the Christ is born in the human soul; this is the blessing which S. Paul invoked in his converts: "My little children, for whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." This Christ-life develops during the life of discipleship, until the final death to the lower life takes place in the Arhat, and separateness is put an end to by the destruction of ahaṅkāra. The killing out of this separateness is the mystical crucifixion, and the "it is finished" proclaims its final extinction. Thereafter the Son ascends into heaven and becomes one with the Father—Buddhi is merged in Ātman.

QUESTION CCCLXXXVII.

M. T. M. What kind of devachan would have been possible to a third round entity, possessing neither the fifth nor the sixth principle?

A. B.—We possess very few details respecting the men of the third round, described as huge ape-like creatures. Judging by analogy, their post-mortem state would resemble that of our present animals, a short kāmāloka existence. Before the formation of the causal body, independent life on the mental plane—and devachan is such a life—would not be possible. The "sixth principle" is *present* in such beings, since the monad, Ātma-Buddhi, is their ensouling energy, but is not manifested as a sixth principle with independent life. The third outpouring has not yet taken place, so that the human Monad is not yet present. The creatures at that stage must be considered as "men" only as human embryos are thus considered, and they do not tread the human cycle of earth, kāmāloka, devachan, and back through the astral plane to re-birth in this world.

QUESTION CCCLXX XVIII.

N. T.—Death is looked forward to with dread by many, not only because of a doubt as to the future or a fear of suffering on the other side, but also because they must part with all those to whom they are much attached. How can Theosophy remove this dread, teaching, as it does, that we do not generally meet our friends again as we knew them, but only as unrecognised forms in future lives?

S. M. S.—"There is no death!" Thus, for countless ages have prophets declared, preachers taught and poets sung; and yet, how comparatively few there are in this modern world who really believe the statement to be true.

And so we find that death still holds sway as the great enemy, the great destroyer and the great problem of life. So, too, even among Theosophists, questions akin to the above are continually arising, nor can we wonder that it should be so. For among us, as among so many outside of the Theosophical Society, there are those who do not really believe all, or nearly all that they profess.

For no reason should the Theosophist look forward to death "with dread." He should be filled with hope—nay, with certainty—as to the future, knowing that no suffering, in the sense of punishment, can possibly come to him, convinced that whatever may have been his mistakes and failures in this present life, there is, for him and for all, progress and joy beyond human thought in the limitless future that lies beyond. For him, therefore, death should have no terrors, but should rather be looked upon as a friend, who for a time brings him release from the ceaseless struggle of earthly life with its so quickly alternating sun and shadow.

But unfortunately there are many among us who have not grasped the essence of the teaching we have been so lavishly given, sufficiently to have gained any real conviction upon this great problem; and so, when we are brought face to face with it, as all of us must be at some time, we find—and perhaps the discovery comes upon us with a shock—that we are *not* certain as to the future, but are filled with fear and doubt.

Can Theosophy remove this doubt, and so take away every trace of fear? Most certainly it can and will, and it is doing so every day. Theosophy, properly understood and really grasped, "cuts all doubts with the sword of knowledge." But there is no royal road to the acquisition of this knowledge; the key, and the only key, that will open its doors, is effort continually exerted and constantly renewed.

And although there are very, very few who have earned the right to the direct knowledge which we now know to be attainable at some time by all, yet is there possible for many an inner conviction so strong and unshakable as to be of very practical and constant help, both to themselves and to those amongst whom they are thrown.

There are many to whom Theosophy has given this conviction, teaching as it does, not only that there is no "death," but explaining, so far as such

things can be explained in language, the conditions through which a man passes on the other side of the grave. Those, therefore, who are able to accept these teachings can no longer feel that when the body dies they will enter into an entirely unknown land. Moreover, we are told that it is the very "dread" which so many have of death that gives it its horror—a horror which re-acts upon vast numbers to an extent of which we have no conception. If a man has lived an ordinarily good life, having purified himself of all the lower forms of passion, no matter what may have been his creed or no creed, there is for him absolutely nothing to fear in any region in which he may find himself after he has cast off the body. On the contrary, an enormous period of happiness and rest awaits him, exactly adapted to his capacity for its enjoyment.

We are taught, also, that those who are conscious upon higher planes, and who therefore know that there partings cannot be, can and do help others who have left this earth and who find themselves in strange and perhaps to them incomprehensible surroundings. And most important fact of all, we are told that each of us may qualify himself to render this most effective help where it is able to be taken.

But even those of us who are upon much lower levels can do our share. The power of thought of which we are sometimes apt to talk so much and to think so little, is just as strong, for good or for evil, in the astral world through which those who "die" must first pass; and if when a friend dies we give way to our grief, and think of him despairingly, he is pursued by our disturbing thought and hindered in his progress onward towards the haven where he would be, and even may be really injured. Who of us would willingly be responsible for such a grave mistake? And yet there are many even among those who have the opportunity of knowing better, who *are* so responsible.

In truth, the parting from friends is for many of us, in our blindness, the supremest test of all; but it is one to the passing of which we should bend all our energies year in and year out. For the way in which we meet it is a very clear indication of the extent to which we have managed to get rid of the personality, and of the extent to which we have really grasped the teachings we have been given. We know that the *man* exists apart from his physical body; we know, if we are honest with ourselves, that it is the man himself whom we love, and not his outside casing; we also know that he has had many other houses in which he has dwelt for a brief time, and will have many more. These things being so, surely we may learn to look upon the breaking up of the outer form which is no longer able to contain the ever evolving life, as a perfectly natural process; and patiently await the time when our eyes shall be opened, and we shall be able to look back and see the separate links that have bound us to our friends in the past, of which our present affection for them is the result, and which will grow more and more strong in the future as we grow nearer and nearer to the Divine.

We must continue to feel a sense of loss when our friends go out of sight of our physical eyes, but we can purify our sorrow from every stain of bitterness and rebellion and despair; and when a man has done that, he will realise for the first time how truly near akin are joy and pain. Then he will be able to say with St. Francis of Assisi, in his Canticle of the Sun:

"Praised be thou, my Lord, for our sister, the death of the body, from which no man living is able to escape. . . . Blessed are they who are found walking by thy most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm."

A. A. W.—Those who think of death as a parting from their friends, have not realised how small a portion of their real life their successive manifestations on the physical plane comprise. The average of humanity, after spending fifty, sixty, or seventy years on earth will have the best part of two thousand years, during which (if so disposed) they may enjoy to the full the company of those whom they have loved on earth. No matter whether their friends are on earth still or already departed, if they are needful for their happiness, they will be there. It is hard, I know, for an O. P. to understand that it is the life after what we call death which is the true waking life, but so it is. After so long a life in company with his beloved ones it surely cannot be hard to have to sleep another short earth life apart from them, if so his karma requires. And it is not quite true that in his next incarnation, if they meet it will be as "unrecognised forms." True, the new bodies and minds have never actually met before and thus cannot recognise each other, but the true individuals—the souls—are not thus limited, and wherever a strong attachment is found between two human beings the probability is that its foundation has been laid in mutual love, perhaps many lives ago. Love is not ruled by reason; and when men or women meet the souls which answer to their own, and spring to claim them regardless of outward circumstances and often of personal deformity and such other qualities as might, in *reason*, repel, the explanation is that they have known and loved long ago and that the bond so framed holds them together still, and may last for many thousand years to come. If our querist has ever loved anyone in this life with ardent and unselfish love, he may be very sure that in his next life they will meet again and renew their tie; even though they do not remember the names they now bear. But it is not everything which calls itself love which deserves this reward. Let him ask himself if he has made *their* bliss, as they have made *his*, and judge himself accordingly. It may be that karma may renew their bond for his punishment, not for his pleasure.

But all these considerations are condescensions to human weakness—milk for babes. To those who are strong enough to bear it, Theosophy has a sterner and more manly lesson. Our repeated returns to earth life are mainly to enable us to grow out of these very attachments which seem

so indispensable to the multitude. As long as we cannot live without them we shall have them—never fear; yet “there is a more excellent way.” Sooner or later we must widen out our sympathy, our love, to embrace *all* that lives; *every* elder must be to us a father; every younger, a brother; and every woman, mother or sister. This is the Brotherhood which our Society has to promote; and when we attain it, it will be enough for us to know that our personally loved ones are bravely pushing onwards life after life on the upward path, without (like children) sitting down to cry because, perchance, they are so far ahead as to be, for the time, out of our sight.

E. G.—The question here seems to resolve itself into what it is we love in our friends! Does not N. T.’s difficulty arise from a failure to realise, in thought, the difference between the real man and his lowest expression on the physical plane. We come to love the forms of our friends truly—but is not this love of the form a matter of habit, secondary surely to the love that flows from soul to soul—the higher sympathy stimulating mental and spiritual activity, which is able to deny itself wholly for the one loved. Has it not ever been borne in upon us, when trying to analyse the attraction drawing us to this person or that, that our love was really called forth more by the possibilities that we felt to lie in our friend’s nature than by any definite set of character or combination of qualities actually manifested? In future incarnations—if we have not outgrown our friends, or they us—we shall be drawn together again by this same strong bond of sympathy, whatever may be the future forms taken. And if we have grown away from each other we shall no longer be friends and there can hardly be trouble for that which does not exist. We are all units of one great whole and as we develop there will come other friends to fill the places of those who have dropped away—dropped away for awhile at least. “Of progressive souls,” writes Emerson, “all loves and friendships are momentary. Do you love me? means, Do you love the same truth? If you do we are happy with the same happiness, but presently one of us passes into the perception of new truth; we are divorced and no tension in nature can hold us to each other. I know how delicious is this cup of love—existing for you, existing for me; but it is a child’s clinging to his toy; an attempt to eternalise the fireside and nuptial chamber; to keep the picture-alphabet through which our first lessons are prettily conveyed.”

But if N. T. will turn to Mrs. Besant’s *In the Outer Court*, p. 157, he will find there the real solution to the question he asks—the very definite hope regarding this matter held out by the Theosophic teaching—a greater hope than has ever before been given out to the world, generally. Alluding to the unification of consciousness on the various planes—possible in the future to all who will make the necessary effort here and now—Mrs. Besant writes: “Separation and death exist not for him who has crossed the threshold . . . it is only while he is in the

body that the separation exists for him, and he may be out of the body at will, and go where space and time can no longer hold him. . . . No friend can again be lost to him, no death can again take from his side those who are knit to him in the bond of life. For to him neither separation nor death has a real existence; those are evils of the past, and in their most terrible forms they are finished with for evermore.”

QUESTION CCCLXXXIX.

M.—Are “will” and “desire” synonymous terms, indicating the action of the fourth principle (*Kāma*), or are they separate principles?

A. B.—The terms are used loosely, and in different senses by different writers, so that it is necessary to find out the definition used by the writer before we can follow his statements without confusion. In any case will and desire are not synonymous, though a common element is present in each. Perhaps the case may be looked at in this way; the true Man, the human Monad, considered as a unit, is the source of all human activities; his is the forthstreaming life that expresses itself as the energies working on different planes. This life appears to be different because of the different forms of matter in which it works, as the light from the one sun appears to be of different colours as it shines through red, or green, or yellow, or blue glass. From the Inner Man, then, pours forth this outgoing energy, and brings about the actions on the mental, astral and physical planes, directed to the attainment of certain objects. Now this energy may be directed either by an outward or by an inward impulse. Sometimes it is set in motion by an object attractive to the desire-nature, *Kāma*, acting as a magnet on iron; the conduct is determined by the environment, which presents various objects that appeal to the passions and stir the man to activity in order that he may become their possessor. When his energy is thus put forth, determined in its direction by the appeal of the external object to his *kāmic* nature, we call it desire. Sometimes, however, the man, guided by the memory of past experiences, using reason to enlighten his judgment, sends forth his energy, determining its direction from within. He may act in opposition to the attractions presented by his environment to his lower nature, and bring his conduct into accord with his best judgment. Energy put forth to reach this result is will, and its mark is that it is determined from within, and has its direction imposed upon it through the mental nature, instead of through the desire-nature. These definitions seem to meet all ordinary cases. The word desire has, however, been used to express the wish for manifested existence, the fundamental “will to live” in conditioned being. This high and unusual sense of the word must not be confused with its ordinary signification: in that lofty region desire and will would be one, and would express simply the self-originated choice to manifest.

QUESTION CCCXC.

C. P.—*What is the basis of the belief current among the Hindus that human souls are born into the lower kingdoms to reap their evil karma? Is it supported by their oldest scriptures?*

J. C. C.—The basis of the belief in transmigration into the animal and other lower kingdoms, held, as far as I know, by the less informed and the populace, lies in the ignorance and misunderstanding of certain passages in the Vedas, which alone can be taken as the ultimate scriptural authority on all Hindu beliefs and ideas. Of the Vedas again, it is the Vedāntas—that is, the Upaniṣhads—which are considered as the highest authority on all such questions. So far as I know, there is not a single passage in the genuine Upaniṣhads which, unless misinterpreted, supports this view of transmigration.

I believe the only passage which can be taken to support it occurs in the second section of the Kaṭhopaniṣhad. There Yama, explaining to Nachiketas what happens after death, says:

“Some souls go into wombs, to take a body; into the ‘motionless’ (?) do others pass according to their deeds, as is their knowledge.” (Kaṭhop. v. 7.)

On the strength of this passage some have been led to suppose that certain souls go down to the “motionless,” that is to say, the vegetable and mineral kingdoms. But the Sanskrit word for which “motionless” only tentatively stands, is “sthānu,” and it is exceedingly doubtful what this means. From the context it would appear that the word refers to a condition in which the soul becomes like an immovable rock and does not go out “to take a body” as other souls do. It is probably of this condition that the Bible speaks, when it says: “He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar (sthānu also means a pillar) in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more” (Rev. iii. 12). Sthānu is also a name of Shiva, he being immovable and unshakable under any circumstances. The passage may probably refer to the Shivatva, which is the goal of every Jīva or living individual soul. Every Jīva after passing through myriads of incarnations and taking many bodies, mineral, vegetable, animal and human, must eventually become the Shiva, the Shānta, that is, peace and tranquillity, motionlessness and rest itself.

There is no reason, therefore, to suppose, merely on the strength of this passage, that the Vedas teach transmigration into the lower kingdoms.

Apart from the ambiguity of the meaning, the passage occurs in a portion of the Kaṭhopaniṣhad, which is, in all likelihood, an after addition—a fact which, if taken into consideration, will diminish much of its authoritative importance.

The real teaching of the Upaniṣhads on reincarnation is very sensible and logical. And it is, in the language of the Prashnopaniṣhad: “The up-going upward life (udāna) with purity

leads to the pure, with sin unto the world of sin, but with the two unto the land of man.” (Prash. iii. 7). This means that if a soul is absolutely pure, without the slightest touch of evil, it is thereby lifted up to the higher worlds, those of the gods and angels. If, on the contrary, it is absolutely evil, it is destined to go downwards, while all souls of a mixed nature, having both good and evil in them, are to be re-born as human beings, higher or lower, according as the good or the evil is predominant.

This most rational doctrine has been taught in the Bhagavad Gītā and by all the great teachers, including the great Vedānta master, Shri Śhaṅkarāchārya himself. In the Bhagavad Gītā we read: “Good, evil and mixed—threefold is the fruit of action hereafter for the non-abandoner; but there is none ever for the renouncer.” (Bhag. Gītā, xviii. 12.) Explaining this verse Shri Śhaṅkarāchārya says: “‘Evil’ means the karma that leads to Hades and the lower animal life: ‘good’ leads to the gods and the rest, and ‘mixed’ means both good and evil and it leads to rebirth as a human being.”

Shri Śhaṅkarāchārya expresses exactly the same view in his introduction to the Commentary on the Brihadāraṇyakopaniṣhad (see Brih. Up., p. 9, Ānandāshrama edition). And there Ānandagiri quotes a passage in explanation of the Āchārya’s statement which says: “One comes, perforce, to humanity by karma, which is a mixture of both good and evil.”

Now all these sayings, both from the Shruti and the Smṛiti, explain clearly and without a shadow of doubt what is the teaching of the authoritative scriptures on reincarnation. This teaching, however, does admit, as far as I can judge, the possibility of a soul going down if it is entirely evil, without a spark of good in it. But it is only a theoretical and hardly a practical case. For I doubt if there is any living soul at the present moment which is *absolutely* evil. Almost everyone has, at least, a little spark, however feeble, of good in him. Therefore souls, as a rule, being of a mixed nature, come back as human beings and not lower animals.

Then, again, granting that there are souls absolutely evil, it is doubtful what the Upaniṣhads mean when they say that such souls go downwards. They may refer to what are called in modern Theosophical literature “lost souls.” Or it may mean, as seems most likely from the context and association of Hades with animal rebirth, that such souls take animal and other shapes in the Hades or the astral world. There their evil and animal thoughts and passions shape the matter into animal forms more readily than on the physical plane, though even in the physical body evil passions hardly fail to leave traces of animality on the countenance of the brutal man. (Cf. *The Ancient Wisdom*, p. 120, Eng. ed.) It was this view which was taken, if I remember rightly, by the late Paṇḍit Nabin Chandra Roy of Lahore.

Now from this theoretical idea of the transmi-

gration of absolutely evil souls, arose in later times the absurd notion that even for a single evil deed of a particular kind, souls, however good in other ways, were re-born as animals and even minerals. And because, in the later age, the Smṛiti literature, of which the main ideas are as old as those of the Vedas or the Shruti, has been clothed and reclothed in new garbs, erroneous ideas, such as down-going transmigration and so on, have, consciously or unconsciously, crept into it. That is the reason why the modern version of the Manu Samhitâ contains so many absurd statements regarding transmigration. I do not believe that the original Manu had anything to do with them, but although I hold this view I am nevertheless as much a believer in the sacred shâstras as any of my countrymen.

QUESTION CCCXCI.

M. T. M.—Is karma the cause of our forgetting the astral experiences we have during sleep?

A. B.—In a sense karma is the cause of everything, but it is not concerned directly in the forgetfulness here spoken of. The most general cause for this forgetfulness among those who are "awake on the astral plane" is the incapacity of the brain to receive and retain impressions from the soul, when the soul has been passing through experiences wholly apart from the physical body. The brain of most persons is entirely untrained to receive the higher experiences; it is the tyrant rather than the servant of the soul, and busy with its own impressions received from the physical world, ceaselessly throwing up images caused by physical vibrations, it is curiously unreceptive of vibrations generated within, and dealing with matters entirely outside its own province. The daily practice of meditation, the detachment of the heart from worldly interests, the setting of the affections "on things above," the purifying of thought and desire, the absence of haste and anxiety, the steady habitual control of the mind—these are some of the conditions for remembering astral experiences. It is, however, well to bear in mind that it is more important that we should be of service, whether in or out of the body, than that we should remember our personal activities. Until we have made considerable progress in destroying the personality, a full remembrance of astral experiences is very apt to nourish and magnify the lower self, and to increase the tendency, already too potent, to run round and round in a circle, like a kitten after its tail, the attention centred on our own caudal appendage. Further, until balance is gained, a memory of astral work is apt to withdraw attention and diligence from the work entrusted to us on the physical plane; like children, we rush

after the novel and neglect the ordinary, and as the astral work will not suffer by our ignorance of it down here, while the physical might suffer by our remembrance of the other, we are often more useful during the early stages of our development with the absence of memory.

C. P.—How does Theosophy account for the non-reappearance of the great philosophers and artists of antiquity?

B. K.—Some few of them have, as a matter of fact, appeared already as the great artists, thinkers, and so on, of the last hundred and fifty years, others will appear in the coming century. But this will not apply to the really greatest among them, since these either have earned and are enjoying devachanic periods of much longer duration, extending to thousands of years in some cases, or when greater still than these, have indeed already returned to earth, but not to dwell among men and unfold their genius on the physical plane, but to tread the path of yet swifter evolution, the path of occultism, and to serve the world on those unseen but infinitely more effective levels of work, whence proceed the really potent forces and causes which urge on the growth of the immense but leaden mass of the human race.

QUESTION CCCXCII.

M. T. M.—To which Root-Race and Sub-Race do the Japanese belong? and are we the first or the second incarnation of the last sub-race of the fifth Root-Race?

A. B.—The Japanese belong to the seventh sub-race, the Mongolian, of the fourth Root-Race, the Atlantean. The English belong chiefly to the fifth sub-race, the Teutonic, of the fifth Root-Race, the Âryan. The sub-races of this fifth Root-Race run: Hindu, Âryan-Semite, Iranian, Keltic, Teutonic. It is not clear what the questioner means by "the first or the second incarnation." In any case we are connected with the fifth, not the last, sub-race. The sixth and seventh sub-races are as yet undifferentiated.

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All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.

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ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

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NO. 6.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

New Branch.

WE are glad to announce that our old friend and colleague, Dr. C. Carter Blake, was released from his body on December 13th. For ten years or more he has battled inch by inch with a slow, creeping paralysis. Unable to move his legs for five years, bedridden for three, he finally lost the use of his eyes and of every limb, and so finally passed away, only when it would seem he had paid in full the last farthing of his kârmic debt. To the last his one delight was to have the latest Theosophical works read to him. C. Carter Blake was a man of many parts and prodigious memory. As a scientist he was an admirable anatomist, an assistant of Sir Richard Owen, an adept in cranio-logy, and one of the founders of the Anthropological Society. As a scholar he knew many tongues, ancient and modern; Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Arabic; German, French, Italian and Spanish. Χαίρε δεξιὰν ὁδοπορῶν!—which he will understand, though some of our readers may not. For, as we learn from an inscription on the statue of a hierophant of the mysteries: "A noble mystery, indeed, is what the blessed ones reveal! No ill at all, but blessing sure is death to those who die!"

ACTIVITIES.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to December 20th: T. Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Midgley, 3s.; Hon. O. Cuffe, £2, Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; Mrs. Finnemore, 10s.; F. L. J. Z., 10s.; G. Graham, £5; Mrs. Lauder, 10s.; H. A. V., £10; H. D., 5s.; Dr. A. A. Wells, £5; Miss Bishop, 10s.; Mrs. Laphorn, 5s.; Mrs. Wilkinson, £3. Total, £28 15s. 6d.

Dec. 9th. Charter granted this day to Mrs. Alan Leo, Alan Leo, J. W. Sidley, Mrs. L. Sidley, G. B. Coleman, Miss Dexter, W. Pinchin, Mrs. Pinchin, Miss E. Windsor, to form a Branch to be known as the Hampstead Branch of the Theosophical Society.

Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been placed in the library:—

The Swastika, Thomas Wilson, of the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, U.S.A., 1896; *I Förgården*, Annie Besant, translation, Stockholm, 1897; *Acta Latomorum, ou Chronologie de l'Histoire de la Franche-Maçonnerie Française et Étrangère*, 2 vols., Paris, 1815; *Egyptian Tales*, translations from the papyri, edited by D. M. Flinders Petrie, First Series IV. to XII. Dynasty, London, 1895; *The Mysteries, Pagan and Christian*, S. Chcetham, D.D., F.S.A., Hulsean lecturer for 1896-7, London, 1897; *The Miracles of Madame Saint Katherine of Fierbois*, translated from the edition of the Abbé J. J. Bourassé, Tours, 1858, by Andrew Lang, Chicago and London, 1897; *Essai sur la secte des Illuminés*, Londres, 1789; *Matikon oder das geheime System einer Gesellschaft unbekannter Philosophen*, Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1784; *Sendschreiben an die erhabenen Unbekannten, oder die ächten und rechten Freymäurer*, 1781; *Compendio della Vita, e delle Gesta di Giuseppe Balsamo denominato il Conte Cagliostro*, Roma, 1791; *The Kabbalah: its Doctrines, Development, and Literature*, Christian D. Ginsburg, LL.D., London, 1865; *Our Sun-God, or Christianity before Christ*, John Denham Parsons, 1895; *The Non-Christian Cross*, John Denham Parsons, London, 1896; *Sacred Books of the East Series, Volume XLVII., Pahlavi Texts*, translated by E. W. West, Pt. V., *Marvels of Zoroastrianism*, Oxford, 1897.

The following is a detailed list of the books contained in the series of *Texts and Studies* noticed in the last VĀHAN as presented to the Reference Library:—

TEXTS AND STUDIES, CONTRIBUTIONS TO BIBLICAL AND PATRISTIC LITERATURE. Edited by J. Armitage Robinson, B.D. (Cambridge University Press.)

I. 1. *The Apology of Aristides on behalf of the Christians*, from a Syriac MS. preserved on Mount Sinai, edited, with an introduction and translation, by J. Rendel Harris, M.A., with an appendix containing the main portion of the original Greek text by J. Armitage Robinson, B.D., second edition, 1893.

I. 2. *The Passion of St. Perpetua*, newly edited from the MSS., together with an appendix containing the original Latin text of *The Scillitan Martyrdom*, by J. Armitage Robinson, B.D., 1891.

I. 3. *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church*, by Frederic Henry Chase, B.D., 1891.

I. 4. *The Fragments of Heracleon*, newly edited from the MSS. by A. E. Brooke, M.A., 1891.

II. 2. *The Testament of Abraham*, the Greek text now first edited, with introduction and notes, by Montague Rhodes James, M.A., with an appendix containing extracts from the Arabic version of *The Testaments of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, by D. E. Barnes, B.D., 1892.

II. 3. *Apocrypha Anecdota*, a collection of thirteen Apocryphal books and fragments, now first edited from MSS. by Montague Rhodes James, M.A., 1893.

III. 1. *The Books of Rules of Tyconius*, newly edited from the MSS., with an introduction and an examination into the text of the Biblical quotations, by F. C. Burkitt, M.A., 1894.

III. 2. *The Fourth Book of Ezra*, the Latin version, edited from the MSS. by the late Robert L. Bensly, M.A., with an introduction by Montague Rhodes James, Litt. D., 1895.

III. 3. *Euthaliana*, Studies of Euthalius Codex H. of the Pauline Epistles and the Armenian Version, with an appendix containing a collation of the Eton MS. of the Pseudo-Athanasian Synopsis by the Editor, 1895.

IV. 1. *The Athanasian Creed and its Early Commentaries*, by A. E. Burn, M.A., 1896.

IV. 2. *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels*, translations, together with the texts of some of them, by Forbes Robinson, M.A., 1896.

IV. 3. *The Old Latin and The Itala*, with an appendix containing the text of the S. Gallen Palimpsest of Jeremiah, by F. C. Burkitt, M.A., 1896.

V. 1. *Apocrypha Anecdota*, second series, edited by Montague Rhodes James, Litt. D., 1897.

A. J. WILLSON, Librarian.

Headquarters' Lending Library.

The following books have been added to the Library:—*The Three Paths*, Annie Besant; *Gleanings in Buddha Fields*, Lafcadio Hearn; *An*

Enquiry into the Life and Legend of Michael Scot, J. Wood-Brown; *A Primer of the Bible*, W. H. Bennett; *The Swastika*, T. Wilson; *Dreams and Ghosts*, Andrew Lang; *Real Ghost Stories*, W. T. Stead.

Terms of subscription to the Library: one year, 10s.; six months, 6s.; three months, 3s. 6d.; one month, 1s. 6d. Postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian.

This Library, which is open alike to members and non-members of the Theosophical Society, will in future be known as THE THEOSOPHICAL LENDING LIBRARY.

LILIAN LLOYD, Librarian.

Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoon, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Jan. 4th, *The Jewish Year*, Miss Sternberg. On the other Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of Hindu Philosophy, and Sundays, at 11.30 a.m., for study, and from 4 to 9 p.m., for enquirers.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings on the first Tuesday in each month, at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, at 8.15 p.m.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month, and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Jan. 2nd, *The Ancient Wisdom*, Miss Woodhead; Jan. 9th, *Unity Underlying Religions*; Jan. 16th, *The Physical Plane*; Jan. 23rd, *The Astral Plane*, Miss Hook; Jan. 30th, *Purgatory*, W. Bell. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 p.m., at 67, Station Parade.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at No. 9 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 33, Belgrave Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 3, Hackins Hey, on alternate Sundays, at 6 p.m.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: Jan. 6th, *The Word*, J. C. Chatterji; Jan. 13th, *Mystic Orders, or Links with the Past*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley; Jan. 20th, *Imagination*, B. Keightley; Jan. 27th, *The Therapists*, G. R. S. Mead.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: Jan. 10th, *Cycles*, P. C. Ward; Jan. 17th, Annual General Meeting; Jan. 24th, *Dreams*, A. A. Harris.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. General meetings at 79, Burdett Road, E., on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Private class on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m. at Millfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, 15, Worsley Road, Hampstead Heath.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST HAMPSTEAD CENTRE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays at 7.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 142, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8 p.m.: Jan. 7th, *Suffering and its Cessation, as taught by the Buddha*, J. C. Chatterji; Jan. 21st, *The Limitations of Heredity*, Miss Weekes. Alternate Fridays, study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square, on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor) on Thursdays, at 8 p.m. Alternate Thursdays, study of *The Astral Plane*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Monday evening at 8.15 p.m.

PARIS. Monthly lectures conducted by Com. D. A. Courmes, at the Salle des Mathurins, 36, rue des Mathurins, on Sundays, at 2 p.m.: Jan. 2nd, *Karma and Reincarnation*. Meetings for enquirers at 3, rue du 29 Juillet (office of *Le Lotus Bleu*), on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, at 2.30 p.m.

PARIS. ANANTA LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays at 8 p.m., alternately at 38, and 58, rue de Verneuil.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at the Foresters' Hall, The Octagon, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Information to be obtained from Miss Hunter, 5, Royal Road, Ramsgate.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 31, Via Lombardia, on Thursdays, at 6 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Mrs. Bestwick's, Cambridge Arcade, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH CENTRE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thorntonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

France.

Most gratifying news comes from Paris of the great success of Mrs. Besant's visit. Her lecture, given in French, was delivered to an audience of over 600, which crowded the hall obtained for her. The lecture was enthusiastically received, and was reported at considerable length in the Paris papers. Most successful Branch and other meetings were also held during the few days spent in Paris, besides many conversations with members and others interested in Theosophy. Much of the success must be attributed to the excellent work of Mons. Courmes, who was most energetic in arranging matters, together with Mons. Gillard, and other members. A like success attended Mrs. Besant at Toulon and Nice, where the Paris programme was repeated.

North of England Federation.

One of the largest gatherings yet held of the members of the Northern Federated Branches took place at Harrogate on November 27th, under the presidency of Mrs. Besant. Members were present from Manchester, Bradford, Athene, York, Hull, Middlesbrough, Leeds, Sheffield and Harrogate Branches and Centres, whilst the Headquarters' staff was strongly represented by Mr. Leadbeater and Mr. Bertram Keightley.

The afternoon session was mainly devoted to an address by Mrs. Besant, entitled "The Theosophical Society." Needless to say, the address was listened to with great interest, and at the conclusion a short discussion took place, among the speakers being Messrs. Leadbeater, Keightley, Corbett and Thomas.

The evening session was begun by a discussion on "What should be our attitude to Theosophical Teachings we have not personally verified?" Miss Shaw opened, and was followed by Messrs. Firth, Leadbeater, Keightley, and other speakers. The necessity of bringing a clear and unbiassed judgment to bear upon all such teachings was strongly urged, and the desirability of applying to them the principles of common sense—but not common ignorance—was insisted upon.

The second part of the evening session was devoted to the discussion of a paper read by Mrs. Oliver Firth, entitled "What Theosophical Teachings should we present to Children, and How?" The following took part:—Messrs. Leadbeater and Saville, Mrs. Larmuth, Miss Shaw and Mrs. Besant.

A very interesting and instructive gathering was finally brought to a conclusion by a few words of encouragement from Mrs. Besant.

Public lectures were delivered by Mrs. Besant at Harrogate on Sunday, the 28th, and at Bradford on the 29th, to very appreciative audiences.

The Rome Lodge.

The officers of the Rome Lodge for 1898 are: President, Signor Gualtiero Aureli, M.A.; Hon. Secretary, Signor Decio Calvari, Camera dei Deputati Roma; Hon. Treasurer, Signor Enrico Mannucci, M.A.

Theosophy is now placed on a firm basis in Italy, and although it has more difficulties to face in Rome than perhaps in any other city in Europe, the membership of the Lodge is steadily increasing. It is hoped that by means of its new organ, *Teosofia*, theosophical ideas may gradually be spread. This monthly journal will be issued by the Rome Lodge on January 1st, 1898, with the motto, taken from Dante's *Paradiso*, Canto xxiv.,

Quest'è il principio, quest'è la favilla,
Che se dilata in fiamma poi vivace.

(This is the beginning, this is the spark, which afterwards will expand into a living flame.)

An *Almanack and Popular Practical Encyclopedia* for 1898, has just been published at Florence, containing a clear and concise article upon Theosophy, with an account of the aim and objects of the Theosophical Society, and of its progress in the present epoch, written for the publication by Signor Decio Calvari, at the special request of Professor Fumagalli.

Margate Lodge.

On Tuesday, December 7th, Mrs. Holmes gave a lecture on "Theosophy" at a drawing-room meeting held at 16, Cecil Square. Mr. Johnson, of Herne Bay, took the chair. An animated discussion was afterwards taken part in by the large number of people present.

The result has been a good demand for pamphlets, and two or three enquirers attended the next meeting for study.

In future these meetings will be held on Tuesdays at 8 o'clock, and not on Thursdays at 7.30 as hitherto.

PHILIP HOLMES, *President*.

East London Lodge.

Steady work is being done at our meetings on Fridays and Tuesdays, and will, it is hoped, continue to be done, in spite of the loss the Lodge has suffered in the departure of its late President, Mr. Harry Banbery, to India. At the same time the thoughts of all the members of the Lodge attend him in his larger work.

EDWIN CUMBERLAND, *Hon. Sec.*

Bradford Lodge.

During her North of England tour, Mrs. Besant visited Bradford on Nov. 29th, lecturing in the Central Hall to a large audience on "What is Evolution?"

All who desired further information were invited to meet her at the Victoria Hotel, on the following afternoon. Besides many members of the Lodges, about a dozen enquirers assembled, who asked pertinent questions, which elicited from Mrs. Besant very lucid answers.

At the close of the meeting the questioners were referred to the older members for further information.

West London Branch.

The opening meeting of the West London Branch was held at 142, Queen's Road, W., on Friday, November 26th, when Mr. Mead and Mrs. Cooper-Oakley delivered addresses. Open meetings are held every Friday at 8 o'clock, a lecture alternating with the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCXCIII.

R. E.—It is stated that there is no "individual" until the causal body is evolved and that the causal body is the reincarnating ego. It appears that the causal body was not formed until the descent of the Manasaputra in the fourth round. How then can the Lunar Pitris be considered individuals? In what vehicle did they function in inter-physical and inter-manvantaric periods?

B. K.—The entire difficulty appears to be a question of words—the old story of our imperfect Theosophical terminology.

As a rule in careful Theosophical writing the term "individuality" implies the existence of the "causal body" and therefore, strictly speaking, no "individual" in this sense can be spoken of until the causal body has been formed. But in ordinary language the term "individual" is used with a very much wider signification, when, for instance, a scientist writes of the "individuals composing a species"—say of fish or insects. If this is borne in mind and it be remembered that Theosophical writers are often forced to use a word both in its technical and its general sense, the difficulty will disappear.

Thus—to clear up at the same time a further confusion implied in the question—we are told that there are various classes of pitris developed as the outcome of the lunar evolution, among which one class only has developed the causal body; a second has reached an early and rudimentary stage in its formation; while in a third no causal body has yet even begun to be formed, but the differentiation of the evolving monadic essence of the second outpouring has reached a condition in which each physical form is ensouled by one single distinct

block of essence, which can thus be considered as an "individual" in the popular, though not in the technical sense of the term, since no causal body has been formed as yet, and the "block of essence" which constitutes the evolving entity, not yet having received the third outpouring, is to be found on the rūpa and not the arūpa levels of the mānasic plane.

As far as is known, only the first two classes mentioned above can be said to "function" in any active sense during the "inter-manvantaric" period. That these did so is apparent from the fact that they exhibit marked development and progress when first they make their appearance on the earth-chain as compared with the condition they were in at the close of the lunar evolution. Their vehicle during the inter-manvantaric period most certainly was the newly formed causal body, but whether or not during the whole or any part thereof they had in addition a mental body on the rūpa levels has not yet been determined.

As regards the third class—those which are re-incarnating entities, though not yet "individualised" in the technical sense—it may be doubted whether they had any "inter-manvantaric period" at all. For since the evolution of the earth-chain overlaps that of the lunar chain, as the successive root-races do on earth, it is quite possible that they passed straight on with their evolution without any break at all. This matter, however, has not yet been specially investigated, and hence this is merely put forward as a suggestion.

As regards the "inter-physical," or "inter-incarnation" periods on the moon, the first class ceased incarnating there as soon as the formation of the causal body took place, just as an animal, as soon as it acquires a causal body now, ceases to incarnate any longer as an animal and awaits a chance to enter the human stream.

The other two classes would, during inter-incarnation periods, be inhabiting a vehicle formed of astral and mental matter possibly in the atomic condition, analogous to that which encases the various blocks of monadic essence whose evolution or differentiation has been observed in the various kingdoms around us. But it may be as well, perhaps, to guard against misconception by remarking that the passing of long periods out of incarnation appears to have been developed at a comparatively recent period—second round or perhaps third—at any rate on our own earth-chain. And seeing that the lunar evolution, as regards the pitris at any rate, was on a lower level still, it is perhaps allowable to infer that "Kāmaloka" and "Devachan" as we know them did not form part of the order of things with which we were then concerned. We know that even the highest of our present animals, failing the actual formation of a causal body by the reception of the third outpouring, have but a very brief existence on the astral plane after death, before merging back into the collective soul to which they belong. And by all accounts the majority at any rate among the pitris of the lunar evolution do not seem to have attained even to the same level of intelligence and morality

as a high-class domesticated animal of to-day. This therefore would seem to confirm the view suggested above, that all the details of incarnation and intervening periods for such entities on the moon must have been radically different from what we are familiar with at this stage of our own evolution.

QUESTION CCCXCIV.

L.—The more perfect the being the more complete will be the sympathy he gives, and this is due to the expansion of his consciousness; will not this expansion be hindered if he continually makes a shell around himself in the manner which has been so often recommended?

A. B.—There seems to be a little confusion here with reference to the word "shell." It is usually applied to a wall formed by checking the outpouring prāṇa (or specialised jīva) from the human body, using this prāṇa as a defence against the entrance of germs or evil influences belonging to the etheric world, magnetic and other. This service is normally rendered by the radiating waves of prāṇa poured forth by the healthy body; as they rush outwards they repel, carrying away in their outward flow, all finely-divided physical substances with which they come into contact, not so heavy as to resist their tide. A healthy person is thus rendered impervious to microbe-diseases disseminated by microscopic germs. This state is, what is called "the positive," and is one eminently desirable. "Forming a shell" is increasing the defence, usually where the magnetic influences are very bad, by checking the radiating waves at the surface of the auric egg, and at some intermediate distance from the body, and holding successive layers of them there as a shield. Such a prāṇic defence has nothing to do with sympathy or with the expansion of consciousness; emotional and mental waves pass freely through it, utterly unimpeded by its presence, either in their out-going or in their incoming. We are not rendered more fit to help others by allowing bad magnetism to play havoc with our own organism; on the contrary, the physical distress thus caused diminishes our usefulness, and is apt to cause a nervous whirl which makes us incapable of rendering efficient aid. If anyone builds round himself a wall isolating his emotions and thoughts from others, shutting out their consciousness and shutting in his own, he would certainly then become unsympathetic, and would stunt his own growth as well as repel those he ought to help. But the harmless and often necessary prāṇic shell is quite innocent of such ill-doings, and does not make anyone more unsympathetic than would the wearing of a respirator in a fog, or a damp handkerchief in rushing through smoke to save a person in a burning house. This question is, it may be added, a very useful one, as the answer may clear away a difficulty that may have been present in many conscientious minds.

QUESTION CCCXCV.

M. E. G.—Theosophy teaches : firstly, that each unit must pass through an average number of earth lives ; secondly, that a very lengthened Devachan is the reward of the more highly developed entities ; thirdly, that a conscious renunciation of the bliss of Devachan, and a rapid return to earth life, is to be desired. How can these three be reconciled? Does it not appear that the higher a man's standards and aims in earth life, the longer is his real progress delayed—even though granted that spiritual teaching is part of the devachanic training?

C. W. L.—When these statements are properly understood it will be seen that there is no sort of contradiction between them. No definite number of earth lives is arbitrarily fixed through which an entity *must* pass ; but, considering the level which had been reached by the various classes of pitris before their entry on the stage of this world, it is abundantly obvious that many lives would necessarily pass before there could be any possibility of sufficient development to put them within measurable distance of entry upon the Path, and in this sense the statement is true. Just in the same way we might say that an average number of years must pass before a baby attains the height of five feet, and the truth of that general statement is in no way affected by the fact that some children grow much more quickly than others.

The questioner will be much more likely to arrive at a correct understanding of the devachanic condition if he looks upon it as the necessary *result* of the earth-life, rather than as its reward. In the course of his physical existence a man sets in motion by his higher thoughts and aspirations what may be described as a certain amount of spiritual force, which will react upon him when he reaches the devachanic plane. If there be but little of this force, it will be comparatively soon exhausted, and the Devachan will be a short one ; if on the contrary a great deal has been generated, a corresponding space of time will be needed for its full working, and the Devachan will be very greatly prolonged.

It is therefore quite true that as a man develops in spirituality his devachanic periods become longer, but the statement that his progress is thereby delayed is entirely untrue. On the contrary, for all but very highly advanced persons the devachanic period is absolutely necessary, as it is only under its conditions that their aspirations can be developed into faculty, their experiences into wisdom ; and the progress which is thus made by the ego, the real man, is far greater than would be possible if by some miracle he was enabled to remain in physical incarnation for the entire period. If it were otherwise, obviously the whole law of nature would stultify itself, for the nearer it came to the attainment of its great object, the more determined and formidable would be its efforts to defeat itself—hardly a reasonable view to take of a law which we know to be an expression of the most exalted wisdom !

With regard to the third point—the renunciation of Devachan and the rapid reincarnation—there seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding. One quite frequently hears members of our Society talking about it in an airy sort of way, as though a man had only to know of the possibility of such a course in order to be able at once to adopt it. Apparently they have not yet realized the perfect justice of the Great Law, which permits no man to renounce blindly that of which he is ignorant, nor to depart from the ordinary course of evolution unless and until it is certain that such departure will be for his ultimate benefit.

The matter is by no means so simple. Be it clearly understood that no one can renounce the bliss of Devachan until he has experienced it during earth-life—until he is sufficiently developed to be able to raise his consciousness to that plane, and bring back with him into physical existence a clear and full memory of that glory which so far transcends all terrestrial conception.

The man who wishes to perform this great feat must therefore work with the most intense earnestness to make himself a worthy instrument in the hands of those who help the world—must throw himself with the most devoted fervour into labour for the spiritual good of others, not arrogantly assuming that he is already fit for so great an honour, but rather humbly hoping that perhaps after a life or two of strenuous effort his Master may tell him that the time has come when to him also this may be a possibility.

As in this case, so in many others, if people who imagine they have discovered a contradiction in the teachings of the Wisdom-Religion, would but wait awhile and study more deeply, they would find that on closer examination the contradiction disappears, and that in fact it had existed only in their own misapprehension.

QUESTION CCCXCVI.

B. H.—Is all wrong we are suffering from others in all cases the effect and consequence of our own karma, i.e., is it always caused by ourselves in a former or present life, or is it possible that sometimes we are not the cause ?

C. W. L.—Assuredly nothing can happen to a man which is not in his karma, but it seems probable that many people who glibly use that expression have not quite understood how very far-reaching it is.

Every man in the course of his long development through the ages has accumulated a vast store of karma, all of which must faithfully and exactly work itself out before he will be finally free. As soon as the man begins to understand life at all, it is towards that final liberation that all his efforts are directed, and the great Lords of karma are more than willing to give him whatever assistance those efforts deserve. But such assistance usually presents itself in a form which only the man who is thoroughly in earnest is able to appreciate, for it consists in increasing the amount

of evil karma to be worked off in the present life, in order to leave him freer in the future.

Of course in the interests of evolution the object is to work off the vast kârmic store as soon as may be, but since it is usually far too great and complex to be exhausted in any one life, it has to be taken in instalments, and when a man descends into any particular incarnation, such portion of it is selected as he might reasonably be supposed to be able to dispose of during that birth.

To the ordinary man that small fragment of karma appears as his *kismet*—the fate from which he cannot escape, however much he may try. The more advanced ego accepts it with gratitude and devotes himself intelligently to the attempt—not to escape it, but—so to work it out as to make it of the greatest possible use to his development.

This portion of karma is to some extent indicated by the conditions under which a man is born, and much of it can therefore be foreseen by astrologers, palmists and others, who from their various points of view make a study of the indications of those conditions. Yet it is by no means always possible accurately to predict the whole course of life, for any man of strong will is constantly setting up new causes and generating fresh karma, which may considerably modify the action of the old.

In addition to this, it seems certain that modifications are occasionally brought about or permitted by the kârmic deities themselves, as for example in the case above-mentioned of the extra mass of evil karma which may be apportioned to a man in recognition of his earnest desire to have it at once and get it out of the way of his future progress, and also sometimes in the case of what we call accidents.

Most assuredly no man could be killed in, let us say, a railway accident or a shipwreck, unless there were somewhere in the vast store of his entire karma a portion which could be worked off by such a death. But if we attempt for a moment to realize what a large and varied selection of evil karma most of us must have made in the course of the ages, we shall see that in the case of any ordinary man it would be exceedingly unlikely that among such an assortment there should be nothing which could express itself in that form.

If such a portion were found, then it is quite possible that the man might be allowed to perish in the accident, and so dispose of that portion, even though it might not have formed part of the plan originally made for this particular incarnation. If no such portion existed he could not so perish, but would furnish one more of those instances of miraculous escape of which one so frequently reads.

One can readily imagine that under such circumstances a man's life would often have to be saved, not because of any virtue of his own, but on account of the effect of his death upon others dependent on him, lest suffering not adjudged by *their* past karma should thus fall upon them.

Undoubtedly, therefore, we may say in reply to

this question that every wrong which we suffer is entirely the effect and consequence of our own action at some period or other of the long life-story which lies behind us; for if it were otherwise, it simply could not happen to us.

It must not be supposed that in all such cases we have on some previous occasion done an exactly similar wrong to the very same person who now treats us so cruelly. Certainly where a person has very largely influenced the life of a friend or an enemy by his action, definite blocks of karma are thus carried over from one time of meeting to another, perhaps thousands of years later, and definitely worked out between those who originally participated in the actions which caused them. But there is also a kind of general store of karma, so that we are able to repay help given to us long ago by those far greater than ourselves by in turn helping those who are below us, and thus in the end the Great Law is vindicated, and eternal justice is done to all.

QUESTION CCCXCVII.

J. E. C.—*How far may the Incarnation and earthly life of the Manu of this, the fifth, root race be taken to account for the tendency to personalise the conception of God?*

B. K.—Undoubtedly direct personal contact and association with the Race Manus, the Divine Kings and Teachers, and other god-like men who watch over and assist infant races must have done much to reinforce and strengthen the personal conception of the Deity. And indeed such a being as any one of these is actually and really far, far beyond any conception which the mind of the average man, even of our present race, could possibly form. Let us not deceive ourselves as, alas! we too often do. To read, repeat, or speak *words* does not imply our having any real conception of that to which the words relate. And far too often we talk of the Logos, the Lords of Karma, and higher beings in general, when we have not even the faintest approach to a real "conception" of such exalted entities either in our hearts or our minds. And it would be much better for our real progress did we frankly realise this and set ourselves to make real, full, living and actual our so-called "conception," say of the Masters, instead of spinning the verbal cobwebs of speculation about the "Deity beyond All." But to return to the question.

The real root of the personal conception of Deity is, I believe, the fact in nature that this universe, our solar system, is the work of the Logos, whose life upholds it, whose mind conceived and designed it, whose wisdom and power guide it, whose love caused its formation, and in perfect conscious union with whom lies the consummation of its evolution. That fact, known to all the great teachers and sages, and by them taught to their disciples and those sufficiently developed in mind to understand it even dimly, is, I believe, the real origin of the idea of a personal Deity. It is a

fact, a truth of nature and, *short of adept levels*, it is but the insanity of vain folly to imagine we can reach beyond that source and origin of our universe; though the knowledge that there is a beyond is given to us that it may guard us against logical absurdities and intellectual suicides, into which theology unrestrained by that knowledge has but too often fallen.

QUESTION CCCXCVIII.

S. F. W. S.—*What reason is there for describing King Solomon's temple as never having had a real existence, and the monarch himself as a "solar myth" as is done in The Secret Doctrine (N. E.), vol. I., p. 334, there being nothing intrinsically improbable in the Jews having had such a temple or such a king?*

G. R. S. M.—The reasons are based on the huge body of tradition concerning this personage floating about in the East; on the proportions and contents of the symbolic structure; and on philological and astronomical considerations. Since the time of Nork (cir. 1835), many scholars have devoted their attention to this interpretation of Jewish mythology. It is, however, not improbable that there was a person in the ancient East round whom the legends were woven. The account of Solomon and his greatness given in the Jewish document is, however, manifestly unhistorical; and even were it historical, the famous temple could have been only a small wooden(?) structure, a nothing compared to the mighty fanes of antiquity. The crude idea that the Jews were the leaders of the world in art and civilisation (an article of faith which had been undisputed for so many centuries), is now known to be an ignorant boast which has received its quietus by the proved existence of a highly developed art and civilisation in Babylonia, the records of which are preserved on monuments of stone, on cylinders and tiles, and which antedates the temple of Solomon (c. 1000 B.C.?) by 6 or 7,000 years. These temples of the ancient Chaldeans were built according to an astronomical canon; and the knowledge of Chaldean lore, which the Jews acquired during the captivity, modified immensely, if it did not originate, their tradition of the tabernacle and of Solomon's temple. Indeed, as is now acknowledged by both Jewish and Christian scholars, the captivity metamorphosed primitive Jewish ideas, and brought the Jews into contact with a civilisation from which they derived the better part of their subsequent intellectual and religious possessions. It was only after the captivity that they wrote up their records, some five hundred years after the date so kindly assigned to Solomon in the margin of the English Authorised Translation.

Personally, however, I am no fanatic of the sun-myth theory. This theory is but an exercise in correspondences; granted that such correspondences existed between the sun and the hero, what then? It follows that the great world and little world (or man), correspond generally. On this fact the inner cultus of the Chaldeans and later of the Jews was based; the initiators into this science of the soul, of man, of the universe, and of God, invariably derived their descent from some great teacher in the far distant past. The Jews chose Solomon for one of the founders of their mystery cultus: hence the symbolic nature of their legend concerning him.

QUESTION CCCXCIX.

K.—*Councillor von Eckhartshausen in his Cloud on the Sanctuary, claims to be a member of the Great Brotherhood, dispersed throughout the world. He teaches, as one of those who know, pure Catholic doctrine, differing in many respects from the Eastern teaching, as given out in The Secret Doctrine. Can you explain the reason of this discrepancy?*

G. R. S. M.—It is only within the last twenty years or so that it has been possible to speak at all plainly about the doctrines referred to. At the time when Eckhartshausen wrote, it was more than a man's life was worth to speak the plain truth in matters religious. Eckhartshausen seems to have desired to widen Catholic doctrine; and to influence it at all, he had to work from within it. Whether he was a "member of the Great Brotherhood" or not, is a matter of indifference, as long as he was a good man labouring intelligently to further the purposes of that Brotherhood. The "members" of the "Great Brotherhood," according to our present conceptions are all of them Masters; there is nothing to show that Eckhartshausen had reached that exalted degree, and therefore he must have used the term "member of the Great Brotherhood" in a far wider sense than we do to-day. The pupils of a Master may belong to any of the great religions; the Master is the teacher of the One Religion.

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All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.

THE VĀHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

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ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

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Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

ACTIVITIES.

LETTER FROM THE INDIAN SECTION.

The following letter has been received in answer to the letter of greeting sent on behalf of the European Section to the Convention of the Indian Section, held at Adyar in December.

I have been desired by the Convention of the Indian Section here assembled, to convey to you and to all our good brothers of the European Section, the heartfelt gratitude of this Section, for the good wishes you have expressed to it, and to assure you that we fully appreciate and reciprocate the sentiments which you cherish for us.

In cordial co-operation alone, lies the way to peace and happiness, and such co-operation seems impossible in any matter except that which works for the common weal of mankind.

You will be glad to learn that our Convention passed off very smoothly, and it was evident that the delegates assembled had but one heart, one wish, one aspiration—and that the success of the noble mission which the Theosophical Society has undertaken. The greatest enthusiasm was wonderfully combined with the utmost serenity and absolute harmony, and our united good will was sent out to all our fellow-workers, the world over.

Wishing you all that is good and peace-giving.

I am, my dear Colleague,

Most sincerely and cordially yours,

UPENDRANATH BASU.

Joint General Secretary,

Indian Section.

To G. R. S. Mead, Esq.

General Secretary,

European Section.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to Jan. 20th.—Thomas Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.; Miss Mallet, £1; Mrs. Marshall, £20; W. S. F., 5s.; Mrs. Larmuth, £2; Miss Claxton, 2s. 6d.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; O. Huschke, 15s.; E. Udny, 5s.; F. T. S., £1; C. L. Richardson, £1; Mrs. MacCarthy, 16s.; G. Graham, £5; H. D., 2s. Total £33 8s.

Lectures at Queen's Hall.

A series of six lectures will be delivered during February and March, at the Queen's (small) Hall, on Sunday evenings, at 7 o'clock. Mrs. Besant will give four of these, as follows: Feb. 6th, "The Search for God;" Feb. 13th, "Giordano Bruno: the Man and the Teacher;" March 6th, "Reality of the Unseen Worlds;" March 13th, "What is Evolution." The other two evenings, Feb. 20th and 27th, will be occupied by Mr. Mead and Mr. Leadbeater, who will speak on "The Birth of a World Faith," and "Dreams."

Mrs. Besant.

Mrs. Besant started on a lecturing and visiting tour in Scandinavia, Germany and Holland, on Jan. 4th, and arrived in Göteborg on the 6th. Meetings for enquirers and numerous conversations were held, and Mrs. Besant delivered four lectures on "States of Consciousness," to members of the Branch. Two public lectures were also given which were much appreciated and well reported. Lectures were also delivered, and numerous Branch and other meetings held, in Christiania, Upsala, Stockholm and other towns.

Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been placed in the library:—

Histoire de la Magie du Monde Surnatural et de la Fatalité à travers les Temps et les Peuples, par P. Christian, Paris; Sacred Books of the East Series, Vol. xliii. *The Shatapatha Brâhmana*, trans. by Julius Eggeling, Part IV., Books 8, 9, and 10, Oxford, 1897; *Real Ghost Stories*, W. T. Stead, London, 1897; *Almanacco Italiano, Piccola Enciclopedia Popolare della Vita Pratica*, Firenze, 1898; *Ciencia y Religion del Porvenir*, Jesus Ceballos Dosamantes, Méjico, 1897; Texts and Studies, contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature, ed. by J. Armitage Robinson, D.D., Vol. V., No. 2, *Clement of Alexandria: Quis Dives Salvetur*, by P. M. Barnard, M.A., Cambridge, 1897; *The Nicetian Christ, the Faith of the historical Christ in Relation to a New Reformation*, by S. H. Playfair, Edinburgh and London, 1897; *Modern Astrology*, Vol. III., 1897-8, ed. by Alan Leo.

A. J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

Theosophical Lending Library.

The following books have been added to the Library:

A Modern Panarion, H. P. Blavatsky; *A New Era of Thought*, C. H. Hinton; *Studies in Psychological Research*, F. Podmore; *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail*, Alfred Nutt; *Ethnology*, A. H. Keane; *On the Face of the Waters*, Flora A. Steel; *The Potter's Thumb*, Flora A. Steel; *In the Permanent Way*, Flora A. Steel.

Terms of subscription to the Library: one month, 1s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra. Catalogues upon application to the Librarian,

LILIAN LLOYD, *Librarian*.

Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr.

Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Feb. 1st, *Theosophy and Religion*; Feb. 15th, *Thought-Transference*, J. Parsons. On the other Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of Hindu Philosophy, and Sundays, at 11.30 a.m., for study, and from 4 to 9 p.m. for enquirers.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, at 8.15 p.m.: Feb. 21st, address by Mrs. Besant. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month, and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Feb. 6th, *The Mental Plane*, W. H. Thomas; Feb. 13th, *The Mysteries among the Greeks*, G. R. S. Mead; Feb. 20th, *The Heaven-world*, Mrs. Bell; Feb. 27th, *Nirvâna*, Hodgson Smith. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 p.m., at 67, Station Parade.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at No. 9 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 33, Belgrave Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings at 3, Hackins Hey, on alternate Sundays, at 6 p.m.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: Feb. 3rd, *The Nervous System and Consciousness (Part I.)*, Mrs. Besant; Feb. 10th, *The Cross*, C. W. Leadbeater; Feb. 17th, *The Nervous System and Consciousness (Part II.)*, Mrs. Besant; Feb. 24th, *The Great Origination as taught by the Buddha*, J. C. Chatterji. The lectures on Feb. 3rd and 17th are open only to members of the Society.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. General meetings at 79, Burdett Road, E., on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Private class on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m. at Millfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, 15, Worsley Road, Hampstead Heath.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays at 7.30 p.m.: Feb. 5th, *Life after Death*, C. W. Leadbeater; Feb. 21st, *The Three Paths*, J. C. Chatterji; Feb. 14th and 28th, study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 142, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8 p.m., alternately for lectures and the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square, on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings at 39, High Street; on Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor) on Thursdays, at 8 p.m. Alternate Thursdays, study of *The Astral Plane*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Monday evening at 8.15 p.m.

PARIS. Monthly lectures conducted by Com. D. A. Courmes, at the Salle des Mathurins, 36, rue des Mathurins, on Sundays, at 2 p.m. Meetings for enquirers at 3, rue du 29 Juillet (office of *Le Lotus Bleu*), on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, at 2.30 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays at 8 p.m., alternately at 38, and 58, rue de Verneuil.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at The Foresters' Hall, The Octagon, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Information to be obtained from Miss Hunter, 6, Clarendon Gardens, Ramsgate.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 31, Via Lombardia, on Thursdays, at 6 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Mrs. Bestwick's, Cambridge Arcade, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH CENTRE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thorntonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

ZÜRICH LODGE.—Meetings at the "Vegaterier-Heim," 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

North of England Federation.

The next meeting of this Federation will take place at Harrogate on February 12th. The General Secretary will preside and lecture, and will also visit several of the Northern Branches between February 13th and 19th.

Blavatsky Lodge.

On December 2nd there was a large attendance to hear Mrs. Besant on the real history of the Christ, and the inner meaning of the legendary narratives of the gospels. She pointed out that the latter were intended to describe the course of the Initiate, from disciple to Adept.

On December 9th the Lodge received from Mr. Leadbeater a lecture upon the importance of external and physical purity as the complement of, and prelude to, the higher purity.

Mr. Chatterji spoke on December 16th in place

of Mr. Bertram Keightley, upon the Vedānta. The audience was an appreciative one, and a discussion followed.

Mr. Chatterji lectured again on January 6th, his subject being "The Word," which he expounded as the origin and informing power of all things. Questions ensued in which some interesting points concerning language were raised.

On December 23rd Mr. Mead treated an inspiring topic, "The Deathless World."

Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, on January 13th, gave a very interesting lecture upon "Mystic Orders," which she showed stretching back in unbroken succession for two thousand years. She pointed out how, under various names—such as the Rosicrucians, the Knights Templars, the Societies of Troubadours, the Albigenses, the Manicheans—schools of mysticism and occultism existed through century after century. The orders of chivalry—page, squire and knight—were explained to have been, at least at the outset, grades of initiation.

Chiswick Branch.

The Annual Business Meeting was held on January 17th, at which the following officers were elected for the ensuing year; President, A. A. Harris; Secretary, W. C. Worsdell. It was stated that one new member had joined the Lodge during the past year, *The Theosophical Review* had been subscribed to, and Vol. III. of *The Secret Doctrine* purchased.

All communications in future to be addressed to the Hon. Secretary,

W. C. WORSDELL,
6, Cumberland Place, Kew.

Sheffield Branch.

The members of the Sheffield Branch have been studying for the last five months *The Voice of the Silence*. On "first-nights" papers have been read as follows: October, R. Pexton, "Is there a Theosophical Orthodoxy?"; November, J. D. Cousins, "Early Religions and their Source"; December, Miss Ibbitt, "Indifference as taught in the *Bhagavad Gita*"; January, C. J. Barker, "The World's Desire."

On February 3rd we are expecting to remove to premises having a more convenient means of access, in order that we may bring ourselves more prominently before the public. The President is to open the new Room with a lecture on "Peace."

On March 3rd, Mrs. Godber will read a paper on "Brotherhood," which completes the present syllabus.

On Saturday, January 15th, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley lectured in the Lower Temperance Hall to a crowded audience on "Theosophy, and the Change that Men call Death," and was accorded a most attentive and appreciative hearing. A report of the lecture appeared in both the local newspapers. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley held two other meetings on

the Sunday following, both of which were well attended.

We have succeeded in obtaining places for *The Theosophical Review* in public rooms for three copies monthly—in the Reading Rooms of the Central Free Library, the Highfields Library and the Vegetarian Restaurant.

C. J. B.

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCLX.

(Resumed from THE VĀHAN for June, 1897.)

K. B.—Why does Patañjali make such a point of the virtue of “non-receiving,” putting it on a par with truthfulness, chastity, etc.? (Ch. II, Aph. 30.) Swāmi Vivekānanda in his commentary says, “Whoever receives gifts, his mind is acted on by the mind of the giver . . . and becomes degenerated” (Rāja-Yoga, p. 177). Surely some of the greatest teachers of the past set the example of the contrary by supporting life entirely upon what the charity of their disciples bestowed upon them?

J. C. C.—In the original the word for “non-receiving” is “a-parigraha.” Dr. Ballantyne translates it by “non-coveting,” which is more correct and nearer the original idea than “non-receiving,” though neither of them half expresses the idea of Patañjali.

The word “parigraha” comes from the root “grah” or “grabh” with the prefix “pari.” The simple root means to grasp, to lay hold of. The prefix emphasises the signification and “parigrah” means to grasp completely “on all sides” and to have a firm grip of. Therefore “parigraha” means “a firm grip,” “a covetous and greedy grasp.”

This refers to an internal process far more than to a physical one; perhaps entirely to the former, the physical being only its outward expression.

Now this grasping greediness of the mind binds the man very strongly to the objects of greed, not in any figurative sense, but most literally. For all our desires and covetings, though invisible to the dull physical eye, act as strong and tangible chords to tie us down to the objects we seek. Here the student may be referred to an illustrated article of Mrs. Besant, entitled “Thought-forms,” in *Lucifer*, Sept., 1896. There he will find how our coveting, greed and ambition shape themselves in hook-like forms, which are attached to what we lust after. Of course all this is known to every student of Hindu philosophy who understands his subject well.

The effect of all such desires is to keep the mind, and through it the soul, chained to the mire of the earth. The soul of a greedy person cannot rise above the physical, and can know nothing as to what happens in the transcendental world.

The Yogin seeks to accomplish detachment from lower objects. He must soar far, far beyond the dust of the earth, if he is to know the truths of

the transcendental. Therefore it is that he must get rid of all greediness, which spreads like a share round the things of the senses and keeps the soul from flying (comp. γρῖφος a fishing net, connected with Sans. grah, grabh). Unless one removes this grasping tendency at the outset of yoga practice, it is absolutely useless to take further steps. Therefore Patañjali demands it of the candidate as one of the most necessary fundamental qualifications for yoga, as necessary as universal kindness, truthfulness and so on.

There is also some truth in the remark of Swāmi Vivekānanda, quoted by the questioner. But that is by no means the principal reason why Patañjali demanded “a-parigraha” or “non-receiving,” “non-coveting,” and “freedom from grasping greed.”

I do not think there is any harm in receiving gifts from those who give them not because they expect any reward either here or hereafter, but only for the sake of giving and helping the aspirant; that is to say, to use the technical phrase, whose gift is “niṣkāma” or desireless. Such givers, when they give anything to the aspirant do not exercise any undue influence on the mind of the receiver.

But when the gift comes from one who seeks reward in the giving—in the shape of something here or in the world to come—such a gift proves a hindrance to the aspiring soul. The gift received establishes a connection between the giver and the receiver. The gift brings with it the demanding thoughts of the giver, and they hover round the aspirant distracting and compelling his mind whenever they can. Therefore it is that our law-givers laid down distinct and minute rules to guide the student in his accepting gifts. He is to accept gifts when they come from persons of a certain nature or natures and not from others. It was for this reason also that Chaitanya, the great Vaiṣṇava teacher, who was an embodiment of love itself, said: “Food, eaten of the worldly, defiles the mind” (Viṣayirā anna khele duṣṭa haya mana).

But, as I say, this is not the main reason why Patañjali prescribes “a-parigraha” as one of the fundamental qualifications for Yoga. It is intended to set the soul free, and that this is so will be evident if we consider the result of “freedom from grasping greediness,” as given by Patañjali himself.

He says: “When freedom from grasping greediness (a-parigraha, ‘non-coveting,’ ‘non-receiving’) is established, there arises the knowledge of the state of affairs in (former) incarnations” (II. 39).

That is to say, this virtue enables one to remember the past incarnations in every detail.

How? To understand that, we must remember that the soul, the real man, never forgets anything. It is the physical consciousness which does not include the past, because the present physical body has nothing to do with the past bodies, beyond the fact that its genesis as an effect has been partly determined by the previous body, or bodies, as the cause. Memory depends on association, and therefore to remember the past,

we must be conscious in that part of our nature which links the present with the past; in other words, we must have, even on the physical plane, the full consciousness of the soul. To possess that, we must transfer the centre, or seat of our normal consciousness, from the physical body to the region of the soul. Now this can be done only when our consciousness does not cling to anything lower, which, acting as a heavy load, keeps the soul from soaring. As soon as that "clinging" or "grasping" is completely cut loose, the soul rises to the higher worlds, its own true home, the man retaining his full consciousness throughout. And there, having an unbroken link, an association with the past, it remembers it in all its details. Thus it is that "a-parigraha" is absolutely necessary for the would-be Yogin.

But all these rules are meant for the aspirant. The perfect Master is beyond all influences that may come from outside and can dominate them. Therefore, he can, if necessary to help the world or to do any other work which he sees fit, receive gifts from anybody, and live anywhere, and identify himself with anything. But as the aspirant has not reached such a level, it is not wise for him to try to imitate the Master in everything.

QUESTION CCCC.

J. A. R.—It is said that the soul can dwell in the unseen worlds, while its body goes on living on earth; and that there are many soul-less men, both wicked materialists and those of advanced holiness, among us. What is the meaning, and what is the proof of this?

B. K.—It would be much more convenient if questioners gave the authority for the statements upon which they base their questions, instead of vaguely saying, "It is said," as in the present case. As a matter of fact I greatly question whether any such statement *in this form* has ever been made by any responsible Theosophical writer. The nearest approach to it, or rather to the first part of it, that I can recall, is, I believe, a remark made somewhere by H. P. B. as to one's meeting "soul-less men and women every day in our streets"; but I have understood this remark as referring not to such cases as the present question points at, but to the fact that some, if not many, human beings are still so immersed in matter, so completely undeveloped and unawakened as regards all that can be called "soul," that for all practical purposes they may be rhetorically described as "soul-less."

But the questioner is obviously not referring to this, or if so he reads the remark quite otherwise. At any rate, to come down to facts, I understand that such a thing as a "soul-less" human being is physically possible though most rare. Such a case would be either that of a black magician—and rather an advanced one too—who had finally and definitely torn away his personality from the causal body, and was still living physically; or, an even rarer possibility, that of a sensitive person

whose body had been completely and permanently taken possession of by some "soul-less" astral entity, *i.e.*, by an "elementary" or the astral personality of a dead black magician which had severed itself from the causal body or real soul. But all these cases are so rare as to be met with in the proportion of units to millions.

As to people "of advanced holiness" being or becoming "soul-less," the statement seems so impossibly absurd as to suggest some complete mistake or misreading on the questioner's part. Surely since "advanced holiness" means growth of the soul, means the soul's obtaining a more and more absolute and unshakeable control over both mind and body, means the ever greater purification of all the lower vehicles—surely this being so, it follows that a man advanced in holiness becomes more full of soul, not empty thereof, as the word soul-less implies?

Hence of two things one: either the questioner is misquoting his authority, or he is basing his question on some misunderstanding. In the latter case if he can supply a reference, it may be possible to deal with the passage and explain what is really meant; but as the question stands the facts are simply not as it assumes them to be, nor am I aware of any statement (except the one of H. P. B.'s already quoted) which could imply them.

QUESTION CCCCCI.

G. R.—If favourable circumstances depend on the happiness we have conferred on others in past lives, how is it that there seems to be no order in common life, good people suffering on the whole as much as, and perhaps even more than, evil and selfish people? Surely they must as a rule have been the means of spreading more happiness than the selfish ones, and if so, our conditions do not appear to depend on our actions in past lives.

E. G.—By "favourable circumstances" G. R. seems to mean environment, and present environment, we are told, is made by past action. Now happiness or well-being conferred on others does not necessarily imply goodness in the person conferring the happiness—in other words, what from our outside standpoint appears to be a good action may be done by bad men, and of course *vice versa*—the motive determining the worth of the agent, but not the quality of the action as regards others.

Plenty of instances illustrating this will at once suggest themselves to our minds—but let us take a very ordinary case. A man gives largely to charity, or is generous to all with whom he comes into contact, in order, say, to see his name figuring prominently in the subscription list, or to enjoy a reputation for generosity—or he builds an institution for the furtherance of art or of science in the hope of gaining a title. The man may have no real generosity of nature, and be poorly developed morally in other respects; but his action, in the instance in question, considered without reference to the motive, may be called good, inasmuch as benefit accrues to others thereby; he will one day

receive the equivalent for what he has given on the plane of action. But surely it is quite possible to conceive that he should receive the physical good owing to him in a life when the evil or pettiness of his nature being apparent, his fellow-men regard him as little deserving it.

On the other hand, I suppose, we should all be ready to admit that goodness, in the narrow acceptation of the term, is not invariably accompanied by wisdom. Acts of the utmost atrocity have been done by men really believing themselves to be acting rightly, in the name of God and religion—are being done to-day in the name of science. Men so acting must bear the penalty of the horrors inflicted by them; but here again it is possible to conceive of their suffering being worked out in a life in which goodness may show forth in their nature. There is error in pursuing some narrow end as though it were the supreme good, and the limitations of ignorance can only be broken through by pain.

The motives at the back of actions are highly complex phenomena, and the great law of karma, simple as it may seem in its general principles, is, in the out-working, as complex as the manifested universe itself. The wider grows our vision, the more possible will it become to unravel some of this complexity—man's goal, however far-off yet, being nothing less than the complete interpretation of the system to which he belongs.

Some men have moved along, in the direction of this goal, very much further than others, and to them we are indebted for such light as we have on the subject of karma.

But only to the vision of the great intelligences behind manifestation do the life-threads, which to us seem so hopelessly confused, straighten out and become entirely disentangled.

L. L.—It is possible that the journey which ends in adeptship is being pursued in its early stages as well by some who are unconscious of their real goal, as by those who apprehend it. Perhaps an intense and continued determination to follow the higher life at all costs, here and hereafter, a deliberate renunciation of the individual for the sake of humanity, may constitute on the Lords of Karma some such claim as is knowingly made by the self-recognised candidate for initiation. And this practical appeal may be met, though not, of course, so completely as in the case of the aspirant in occultism, by some preparatory precipitation of karma.

The burden is adjusted to the back. A strong ego might be given the opportunity of clearing off a heavy portion of his debt before, in a new incarnation, taking up a line of study which would open to his eyes the vista along which he was travelling, and its true termination. A weak ego, inadequate through stunted moral development to support trial, might have his payment postponed till he should have gathered more strength to resist.

A. M. G.—I am not sure that the Scotch plan of replying to one question by another would here

be out of place. *Do* good people suffer "on the whole as much as, and perhaps even more than, evil and selfish people"? I venture to think not. It *may* be that the possession of money is to be found more often in connection with selfish and evil, than with unselfish and good people, but even this seems to me to be quite an unwarranted assumption. That business success, for example, depends on a selfish line of action, may be true enough, but it is not true that lack of such success is therefore due to unselfishness—it may be so, but more generally want of ability, or of that incomprehensible factor, "luck," is the cause. The mere observation, therefore, that a few people, noticeably evil or selfish, have made or inherited large fortunes, is not sufficient for the wide generalisations indicated in the question. The fact is that such cases are much more remarked upon than the others, and tend to arouse a feeling of injustice or resentment in the less fortunate. If we examine the actual state of things a little more closely, I believe that on the whole consideration for others, and general unselfishness of life, will be found at least as much in the more fortunately circumstanced class, as in the class of those who have directly to experience the struggle for existence.

When we come to a much more important part of the question than position or wealth, we see a state of things in which enjoyment *must* depend largely upon the development of the relatively unselfish qualities. Companionship or friendship cannot exist between people who are merely concerned with their own individual pleasure. The basis of all proper society is that the purely selfish side shall be kept under, and that at least an outward form of consideration for others shall obtain. A person who had not reached this state of mind would soon find himself an outcast from the society he desired, and conversely one who showed special kindness to others would rapidly increase the circle of friendship and enjoyment.

There are other lines on which we might argue, but all, I think, go to show that, on the whole, the balance of happiness must be on the side of the unselfish—morbid feelings of injustice to the contrary, notwithstanding.

A. A. W.—The key to G. R.'s difficulty lies in the fact that karma is a much wider system of retribution than the mere repaying goodness in one life by happiness in the next. We shall never understand the seriousness of our own lives until we realise that we are now laying down the cause, whose results, for good and for evil, may take many subsequent lives to exhaust. And it would be a serious mistake to suppose that the causes which have such far-reaching results are necessarily what *we* are used to consider as *great* acts of virtue or of vice. A single thought sent out in solitude to do mischief on the higher planes, may bring back more evil karma for us when, as curses will do, it "comes home to roost," than our most brilliant good deeds can counterbalance. Not only what we have *done* to others, but what we have *wished* to do is all laid up in store for us hereafter. So that it is by no means so easy as "J. R." seems

to think, to know who *deserves* to suffer in this life. If we could look back into our past lives we should understand it better, but even then the complication would be hard to unravel. For the due consequences of our acts may be long delayed by other more pressing requirements, or hastened by the occurrence of convenient opportunities; or, as we are told is the case with those who enter on the Path, may be intentionally heaped up all at once, to be the sooner exhausted. Then there are the results of family, national and race karma to be reckoned with; so that, on the whole, we shall find it best to take the comfort of knowing that all evil is, somehow or other, deserved, and in truth a means of good to those who suffer, without troubling our limited intelligence as to the details.

But it must not be forgotten that the Law of Karma exists, like everything else, not for human pleasure, but to aid in the task of raising mortals to the Gods. To the Lords of Karma, who have the settling of our fates, our happiness or suffering is a matter of as total indifference as it must, sooner or later, come to be to ourselves; and when we see a good man suffering we must feel that in all probability his suffering is the best reward of his virtue, and is leading him on the upward path far more quickly than the enervating sunshine of worldly prosperity could do. There are but few who are beyond the actual need of such a spur; for most of us the true view of suffering should be that of the saint of old who was used yearly at a certain season to have a serious illness. One year his sickness did not come; whereupon he wept and lamented, saying, "The Lord is angry with me, for this year He has not visited me."

QUESTION CCCCII.

J. P. M.—What is the attitude of Theosophy to astrology?

G. R. S. M.—As THE VĀHAN knows no one who has the authority to speak in the name of Theosophy, we will bring the question within the range of practical politics by re-wording it as follows: "What is the attitude of members of the Theosophical Society to astrology?" and so we shall be dealing with facts of knowledge and not with opinions merely. The members of the Society take up the most divergent and contradictory attitudes with regard to astrology; some believe in it with various qualifications, a few even make of it a religion, as it were; some ridicule it as an absurd superstition, and proclaim the astrologer a charlatan; the majority are inclined to think there *may be* something in it, but are content to admit their ignorance of the art, and what is more, their indifference to it even supposing there may be truth in it, being quite content to subscribe to the saying, "The wise man rules his stars; the fool obeys them," and so be quit of the whole business. Each member, then, has his own opinion, and if I give J. P. M. mine on the subject, he should remember

that it is mine and not the Society's, least of all Theosophy's.

I must confess, then, that I never could get up much respect for modern astrology, in spite of the fact that *sometimes* extraordinarily accurate predictions are made by professed astrologers. I have never known astrology do any good to the character, and I have often known it do a great deal of harm. On the other hand, I know that some of our members are making an honest endeavour to turn the art to ethical service, and in that I wish them every success. But before any real good can be done, it will be necessary to make a searching enquiry into the genesis of astrology, and replace the traditional rule of thumb astrology by some more rational method. Hipparchus and his plagiarist Ptolemy, with the cheerful impudence of scholastic Alexandrians, hellenised the real Chaldæan art out of existence, and modern astrology is based on their misconceptions solely. Modern astrology is *not* the Chaldæan art, it is the superstition of a Greek burlesque of the true science of the stars. In the distant past, when the "Chaldæan" civilisation was at its height (though under a different name, for that time was prehistoric) "astrology" was the religion of the race, and *that* astrology was (and is) one of the root-rays of religion; but between this real science of the solar system and its inhabitants and the modern caricature, there is as little connection as between the present-day conceptions of the death of Jesus and the real self-sacrifice of the Logos.

But even before the days of Hipparchus the true science had fallen from its purity; and so we find the Buddha strictly forbidding his followers to dabble with the art. The direct disciples of the spiritual Christ also, among the early Gnostics, knew the true state of affairs: and so we find one of the writers in the Pistis Sophia treatise declaring that the astrologers were all at sixes and sevens; that it was only by chance that they hit on a correct prediction; for that as soon as a man's nature contacted the Christ spirit, there was a revolution in the spheres, and the motion of half of them was entirely inverted; of this the ordinary astrologer knew nothing, and so his predictions were almost sure to be erroneous. This statement was based on a knowledge of the real Chaldæan art, which had been so materialised by the Greeks; on a knowledge of what the "planets" really are, and how many there are, and how placed, in fact, of the entire economy of the whole system. This economy is entirely unknown to modern astrology, and it is wonderful that with such false premises it ever succeeds in getting even a single correct prediction from the few old rules of thumb which have been handed down from the genuine Chaldæans.

Modern astrology, then, requires to be purified, and ancient astrology to be rediscovered. But in this vulgar and huckstering age, when the income of the professional astrologer comes mostly from ignorant servant girls, or stock-dealers, or book-makers, what chance is there of purification; and until there is purification, what claim has mankind to rediscovery?

QUESTION CCCCIII.

M. M.—What would be the distinguishing characteristics of a "Fifth-Rounder" living at the present time? Would such a person be recognisable as such by people of the Fourth Round, assuming the latter to be acquainted with Theosophy?

B. K.—The term "Fifth-Rounder" was one employed in the very early days of the evolution of a theosophical nomenclature, to denote a person who in point of development had reached that stage which will be the average level of development in the Fifth Round. It does not necessarily imply that the individual so spoken of has actually made five complete circuits round the planetary chain, while the rest of humanity is now only half way through its fourth circuit. Thus it has been said that the general level attained by mankind on earth in the Fifth Round will be that now represented by the first great Initiation—the Sohan or Srotâpatti step of the Path. Hence all who reach this level now have attained the level of mankind in the Fifth Round, and may thus be spoken of as Fifth-Rounders.

But there is another sense which the term Fifth-Rounder might bear, though it seems rather doubtful whether as it appears in *Esoteric Buddhism* or in the letters of the Master to Mr. Sinnett, it was ever actually used in that sense.

As matters now stand it seems that many second-class Pitris (in the classification used in the *Lunar Pitris*, the London Lodge Transaction), are not sufficiently evolved to "enter the Path" in this Round, and life on earth at present is inadequate to afford them the necessary conditions for rapidly making up this deficiency in experience, which amounts to the transformation from second into first-class Pitris. Hence special arrangements are needed to effect this, and it is accomplished by such a second-class Pitri being actually made to perform an extra circuit of the Planetary Chain, passing from globe to globe, incarnating on each one or more times, and eventually again catching up the humanity which he left, either on the same globe—say the earth—or on a subsequent one. But when he does so he has overtaken, so to say, his deficiencies in experiences and reappears among his fellows as a first-class Pitri, and as such qualified to attempt entrance upon the Path in the ordinary way.

This process has been spoken of as the "Inner Round," and a hint of it may be found given in the Notes to the last editions of *Esoteric Buddhism*, in connection with what is there called the "Noah's Ark" theory. The effect of it is that such an entity would have actually made one circuit of the chain more than his fellows, though since the second-class Pitris incarnated only in the Third Round, such an entity would have completed *two* whole Rounds, while his fellows would only have just entered upon the commencement of their second. So that it would seem not quite accurate to speak of such exceptional entities as "Fifth-Rounders," although before the details concerning the various classes of Pitris were given, such a term might have been applied to them.

So far as is at present known there is no very definite mark or peculiarity perceptible even to devachanic vision, which distinguishes an entity which has been through this Inner Round from others; and probably the fact could only be definitely ascertained by actually tracing back the evolution of that entity in the âkâshic records.

Of course one who has passed the Srotâpatti initiation, and thus has attained to the Fifth Round level of evolution, does exhibit definite marks and peculiarities in his aura which are at once recognisable by one of the same or a higher level, though probably not equally plain or significant to the non-initiated psychic. It is a question of actual development, not of intellectual knowledge, and a mere acquaintance with Theosophy in its intellectual aspect would not suffice to guide the judgment in such matters.

G. R. S. M.—Had we not better drop the term "Fifth-Rounder?" It barely escapes the charge of vulgarity; no one can successfully introduce such a term into a dignified sentence.

QUESTION CCCCIV.

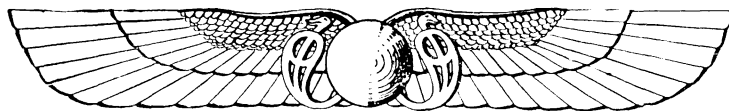
H. D.—Is the doctrine of reincarnation to be found in the Zoroastrian scriptures?

G. R. S. M.—In the fragments of the Avesta text, and the Zend commentaries (and in the later Pahlavi documents) preserved by the Pârsîs, the modern representatives of the very ancient Iranian tradition of the Âryan root-faith, the doctrine of reincarnation is said to be absent. These are, however, but a small portion of the original documents, and are said to date from the Sassanid period (c. A.D. 300). On the other hand Greek writers emphatically assert that the doctrine of reincarnation was one of the main tenets of the Magian tradition. The voluminous Zoroastrian scriptures are said to have been translated at Alexandria about the same time as the Jewish Pentateuch, somewhere in the third century B.C., and several Greek writers dealt with them at length. Porphyry (flor. 275 A.D.), refers to them, and also himself wrote at length on the subject. The famous pupil of Plotinus several times asserts that reincarnation was a basic doctrine of the Magians, a designation which we learn from a fragment of Chrysostom, meant the "wise," or "those who worshipped God in silence."

The subscription to the VĀHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 26, Charing Cross, S.W. No back numbers can be supplied.

All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.

THE VĀHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. VII.

LONDON, MARCH 1, 1898.

NO. 8.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

LETTER FROM THE NEW ZEALAND SECTION.

January 21st, 1898.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,

I have much pleasure in forwarding to you the following resolutions passed by the Convention of the New Zealand Section held in Auckland:

"That the New Zealand Section of the Theosophical Society in Convention assembled, sends its cordial greetings to the European Section, and wishes it every success in its work.

"That the hearty thanks of the New Zealand Section be accorded to Mr. G. R. S. Mead, the General Secretary of the European Section, for the copies of THE VĀHAN sent monthly to New Zealand."

Yours fraternally,
C. W. SANDERS, *General Secretary*.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY,
EUROPEAN SECTION, T.S.

ACTIVITIES.

New Branch.

Feb. 3rd. Charter granted this day to Philip Tovey, Fred Horne, J. Sims-White, Miss Margaret Stowell, Miss I. P. Whitfield, Miss Mary Grover, and W. P. Swainson to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society to be known as the Thornton Heath Branch.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to February 20th: T. Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.;

Baroness von Blome, £4 15s.; Mrs. Hamilton, 11s.; Mrs. Kennedy, £5; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; Mrs. Haig, 5s.; G. Graham, £5; H. D., 6s.; L. A., £2 2s. Total £19 1s. 6d.

Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been added to the Library:

Studies in Psychical Research, Frank Podmore, M.A., New York, 1897; *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*, A. Sprenger, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1869; *Fyra Världsreligionen*, Annie Besant, trs., Stockholm, 1898; *Seven Stanzas of Dzyan*, trs., Amsterdam, 1896; *Karma*, Annie Besant, trs., Stockholm, 1897; *Humanity and the Man*, Wm. Sharpe, M.D., London, 1898; *Genesis: its Authorship and Authenticity*, Charles Bradlaugh, 3rd ed., London, 1882; *The Man, the Seer, the Adept, the Avatar: T. L. Harris, the Inspired Messenger of the Cycle*, Respiro, 2nd ed., London, 1897; *Aufschlüsse zur Magie aus geprüften Erfahrungen*, Karl von Eckartshausen, München, 1791, 4 vols.

A. J. WILLSON.

Theosophical Lending Library.

Open alike to members and non-members of the Theosophical Society.

Terms of subscription: one month, 1s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W.

Subscribers are urgently requested to forward to the Librarian all changes of address. Want of care in this respect has caused the loss of a considerable number of books.

LILIAN LLOYD, *Librarian*.

Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: March 1st, *Spiritualism*, F. B. Bond; March 15th, *The Mystic Side of Art*, Mrs. Parsons; March 29th, *The Elemental Essence*. On the other Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of Hindu Philosophy, and Sundays, at 11.30 a.m., for study, and from 4 to 9 p.m. for enquirers.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, at 8.15 p.m.: March 22nd, *Sacrifice*, Mr. Cuthbertson. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month, and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: March 6th, *Reincarnation*, Mrs. Hodgson Smith; March 13th, *Karma*, Miss Shaw; March 20th, *The Law of Sacrifice*, Baker Hudson; March 27th, *The Ascent of Man*, C. N. Goode. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 p.m., at 67, Station Parade.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at No. 9 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 33, Belgrave Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. For information as to meetings, etc., apply to the Corresponding Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19,

Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: March 3rd, *The Rationale of Mental Healing*, Annie Besant; March 10th, *Jacob Boehme*, Bertram Keightley; March 17th, *The Mysteries among the Greeks*, G. R. S. Mead; March 24th, *Consciousness in the Lower Animals*, C. W. Leadbeater; March 31st, *The Light that faileth not*, Herbert Burrows. The lectures on March 3rd and 17th are open only to members of the Society.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on, alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: March 7th, *Savage Beliefs*, Mrs. Hooper; March 21st, *Atlantis*, W. C. Worsdell.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. General meetings at 79, Burdett Road, E., on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Private class on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m., at Millfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, 15, Worsley Road, Hampstead Heath.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays at 7.30 p.m.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 142, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8 p.m., alternately for lectures and the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square, on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor) on Thursdays, at 8 p.m. Alternate Thursdays, study of *The Astral Plane*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Monday evening at 8.15 p.m.

PARIS. Monthly lectures conducted by Com. D. A. Courmes, at the Salle des Mathurins, 36, rue des Mathurins, on Sundays, at 2 p.m. Meetings for enquirers at 3, rue du 29 Juillet (office of *Le Lotus Bleu*), on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, at 2.30 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays at 8 p.m., alternately at 38 and 58, rue de Veneuil.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "The Borough Arms" (Coffee Tavern), Bedford Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Information to be obtained from Miss Hunter, 6, Clarendon Gardens, Ramsgate.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 31, Via Lombardia, on Thursdays, at 6 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Oxford Temperance Hotel, St. James' Street, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH LODGE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thorntonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: March 1st, *The*

Therapists, G. R. S. Mead ; March 8th, *Man's Divine Instructors*, F. Horne ; March 15th, *Devotion and the Spiritual Life*, Mrs. Leo ; March 22nd, *A Lost Continent*, P. Tovey ; March 31st, Short Papers. Students' class on March 10th and 24th. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meetings at the "Vegetarier-Heim," 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

North of England Federation.

The North of England Branches held their usual quarterly meeting at Harrogate, on Feb. 12th, under the presidency of the General Secretary of the European Section. It was announced that since the last meeting the Birmingham Branch had been admitted to membership. After the usual report of Branch work, an address was given by the Chairman on "The Therapists" in which many interesting facts with regard to the mode of life and the work of this sect were dealt with.

A short discussion followed, after which Mr. Mead replied.

The evening session was opened by the reading of a paper by Mrs. Corbett entitled "Competition as a Stimulus to Progress." An interesting discussion ensued. Mr. Hodgson-Smith afterwards introduced a debate on "Does Interest in Theosophy tend to diminish our Interest in Family, Social and Political Life?" This topic was productive of an active interchange of opinion, many of the members joining in the debate.

In connection with his visit to the Federation meeting, Mr. Mead lectured at Harrogate, Middlesbrough, Bradford, Hornsea, Sheffield, Manchester and Birmingham, on either "The Mysteries among the Greeks," or "The Birth of a World-Religion."

W. H. THOMAS, *Hon. Sec.*

Thornton Heath Branch.

The Centre formed last June at Thornton Heath, Croydon, has now been transformed into a Branch, and at a general meeting held on Feb. 8th, various rules were adopted, and officers were elected as follows: President, Philip Tovey ; Vice-President, J. Sims-White ; Secretary, Fred Horne. The members intend to make the Branch a vigorous centre of Theosophical activity. Weekly lectures are regularly given, and a class for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom* meets fortnightly.

FRED. HORNE, *Hon. Sec.*

Margate Branch.

On Sunday evening, Jan. 30th, the members and friends of the Margate Lodge had the pleasure of hearing Miss Netta Weeks speak on "The Forces of Nature." A great many questions were put to Miss Weeks, and satisfactorily answered.

Members from Herne Bay and Ramsgate were present, and a very pleasant evening was passed.

MARION HOLMES, *Hon. Sec.*

Blavatsky Lodge.

As the Lodge persistently increases in numbers, it becomes increasingly difficult for its members to make acquaintance with one another. Such a gathering as that held on the evening of Feb. 8th, is therefore exceedingly helpful, smoothing away, as it did, a great part of the difficulty. This reception, given by the President and Council of the Lodge to its members and associates, was very largely attended, and in every sense of the word the evening was a success.

On Jan. 20th, Mr. Keightley, in an interesting lecture upon "Imagination," drew attention to the best way of training it, and the importance of its assistance in the cultivation of the higher faculties of the mind.

Mr. Mead, on Jan. 27th, gave a highly instructive lecture on "The Therapists," that curious sect which exhibited so many points analogous to the tenets of the Pythagoreans and the Essenes, and the ethical teachings of which had so much in common with those of Theosophy.

Mrs. Besant lectured on Feb. 3rd and 17th, upon "The Nervous System and Consciousness." She pointed out, in connection with the sympathetic and cerebro-spinal systems, that in Hatha Yoga power was gained only over the former system, while in Raja Yoga, the latter was brought under control.

"The Cross" was the subject of Mr. Leadbeater's lecture on Feb. 10th, which explained the occult meaning underlying the varying forms of the cross.

Mrs. Besant.

MRS. BESANT lectures as follows:—March 6th and 13th, Queen's Hall (smaller), Langham Place. 3rd, Blavatsky Lodge. 4th, Pioneer Club. 7th, Hampstead Lodge. 8th, Somerville Club. During February she lectured at the Queen's Hall, Blavatsky Lodge, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Nottingham, and Tunbridge Wells; also to the Spiritualistic Alliance, the Despard Club, Wandsworth, the Liberal Social Union, and the London Lodge, T.S. On March 14th she leaves England, lecturing in Rome on the 18th, and going on to India, returning at the end of June in time for the European Convention.

Brighton Branch.

Mr. Leadbeater held a most successful drawing-room meeting in connection with the Brighton Branch, on Sunday, Feb. 20th, the subject being "The Astral Plane." We keep up our meetings and are now struggling with a weekly one.

The Hove Public Library now receives *The Theosophical Review* every month.

A. KING, *Hon. Sec.*

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCCIV.

H. A. V.—Do the mental and causal bodies, when on their corresponding planes, retain any semblance of the human form? At all events such semblance seems to disappear at a certain stage of the ego's ascent, for in "Dreams" (Lucifer, Vol. XVII., page 237) the causal body of an Adept is described as "a magnificent sphere of living light, whose radiant glory no words can ever tell."

Would it be possible to give an idea what the appearance of the "divine beings" can be likened to?

A. B.—The mental and causal bodies are not in the human form when working with the physical body; they interpenetrate it, and, extending beyond it in every direction, surround it with a "sphere of living light." This sphere-like appearance of the invisible bodies—the parts outside the physical body forming the aura—has given rise to the name "auric egg," applied by some to the aura. The shape is really ovoid, the human form standing in the centre. Needless to say that these bodies are on their own planes always, as the planes interpenetrate each other. When the soul withdraws from the physical and astral bodies and shapes the mental body into a Mâyavi-Rûpa, or body of illusion, to serve as an independent vehicle of consciousness, it is usual, but not necessary, to mould it into a likeness of the physical body, the causal body still surrounding this glorified human form as a sphere of light.

It is practically impossible to describe the causal body or to give any idea of the appearance of the "divine beings" alluded to. Many attempts to do so have been made in many Scriptures, but when the writer has departed from the "likeness of a man" his descriptions have too often bordered perilously on the grotesque, and have but offered points of attack to the scoffer.

QUESTION CCCCVI.

S.—What is the meaning and derivation of the word *Devachan*?

V. M.—As Madame Blavatsky remarks (*Secret Doctrine*, Vol III., page 408), *Devachan* is the Tibetan word for the Sanskrit *Sukhāvati*. Notwithstanding, there remains a tenacious tradition amongst our members that the element *Deva* in "*Devachan*" is connected with the Sanskrit word "*Deva*," and the word has even been publicly explained as being formed by "*Deva*" (Sanskrit) = a god, and "*khan*" (Tibetan) = place; its meaning being, according to this explanation, the place of the gods—*Devaloka*. This is altogether wrong, and I here give the right etymology of the word.

Its first part is formed by the Tibetan word *bde*. *ba*., which corresponds exactly with the Sanskrit *sukhā*. Its significations are (a) as a verb: to be well, to be happy; (b) as a noun: happiness;

(c) as an adjective: happy, good, favourable, beautiful, etc., etc.

Its proper root is *bde*; *ba* being the usual particle which follows most Tibetan words.

As to *khan*, this really is a Tibetan word for place, but it has nothing to do with *Devachan*, as the *ch* in the latter word is a transcription for a sound like the Sanskrit *ch* in ordinary transcription. The Tibetan word *chan* signifies: having, being provided with; and so corresponds with the Sanskrit suffix *vat* (*f*: *vati*).

So the word *bde ba chan* (pronounced *de bachan*, i.e., with Sanskrit pronunciation of *ch*), is the exact translation of *sukhāvati* and is pure Tibetan.

It occurs amongst others in *Gyalrabs*, a history of the kings of Tibet, and Köppen mentions it in *Die Religion des Buddha* (II. 27). See also Jäschke's great dict. 270 II. and the last answer to Question XXV. in THE VĀHAN (Second Series, No. 5, December, 1891).

QUESTION CCCCVII.

G.—"I have been very ill and suffering, and as I lay in my bed enduring pain, I thought the Theosophical dogma of re-incarnation a horrible one, and I did long for a religion teaching utter annihilation, extinction. 'To cease to be' seemed to me the one and only thing to be desired. One night, in which I was rather light-headed, I found myself, first in heaven (the old-fashioned theological heaven), very cold, very white and green, all icicles and ice, and very, very cold; the angels half clad and shivering! Then I was in hell, where it was warm and close, and very black and dirty; the devils sitting round a stove (in the cinders)—it was all most vivid. I wished to stay in neither place, nor did I wish to come here again." (Extract from private letter.)

A. A. W.—Of course you are very tired of the sick body, and the worried mind which bothers you, and you don't like the chilly heaven nor the dirty hell any better; that is all quite natural. Well, our doctrine goes with you so far; all that you are so tired of will be annihilated, never fear. It is hard to realise that all that will resolve into the elements, and yet that you will be left alive, very much alive, and all the worry gone with the brain you have left behind you; and it is especially hard in sickness. Then you will have your rest, a good long rest. If you don't fancy the popular Christian heaven (I don't!) you can make yourself one which does please you, and find the company you like. *To wish is to have* in the world where thought is the only reality.

And you will stay in heaven just as long as you want to stay. Don't fancy any capricious power will turn you out and shut the door upon you against your will. But if there is any seed of immortality in you, there will come a time when you are tired of that too! You will have studied over this past life till you have learned all it has to teach, and begin to feel there are possibilities within your soul of something more and better than the

mere "golden streets" and "mansions" which any Heaven can give—to take your own image, you will begin to feel it chilly there, and long for the warm earth-life once more. It is on earth, not in Heaven, that the fight goes on which gains us immortality; and when you feel you cannot keep out of it any longer—that you must snatch up another body and mind to "have another go at it" (to use a vulgar but expressive phrase), then, and not before, will the time come to return.

But you will not come back to the "*misère*" which has so wearied you in your present life. Whilst you have been resting, the world will have moved on—the new race of men developed. The new body will not only be fresh, young and strong, but of far finer material, and with far more delicate senses; the new brain alive through and through to the promptings of the higher soul. You will understand then what a pity it would have been to have missed the glory and the power of the new life, the company of the new men around you, and the new and vigorous growth upwards which comes of it all.

Annihilation is possible—in a sense—but most undesirable. There are plenty of people about us who have contrived to put out the spark of the divine life in them, and for whom (sorrowful thought!) the popular Christian Heaven, or whatever corresponding place of enjoyment the enlightened followers of the Higher Criticism may invent for themselves, is completely sufficing. If this be so; if they have not one single desire to aid in the growth of humanity into Divinity—if they have not one single aspiration for such growth in themselves, but are perfectly satisfied with their selfish bliss; what can come of them but that, as the life they have brought with them from this world slowly fades out, they themselves shall slowly fade with it into a blank unconsciousness which is annihilation for the almost countless æons of this human period—their place lost, their chance ended! But, as long as we have one hope left of something better to come of us hereafter, I think we can hardly, even in time of sickness or suffering, seriously desire this!

QUESTION CCCCVIII.

M. M.—Has the moon reached the ultimate stage of materiality?

B. K.—I know of no ground upon which the conception of an "ultimate" stage of materiality can be based. In any given cycle or system some one stage can be found which relatively to the other stages of that same cycle or system is the most densely material of that series. But how far, or, indeed, whether at all, it may be possible to compare distinct and separate cycles or systems with one another, in respect to the density of their several material maxima, is very doubtful; in any case, it could be possible only from the standpoint of a consciousness which should be able simultaneously to embrace all the cycles or systems to be compared, in one and the same purview. Under

these circumstances, it does not seem possible to attempt to give any very definite answer to this question. But some considerations present themselves, which may serve to guide our thoughts on such a subject.

H. P. B. states in *The Secret Doctrine* that the moon is slowly disintegrating, and will have entirely vanished by the close of the Fifth Round. Hence the moon must now weigh less than it once did, *i.e.*, it must be less rather than more dense. So if we take density as a measure of materiality, we must therefore say that the moon is now less densely material than it has been at earlier periods.

But it should be remembered that density is a definite conception, and represents a measurable quantity, while I have encountered the suggestion that "materiality is not the same as 'density,'" and in that case I confess myself at present to be without any very clear idea of what it then signifies, or how it is to be measured.

QUESTION CCCCIX.

M. M.—What is the difference between a mental image and an astro-mental image?

B. K.—The questioner will find his answer on pages 23 *et seq.* of Mrs. Besant's Manual on *Karma*.

Briefly, in the terminology there employed, the "mental image" is the "trace," the impress left upon the individual character by a thought, whether pure or associated with desire.

Let us take a thought not associated with desire. It leaves a permanent trace in the nature of the individual—a trace or impress which can always be set vibrating afresh and so reproduce the former thought. This is a "mental image." Further, the original thought, or any revival of it, will create in *mānasic* matter an external, objective thought-form or "artificial elemental" in the mental world—longer or shorter-lived, as the case may be.

But suppose the thought has desire in it. Then as before, the "mental image," the trace of its having been, remains part of the individual character; but the "thought-form" or "artificial elemental" in this case, does not remain a purely *mānasic* entity, but owing to the presence of desire, it at once attracts round itself astral matter and astral elemental essence, thus becoming manifest and perceptible on the astral plane, becoming in short an astral "artificial elemental" or as it is called in the Manual in question an "astro-mental image." The whole treatment of this subject on pages 23 to 43 of the Manual in question is deserving of the closest and most careful study.

QUESTION CCCCX.

O. H.—If a person gives way to an involuntary tendency to slip into the astral world, is he likely to fall a prey to elementals, nature-spirits, and earth-bound souls, and to finally become their

dupe? If there be any danger of this kind, what is the best way of resisting the tendency?

A. B.—This involuntary slipping into the astral world is generally preceded by a passive, dreamy state, during which the pulses of the physical life throb more and more languidly; the oncoming of this state can be prevented by the exercise of the will, and by setting-up positive thought. It is not well to slip involuntarily into any state, least of all into the astral world, for if that world is to be trodden with safety the will must be steadfast, firm and strong. A person passing into it with the will semi-paralysed is certainly in danger of being affected by elementals and by earth-bound souls, who would be likely to play upon and delude him, and in the case of the second class of entities—even to obsess the physical body, left defenceless by the vagrant astral. Nature-spirits would not be likely to take much notice of the wanderer, save to keep out of his way, or, at the worst, to play some harmless Puck-like trick, if he seems likely to be easily frightened.

It may be well to remark that no one can pass safely into the astral world until his life is pure and his feelings well under control. A person of impure physical life—profligate, gluttonous or intemperate, or with any of the passions which in their excess give rise to these vices having still any place in his astral body—draws about him in the astral world elementals of a terrifying and dangerous kind, and earth-bound souls who, during physical life, were addicted to evil ways. These throng round him when he enters the astral world, and, as the latter especially are of a malignant character, the astral visitant is likely to find himself in sore straits. If the person be of purified life but of uncontrolled feelings, he will create for himself formidable difficulties. When a gust of feeling sweeps over the physical body all that can be used for mischief is the residue of force left free after the astral energy has moved the dense matter of the body; by far the greater part of the force has been exhausted in setting in motion the heavy nervous apparatus. But a similar force set free on the astral plane loses but little of its energy in moving the fine matter of the astral body, and is almost entirely available for the production of external effects. Hence an ill-balanced, uncontrolled person is dangerous in the astral world, and is likely to do much injury to himself and others. It is far better that he should remain on the physical plane, weighted by the cumbrous physical body, than that he should perambulate the astral plane as an active volcano.

QUESTION CCCCXI.

G. R.—*Why is Buddhism spoken of by scholars as agnostic and negative? Is there any truth in the statement?*

J. C. C.—It is only the so-called Southern Buddhism as recorded in the Pāli Piṭakas, which is supposed by some scholars to be agnostic and negative in tone. I do not think any scholar will

ever venture to suggest that the Northern phase of the teachings of the Buddha is anything but emphatically positive in every respect.

Even with regard, however, to what has been called Southern Buddhism, it is not quite correct to regard it as negative. The Pāli Canon contains the grandest possible descriptions of Nirvāṇa, which is described as "uncreate," and "immortal." It is this positive Nirvāṇa to which the Buddhist aspires. But inasmuch as it is really beyond speech, it must be indicated as "not this" and "not this," if one is to avoid misleading. Even then one is not quite free from the charge of being illogical. Silence alone is the best answer to all questions regarding Nirvāṇa. But humanity has not yet evolved high enough to be beyond the necessity of speech, and so we must speak if we are to communicate with one another at all. Therefore the compilers of the Pāli books have tried to speak even of the unspeakable, the Nirvāṇa, and in so doing they have used the loftiest language to describe its nature.

Though they have doubtless failed in their object so far as it is concerned with description, yet they have succeeded in showing that Nirvāṇa is not only not negative but that it is the only thing positive and real. I have often wondered how, in the face of the statements contained in the Pāli books, the scholars could ever assert that Buddhism was negative. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is as positive as anything we can find in religion. (See Udānaṃ, VIII.)

Coming down from the consideration of that highest goal, we find in the Pāli books how one can gain definite and positive knowledge of post-mortem conditions, of the other beings which crowd the universe, though invisible to the physical eye. We hear of different worlds and states of consciousness and divine powers, all as real and positive as anything can be. Buddha prescribes most definite methods of training, whereby we can pass out of the body in a body "formed of mind" which is drawn out of the gross physical encasement "as sword from the sheath." (See Sāmaññaphala and numerous other parts of the Scriptures.)

Then when the aspirant is able to get out of the body he can visit at will different regions of the universe, converse with gods and demons, and gather knowledge at first hand of things invisible to the ordinary sight. There are also definite methods prescribed for the recovery of the latent memory of past incarnations. Thus any charge of indefiniteness is not only unfair, but shows ignorance or gross misunderstanding of the Scriptures.

The only ground on which agnosticism can be predicated of Buddhism, is the fact that Buddha never favoured speculation on transcendental and abstract problems. Whenever such questions arose He either held His peace or answered them in such a way as not to commit Himself to any opinion on either side. But this persistent discouragement of speculation and inference on transcendental questions is not peculiar to Buddha. It is also the fundamental idea of the greatest of all Hindu philosophical systems—the Vedānta. In the Vedānta

"anumāna," or inference and speculation, has hardly, if ever, received any encouragement. For inference is possible only of things the like of which we have *observed*. If we have not observed things transcendental, how can we speculate upon them? This will hardly be understood in the West, where philosophy means speculation; "philosophy" in India means the science of the principle of things based on the first-hand observation of facts on the noumenal planes.

But in the case of the Vedānta, the Teacher could draw upon the recorded knowledge and observed facts of the previous sages, as evidence, *i.e.*, he could fall back upon the Shrutis, or Scriptures. Therefore there was no necessity for him to remain silent on metaphysical questions. He could teach them as theories and tell the students how to verify them. Buddha, on the other hand, had to refrain from all allusions to the Scriptures; because when He flourished the people had become letter-bound, and the Scriptures acted as hindrances rather than helps. Therefore He taught His disciples only the method—the Noble Eightfold Path, as it is called—whereby they could develop the inner powers, and thus know and see the truth as it is in nature. And this Noble Eightfold Path is Yoga, pure and simple, and it is not different from the Yoga taught by the Vedāntic Teacher.

It is, as every occult student knows, the Gñāna Yoga, or the Yoga of Wisdom. As regards the other two forms of Yoga, Buddha remained silent.

Thus we find that Buddhism is no more negative than is the Vedānta. Only in the case of the Vedānta the Teacher mentions beforehand most of the metaphysical truths which the student will verify by the practice of Yoga; whereas Buddha gives simply the Yoga, the Path, without saying much beforehand about the metaphysical truths which the student will recognise when the Path is trodden. He does so because He has seen the danger of giving transcendental ideas before the student has developed the powers to verify them, before he has prepared the instruments wherewith to perform the experiments. He has seen that truth told to the unprepared has often been misunderstood; for the transcendental cannot be fully expressed in words. But, unfortunately, His silence on certain metaphysical truths, while saving the unprepared from their misconception, has led them to deny such truths altogether, has made them agnostics and sceptics. This, it seems to me, is the reason of the charge of agnosticism made against Buddhism, or rather, against the modern misconceptions of it.

QUESTION CCCCXII.

E.—What is the difference between "knowledge" and "wisdom"? How does the devachanic experience of the ego change the one into the other?

A. B.—"Knowledge" seems to be the result of making, comparing, and reflecting upon, observations. We observe facts, and store them in our memories; we arrange and classify them by com-

parison; by reflection we reach conclusions upon them, and we often make inferences which lead to new observations. Thus a man may become learned, a walking encyclopædia. Of such gathering there is no end; were everything in the physical world within our knowledge, the astral and mānasic realms would remain to be studied; were these mastered, the nearest planet would offer a new field; and so on, on and on, through the immensities of space. "Wisdom" appears rather to be the result of the distilled essence of experience, assimilated by the soul. It does not depend on a knowledge of facts, but on an insight into the principles of nature. It is the fruit of profound reflection on causes rather than on effects, and shews itself in ripened judgment, not in keen observation. It is a sign of maturity in the soul, and is always accompanied by peace and balance, whereas a feverish unrest generally characterises knowledge. It belongs to Buddhi, not to Manas, and uses intuition, not reasoning, for its growth. Knowledge increases in extent, wisdom in depth.

The devachanic experience of the ego cannot, it seems to me, as a general rule be regarded as changing knowledge into wisdom. In the latest stages of its growth this may indeed be done, but until these are reached it appears to be engaged in Devachan in building up faculties, capacities and powers, in registering conclusions that appear as innate ideas at the next birth, thus forming the mental and moral character with which it returns to earth. The knowledge of facts is stored in the causal body, and the capacity to acquire knowledge of similar facts is formed for the next mental body. But the growth of wisdom must wait until the buddhic consciousness begins to stir into activity, and in its evolution love plays a greater part than knowledge.

QUESTION CCCCXIII.

R. E.—(a) Are the disembodied spirits—who are awaking to conscious life on the astral plane, especially in the lower regions—able to see and follow events taking place upon the physical plane?

(b) If the power to do this (*i.e.*, to see and follow events), varies in the different individual cases, what principle determines this variation?

(c) Are disembodied individuals able to utilize means for study (such as books), belonging to the physical plane, or are the books they study only imaginary?

(d) Do the disembodied see this physical world as it is, or the astral counterpart plus beings and objects belonging to the astral regions?

(e) Seeing, then, that physical objects have a totally different aspect when seen astrally, what determines and guides the visual power of the disembodied?

C. W. L.—(a) There are three sub-divisions of the astral plane from which it might be possible, though not desirable, for them to do so to some extent. On the lowest sub-plane the man is usually fully occupied in other ways, and concerns

himself with little that takes place in the physical world, except, as explained in our literature, when he haunts vile resorts; but in the sixth sub-division (counting from above downwards) he is in very close touch with the physical plane, and may quite probably be conscious of it. In rapidly diminishing degree this consciousness is also possible as he ascends through the fifth and fourth sub-planes, but beyond that it would be only by the special effort to communicate through a medium that contact with the physical world could be gained, and from the highest sub-plane even that would be extremely difficult.

(b) It would be determined by the character and disposition of the person, as well as by the stage of development to which he had attained. Most of those who are ordinarily called good people, living out their lives to their natural end, would sweep through all those lower stages before awakening to astral consciousness, and would therefore be extremely unlikely to be conscious of anything physical at all. Some few, however, even of these are drawn back into touch with this world by great anxiety about some one left behind.

Less developed entities would have in their composition more of the matter of these lower sub-planes, and would be much more likely to be able to follow what goes on upon earth. Most of all would this be the case if they were people whose whole train of thought was essentially of this world—who had in them little or nothing of spiritual aspiration or of high intellect. It is to be remembered also that this downward tendency grows with the using, and that a man who was at first happily unconscious of what lies below him may be so unfortunate as to have his attention attracted to it (frequently by selfish manifestations of the grief of the survivors), and will then exert his will to keep himself from rising out of touch with this life to which he no longer belongs; and in such a case his power of seeing earthly things would almost certainly increase for a time, and he would be likely to suffer mentally when he presently found such power slipping from him. Such suffering would of course be entirely due to the irregularity introduced into the kāmāloka life by his own action, for it is absolutely unknown in the ordinary and orderly evolution after death.

(c) They certainly could not utilize physical books unless they had developed a lower sight in the highly undesirable manner just mentioned, though in many cases they might be able to assimilate ideas direct from the mind of some student interested in their special subjects. The books spoken of as used upon the highest sub-plane, however, are by no means imaginary, but are real astral duplicates of those down here.

(d) Neither the departed nor we on this plane ever see the physical world as it is at all, for we (or most of us) see only the solid and liquid portions

thereof, and are altogether blind to the far vaster gaseous and etheric parts; while the departed do not see the physical matter at all, nor even the whole astral counterpart of it, but only that portion of the latter which belongs to the particular sub-plane upon which they are at the time. The only man who ever gets anything like a really comprehensive view of affairs is he who has developed etheric and astral sight while still alive in the physical body.

(e) The disembodied, as has already been explained, does not see the physical object, and would not as a rule recognize its astral counterpart with any certainty, even when he saw it. He would usually require considerable experience before he could clearly identify objects, and any attempt which he made to deal with them would be liable to be very vague and uncertain, as is often seen in haunted houses where stone-throwing, trampling, or vague movements of physical matter take place. His power of identification is thus largely a question of experience and intelligence, but it is little likely to be perfect unless he has known something of such matters before death.

QUESTION CCCCXIV.

J. A. R.—Is it correct to suppose that the ego chooses the manner and circumstances of its next incarnation? If so, does it not seem like haphazard or ignorant selection in cases wherein the lives are extinguished shortly after birth or before the ego can possibly have had any appreciable experience? And, if the ego does not choose, what power then does? Is it a waste of power as well as of human lives?

B. K.—No. The ego of the ordinary man does not choose the “manner and circumstances” of its incarnation, otherwise than in the making of the karma which leads to them. It needs that an ego should be really advanced and fully awake on its own plane, before it can conceivably take any active or intelligent part in the matter of its incarnation, and that stage is hardly reached before the first or even the second step of Initiation on the Path has been taken. Even then the choice is a limited one, its range depending upon the nature and character of the still unexhausted karma which the ego has left to work out.

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All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.

THE VÂHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

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LONDON, APRIL 1, 1898.

NO. 9.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

NOTICE.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUES,

I desire to give you timely notice of a slight change, which has now been contemplated for some time, in the office of the General Secretary.

As many of you are aware, for years past there has been a battle for time in the cosmos of your General Secretary, fought out between his official duties and his literary labours. At first the latter were pinned in a corner, and only sufficient time could be snatched for a hasty and superficial article or paragraph in the midst of constant interruption. This was at a period when we were all younger, and thought it our duty to be ever feverishly on the double, with a constant supply of unnecessary alarms and excursions to persuade us that we were doing something. But for the last two or three years the Society has settled down to a more regular stride, and seems to have at last got into its head some idea of the point on which it is to direct its march. I have consequently been gradually giving more time to that special literary work in comparative Theosophy, for which I have some small ability, though no one is more deeply conscious than myself that it should be in more capable hands. But, alas, the special workers that I hoped would appear, have so far not come to the front, and the work brooks no delay, for it is above all things important that a healthy all-round view of general Theosophy in the past as well as in the present should be kept before the eyes of our students, rather than that our thought should run in a certain groove. Now this work, to be of any lasting utility, not only requires time, but indeed demands the whole time of a man, and not only of one individual, but of many. I have therefore, during the last two years, more or less, been com-

pelled to reduce my General Secretary's work to a minimum, by distributing it among a number of willing helpers; but a point has now been reached when I can no longer consent to call myself General Secretary, seeing that others could do so much more work if they held the office. I am, therefore, asking the Executive Committee to relieve me of my official duties by May 1st, and to take as my substitute our friend and colleague the Hon. Otway Cuffe, until the convention in July, when you will formally elect my successor.

This step has been taken only after serious deliberation with others, and has the approval of our President-Founder. It is hardly necessary to tell you that there will really be no change except one of name as far as I am concerned; I shall do the same work of lecturing as before, see as much of you all as before; I shall change neither my way of life nor my dwelling-place; the only change will be that some one else will have an opportunity of doing more work. Everything is in order, the Section is healthy, the times are peaceful, as you are well aware. Finally in taking my official farewell of you all, my dear colleagues, I would thank you from the bottom of my heart for your ever kindly consideration and willing co-operation, and would still sign myself your friend and obedient servant,

G. R. S. MEAD.

EXECUTIVE NOTICE.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE,
January 24th, 1898.

The wording of Section 5 of the Revised Rules of the Society, approved by the General Council, July 9th, 1896, having given rise to misunderstanding as to the authority of a Branch President in the matter of the issue of Diplomas of Membership, the undersigned, by virtue of the general authority given him in Section 12, hereby declares the Constitutional meaning of the Rule to be as

follows: after the word "membership," in line 3, read "bearing the signature of the President-Founder and the seal of the Society, and countersigned by either the General Secretary of the Section or the Recording Secretary T.S., according as the applicant resides within a sectionalised or non-sectionalised territory, shall be issued to the member."

The Council had no intention to signify that a Diploma could be issued by a Branch President independently of the constitutionally prescribed officers of the Headquarters or Section, nor that his signature should be appended to it at all.

General Secretaries of Sections will please cause this Notice to be communicated to their Branch Officers.

H. S. OLCOTT, P.T.S.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE "DEATH OF THE SOUL."

J. M.—I wish to refer to Question CCCC. of J. A. R. in the February VĀHAN, as follows:

"It is said that the soul can dwell in the unseen worlds while its body goes on living on earth; and that there are many soulless men, both wicked materialists and those of advanced holiness, among us. What is the meaning and what is the proof of this?"

and to B. K.'s answer to the same. Judging from B. K.'s remarks, he does not regard the theosophical doctrine of the loss of the soul as being of great importance, and evidently thinks that it is based on a remark made somewhere by H. P. B. as to one's meeting "soulless men and women every day in our streets." As I understand it, this is one of the most important doctrines in the whole range of esoteric teaching; it is fraught with the most profound and terrible truths; it is an aspect of one of the dark sides of nature; and was *deliberately* taught by H. P. B. It is so taught in the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, from page 510 to page 529 inclusive, and to this I would refer B. K. I regard this doctrine as of the greatest importance, and have been teaching it in public and private lectures; and if I am wrong in my belief as to its terrible reality, I would like to be set right. In the article beginning at page 510, "On Exoteric 'Blinds'" and "The Death of the Soul," H. P. B. says: "But now I have permission to give it to all, revealing its tenets first to the Esotericists, and then, when they have assimilated them thoroughly, it will be their duty to teach others this special tenet of the 'second death,' and warn all the Theosophists of its dangers. The pledge of secrecy, therefore, will no longer extend over this one solitary article of the esoteric creed." The article mentioned, and also the article following it, headed "The Philosophical Rationale of the Tenet," make it perfectly plain to me that the divine immortal triad of a human being can be eternally severed from the lower personality,

making personal immortality conditional. She says: "Speaking on esoteric lines, every irrevocably materialistic person is a *dead man*, a living automaton, in spite of his being endowed with great brain power." Again: "Thus the chief and most important secret with regard to that 'second death' in the esoteric teaching was and is to this day the terrible possibility of the *death* of the soul, that is, its severance from the Ego during a person's life-time." What becomes of the lower personality in the case of the severance from it of its Ego, and what becomes of the Ego itself after the severance, is thoroughly explained in the third volume in the pages referred to; and I understand it is now the duty of Theosophists to thoroughly understand and teach this important doctrine of the possibility of the "loss of the soul" through the persistent ignoring of spiritual things, as well as by a criminal career of positive vice. I gather from the teaching of H. P. B. referred to, that soulless men and women are more common in this materialistic age than is generally supposed. The soul, she says, "begins by becoming virtually dead during the life of the body, and ends by dying completely—that is, by being *annihilated as a complete immortal soul*. Such a catastrophe may often happen long years before one's physical death: 'We elbow soulless men and women at every step in life.' And when death arrives . . . there is no more a soul (the reincarnating Spiritual Ego) to liberate . . . for it has fled years before." Again she says: "I gave the outlines of the occult doctrine in *The Theosophist* of October, 1881, and November, 1882, but could not go into details, and therefore got very much embarrassed when called upon to explain. Yet I had written there plainly enough about 'useless drones,' those who refuse to become co-workers with nature, and who perish by millions during the manvantaric life-cycle; those, as in the case in hand, who prefer to be suffering in Avichi under kârmic law, rather than give up their lives in evil, and, finally, those who are co-workers with nature for destruction. These are thoroughly wicked and depraved men, but yet as highly intellectual and acutely *spiritual* for evil as those who are spiritual for good. The (lower) Egos of these may escape the law of final destruction or annihilation for ages to come."

"Thus we find two kinds of soulless beings on earth; those who have lost their Higher Ego in the present incarnation, and those who are born soulless, having been severed from their Spiritual Soul in the preceding birth. The former are candidates for Avichi; the latter are 'Mr. Hydes,' whether *in* or *out* of human bodies, whether incarnated, or hanging about as invisible or potent ghouls. In such men cunning develops to an enormous degree, and no one except those who are familiar with the doctrine would suspect them of being soulless, for neither Religion nor Science has the least suspicion that such facts actually exist in Nature."

Henry Drummond, in his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, in the chapter on "Degenera-

tion," teaches that the soul may become atrophied by the non-exercise of its functions. The soul that Drummond means is the Antahkarana of Theosophy, the silver thread which unites the higher and the lower Manas; when this thread becomes broken then the higher soul departs. Did not Jesus also teach this doctrine when he said: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

I believe this is a terrible possibility. If I misunderstand the doctrine, however, I would like to be put right.

B. K.—In reference to J. M.'s letter, I should like to enter a protest, both on my own behalf and that of others, against the tendency displayed to forget that in the THE VĀHAN one is answering a definite and specific question, and not penning a disquisition upon the subject in general. In my reply to Question CCCC., I was trying to deal with the specific point raised, and in no sense writing upon the problem of the loss of the soul in general.

In the next place, anyone reading what H. P. B. has written, with a knowledge of her style and phraseology and a familiarity with the presuppositions she always assumes as known to her readers, will, I think, see that the phrase I used, "units to millions," is amply justified both by the facts and by her own teachings. Thus to take the passage quoted beginning: "Speaking on esoteric," etc.; the first part of this sentence is *obviously* metaphorical, and not meant to be read literally; as to the latter portion, the "death of the soul" is undoubtedly a "possibility," as she herself says, but certainly is a rare and relatively very abnormal occurrence; and a careful analysis of the teaching given will be found to reduce the cases of its occurrence to the types mentioned in my original reply.

Each man must form his own conclusions for himself, but it seems to me—to touch only on one point—that J. M. has applied to all *three* of the classes spoken of by H. P. B. what seems obviously and plainly to be said of one only. Thus the "drones who perish by millions" are plainly the two-fifths of humanity who fail to pass beyond the middle point of the Fifth Round, and have to wait in a state of suspended animation, to resume their evolution when the new manvantara dawns. Again in another place H. P. B. speaks of a life of suffering on earth as "Avichi" or "Myalpa"—clearly by analogy only—and makes it plain that only in a few very rare cases is the "immortality in Satan," or *true* Avichi reached, which is what follows on the "loss of the soul." This seems to me perfectly plain on the face of her teaching, and she herself speaks of the "great abyss" between the "venal" wickedness of our present age and society and the intensity of intellectual and spiritual evil required to cause the "loss of the soul." So that I still maintain my position, *viz.*, that both according to the facts and to H. P. B.'s teaching the "loss of the soul" is excessively rare, occurring in cases barely to be counted as "units among millions";

and in that somewhat more cheerful view of the case I am glad to say that the wisest and best-informed of our students agree with me.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE—ACCOMMODATED!

DEAR A. A. W.—Your attempt to smooth the agitated feelings expressed by G.'s question (CCCCVII.), should call forth the sympathy of all Theosophists; but at the same time it cannot but suggest thoughts to the one who would make his philosophy a reality in this present tangible existence.

To tell a man his sickness is the result of past misconduct will *not* help him to bear it, nor take the pain away; neither will it afford him consolation to hold out a hope for the entire eradication of his disease in some future body, that being the result of something he knows nothing about.

No! The teacher in this lower existence must be the helper in some form or other of the pain and suffering we see around us, and up to now dogmas have not done this!

The only cry that awoke the sympathy of Jesus was, "Lord, that I may see; Master, that I may be healed of my infirmity."

And where is the religion that will say, "*I will*, be thou made clean"?

When the majority of us have advanced to that stage of being where the material plane ceases to affect our highly civilised organisms, then we may hope for a withdrawal of the physical atoms of pain and suffering. But before that particular stage is reached, we should try to remove that which is now a stumbling block to so many, preventing them from using those faculties which are as necessary for their poor bodily advancement, as they will be later on for the emancipated soul. A perfect mind can exist only in a perfect body. Let us then begin with this body that we now hold, and be co-workers with nature in the life that now *is*, and so we shall attain the perfection of that which is to come; being quite assured that where there is knowledge there is power, and that he who withholds the power draws a veil over the face of knowledge, leading the little ones in paths unsuited to their fragile steps.

M. D.

A. A. W.—I most fully sympathise with our amiable correspondent. I do not think there is a man or woman in the world more greedy for "comfort" than myself; albeit I doubt whether if we were put to our definitions, any of us could get much beyond Ancient Pistol's: "Accommodated; that is, when a man is, as they say, accommodated; or when a man is—being—whereby—he may be thought to be accommodated! which is an excellent thing!"

But what can I answer? I have no tincture to make pain pleasant; and, if I had, I would keep the fatal secret close. If there is indeed anything I have learned by experience it is just that this

desire for comfort is nothing but the beast's outcry against the whip and spur of the Higher Ego. It is a hard saying—I admit it; but truth is truth. Perfect *bodily* comfort means death to all physical progress, and in all higher worlds of which I can gain a glimpse the analogy holds. If old women of *both* sexes have made of Christianity a religion of "comfort" such was not its Founder's idea of it. Of all His sayings recorded in the Gospels perhaps none bear more distinctly the impress of a Master's teaching than these two: "I came to send *fire* upon the earth," and once more: "I came not to bring peace, but a *sword*." For my own part, all my quarrel with modern Christianity lies in this very thing—that its ministers have quenched Christ's fire and buried Christ's sword, and devoted themselves simply to making things comfortable. Our vocation as Theosophists is to stand for Christ *against* Christianity, as it now exists—to make a true Reformation in it; not a change of dead doctrine but the rekindling of the Fire. And the first thing the Fire will burn up is that insidious longing for comfort—to sleep ourselves away into the Abyss!

ACTIVITIES.

Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been placed in this Library and are now acknowledged with thanks:

Clerk's Foreign Theological Library. New Series, Vol. XX., *Encyclopædia of Theology*, Dr. J. F. Râbiger, trs. by the Rev. John Macpherson, M.A., 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1884; C. F. T. L. Fourth Series, Vol. XXXVII., *A Comparative View of the Doctrines and Confessions of the various Communities of Christendom*, Dr. George Benedict Winer, Edinburgh, 1881; C. F. T. L. New Series, Vol. XLIII., *A History of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ*, Emil Schûrer, D.D., M.A., Div. I., Vol. II. Div. II., Vols. I., II., III.; *Phantasms of the Living*, E. Gurney, F. H. Myers, F. Podmore, 2 vols., London, 1886; *Vedic Religion*, Vol. I., *The Bhagavad Gîtâ, with the Commentary by Shri Shankarâchârya*, trs. by A. Mahâdeva Shâstri, B.A., Pt. I., Madras, 1897; *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms and of useful words of British India*, H. H. Wilson, M.A., F.R.S., London, 1855; *The Book of the Dead, The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day*. Egyptian text. Theban recension, ed. by E. A. Wallis Budge, London, 1898. Do. *Vocabulary*, Do. *Translation*; *The Swâmi Vivekânanda's Addresses* (presented by "M."), December, 1896, to November, 1897; *La Langue Sacrée. La Cosmoglyphie. Le Mystère de la Création*, Emile Soldi, Paris, 1897; *Die Hebraischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher. Ein Beitrag zur Literaturgeschichte des Mittelalters, meist nach handschriftlichen Quellen*, von Moritz Steinschneider, Vols. I. and II., Berlin, 1893.

ANNIE J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

Theosophical Lending Library.

Open alike to members and non-members of the Theosophical Society.

Terms of subscription: one month, 1s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W.

LILIAN LLOYD, *Librarian*.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to March 20th: T. Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.; Miss Tisdale, 15s.; "in remembrance of J. W. M.," £1 10s.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; A Friend, £1; A. Pearson, 5s.; Mrs. Mallaloe, 10s.; J. W. H. Mackenzie, 6s.; Mrs. Besant, £5; Mrs. Hooper, £14 10s. Total £24 18s. 6d.

New Branches.

March 7th. Charter granted this day to Dr. Hübbe Schleiden, Günther K. Wagner, Frau Anna Wagner, Fräulein Gretchen Wagner, Fräulein Paula Stryczek, Bruno Ottmer, and Clemens Driessen, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society to be known as the Hanover Branch.

March 18th. Charter granted this day to Willem H. M. Kohlen, André Vanderstraeten, Dr. Ernest Nyssens, J. E. Bäumer, Jon. C. Louman, Octave Berger, and H. J. W. Walenkamp, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society to be known as the Brussels Branch.

New Centre.

A Centre to be known as the "Alpha" Centre has been formed at Leeds. Meetings are held weekly for the study of the philosophy of Pythagoras, under the direction of W. H. Bean, 9, Winstanley Terrace, Headingley, Leeds.

Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Rome.

Mrs. Besant delivered a most successful lecture at Rome, on her way to India. The Hall of the Associazione della Stampa was crowded, and the lecturer was introduced by Signor Bonfadini, the president. Mrs. Besant spoke in French on "La Théosophie dans le Passé et dans l'Avenir." Very favourable reports appeared in the press; we learn that in every respect our orator's visit to Rome was a tremendous success.

Blavatsky Lodge.

The lectures for the past month have been particularly interesting, and both on the "closed" and "open" nights the Lodge has been full. Mrs. Besant has lectured twice. She took for her subject on March 3rd "The Rationale of Mental Healing," and by way of introduction, reminded the Lodge that in order to understand any subject it is absolutely necessary to consider it sympathetically, and that the duty of members of the Theosophical Society should be to try to find the basis of truth which is the foundation of all widely-held opinions and beliefs. Mrs. Besant then explained the science of mental healing, and quoted largely from the writings of its modern expounders.

On March 10th, Mrs. Besant lectured in place of Mr. Keightley, who has only deferred his subject till later. On this occasion, Mrs. Besant compared our position in the present day with the position of those at an earlier period of the world's history, and more especially during the Middle Ages, when, as she reminded us, souls struggling for the light had no human help and guidance, but had to face always opposition and very often death, and who therefore had to fight on absolutely alone; and in a most impressive lecture Mrs. Besant urged us, as members of the Theosophical Society, not to let slip our great and almost unparalleled opportunities.

On February 24th, Mr. Chatterji lectured on "The Great Origination as taught by the Buddha," while on March 17th Mr. Mead threw further most interesting light upon "The Mysteries among the Greeks."

S. M. S.

West London Branch.

The meetings of the above Branch have been hitherto held at 142, Queen's Road, but members and visitors are asked particularly to note that the Branch has now secured a permanent room for a Library and Reading-room, at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road (opposite Queen's Road Station), where the Friday evening meetings will be held. Members having friends in Bayswater or Kensington are invited to make these meetings and the existence of the Lending Library known to any who may be interested. Books may be obtained, or exchanged, on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday evenings, from 7.30 to 8.30, and on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from 4 to 5. *The Theosophical Review*, and other periodicals, will be in the reading room.

The Library owes its existence to the kindness of Mrs. Besant, who has given a generous donation for the purchase of books, to add to a nucleus which Mr. Mead has kindly handed to us, in the shape of some books left for his disposal by a late member.

Miss Pope is giving some elementary Natural History lessons, illustrated by the microscope, on Saturday afternoons at 3, to children only. Members of the Lotus Circle are cordially invited.

Arrangements for social evenings and further lectures are in progress, and we trust that our new Lodge room will be constantly brightened by the presence of members and friends interested.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.; on Sundays, at 11 a.m. for study, and from 4 to 9 p.m. for enquirers.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, at 8.15 p.m.: April 19th, *Methods of Occult Study*, Miss K. Moffat. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattanach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month, and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: April 3rd, *The Bible*, Hodgson-Smith; April 10th, *The Forgiveness of Sins*; April 17th, *The Path of Discipleship*, Miss Hook; April 24th, *Prayer*, Mrs. Bell. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 p.m., at 67, Station Parade, for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at No. 9 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 21, Briggate, on the first and third Mondays in the month, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE. Meetings held weekly at members' houses for the study of the philosophy of Pythagoras. Enquiries may be addressed to W. H. Bean, 9, Winstanley Terrace, Headingley, Leeds.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. For information as to meetings, etc., apply to the Corresponding Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: April 4th, *The Growth of Individuality*, Mrs. Sharpe; April 11th, *Bank Holiday*; April

18th, *The Resurrection and the Life*, S. F. Weguelin-Smith; April 25th, *Meditation*, P. Tovey.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: April 7th, *The Middle Path of Buddhism*, J. C. Chatterji; April 14th, *Magic, Its Use and Abuse*, C. W. Leadbeater; April 21st, *A Hymn of Initiation*, G. R. S. Mead; April 28th, *The Rosicrucians and the Knights-Templars*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: April 4th, *Carlyle and the Philosophy of Clothes*, W. C. Ward; April 18th, *The Growth of Individuality*, Mrs. Sharpe.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. General meetings at 79, Burdett Road, E., on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Private class on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m., at Millfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, 32, Chaucer Road, Forest Gate.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays at 7.30 p.m.: April 18th, *Many are called; few are chosen*, Mrs. Leo; April 25th, Class for Study (*Ancient Wisdom*).

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, on Fridays, at 8 p.m., alternately for lectures and the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. On April 1st, Mr. Leadbeater will lecture on *Pern, B.C. 1200*.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square, on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor) on Thursdays, at 8 p.m. Alternate Thursdays, study of *The Astral Plane*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Monday evening at 8.15 p.m.

PARIS. Monthly lectures conducted by Com. D. A. Courmes, at the Salle des Mathurins, 36, rue des Mathurins, on Sundays, at 2 p.m. Meetings for enquirers at 3, rue du 29 Juillet (office of *Le Lotus Bleu*), on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, at 2.30 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Open Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., alternately at 38 and 58, rue de Verneuil. Meetings for members only, 2nd and 4th Sundays in the month, at 58, rue de Verneuil, at 9.30 a.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "The Borough Arms" (Coffee Tavern), Bedford Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Information to be obtained from Miss Hunter, 6, Clarendon Gardens, Ramsgate.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 31, Via Lombardia, on Thursdays, at 6 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Oxford Temperance Hotel, St. James' Street, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH LODGE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thorntonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keene's Road, Croydon.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

Library Closed.

The Library at 19, Avenue Road, will be closed, for purposes of cleaning, from April 15th to April 20th inclusive.

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCCXV.

A. M. G.—*Is sight developed in the etheric double apart from the dense body, and if so, is it by such sight that the various kinds of ether are perceived?*

C. W. L.—The etheric double is really part of the physical body, and as a general rule we are less likely to fall into error about either of them if we think of them together. They separate completely only at death, and even partial separation occurs only under anæsthetics, except in the case of a medium. There is etheric matter as well as solid and liquid matter present in the retina of the eye and in the brain, and it is probable that ordinary sight is connected quite as much with the vibrations of the former matter as with those of the latter. The capability of examining the molecules or atoms of ether would seem to be rather a different faculty, and apparently implies the use of a much higher power; but large masses of matter in the etheric state, or the bodies of the inhabitants of the etheric sub-planes, may often be seen under favourable conditions by what seems to be a mere intensification or exaltation of ordinary sight.

This question is probably closely connected with the evolution which is slowly but steadily taking place in the physical atom itself. Those who have read the article in *Lucifer* on "Occult Chemistry" will remember that four sets of spirillæ are there mentioned as existing in the atom, lying as it were one behind the other, each set forming the spiral running round the walls of the tube of the larger or grosser set below it. There are in reality seven sets of such spirillæ, thus lying one behind or within the other, and one of them comes into activity in each round of our evolution. Thus, since we are now in the fourth round, only four sets of these spirillæ may be observed in working order in the atom as we see it to-day; but by the end of the seventh round the entire system of seven orders of spirillæ will be fully vitalized, and therefore the physical atom will no doubt be a far more sensitive object, able to answer to many finer vibrations which at present evoke from it no response.

Now one of the lighter tasks of the aspirant to adeptship is the development of the very atoms of which his physical body is composed, so that they *may* be capable of response to these finer forces of nature, and as he does this he gradually becomes sensitive to all kinds of etheric vibrations which had not previously affected him, and is therefore conscious of much to which the undeveloped man is totally blind.

Naturally his efforts along these lines have to be continually kept up, since the atoms of his body are constantly changing, and every new atom which is absorbed into his frame needs to be subjected to this process of development. Thus he is assisting in his small way in the evolution of the physical universe, for the atoms which have passed through his body are distinctly the better for his use of them. Though after they leave him their finer spirillæ sink back into inactivity, they are yet much more ready to be again aroused into response to the play of the higher forces than would be the case with other atoms which had had no such experience. These more advanced atoms come in process of time to form part of other organisms, and the presence of a number of them in the brain even of a quite ordinary person would be very likely to give him occasional opportunities of a certain amount of what is commonly called etheric vision.

QUESTION CCCCXVI.

A. M. G.—*Does a highly developed ego, that of a Master for instance, put on the limitations of the physical brain when it descends to work on the physical plane?*

C. W. L.—Undoubtedly when working on the physical plane such an ego must be limited by his physical brain; but if we in any way compare such limitation with that which we experience in connection with our own brains we shall be grievously mistaken. It should be remembered that the Master stands at least at the Asekha level—the position which humanity is intended to attain at the end of the seventh round—and that therefore even his physical body is far more highly evolved and far more sensitive than ours.

In addition to the evolution of the physical atom, to which reference has already been made, there is also visible in the adept a very striking development of the means of communication between the cells of the brain and the higher principles. It is very difficult to describe this clearly without the help of a diagram, but it may be possible to give some idea of it by calling in the aid of the reader's imagination.

Let us suppose the grey matter of the brain to be laid out upon a flat surface, so that the layer is only one particle thick—that is to say, let us suppose ourselves looking down upon it from the "fourth dimension," since that is exactly the appearance that it would present if regarded from that point of view. Let us suppose also that the corresponding particles of the astral body and of the mind-body are similarly arranged in layers on

their respective planes, and that the lines of communication between them are represented by threads joining each physical particle to its astral counterpart, and each of those astral particles in turn to its counterpart in the mind-body.

Now, if we imagine an ordinary man's brain and its counterparts to be thus arranged, we should see that surprisingly few of the lines of communication were perfect—probably not more than a score or two out of many thousands. In the case of the vast majority of the particles, there would simply be no threads at all, and great areas of the brain matter could therefore never receive any direct communication from the higher bodies. In the case of other particles the thread might exist between the mind-body and the astral, but not be carried through to the physical, while yet others might have the thread complete between astral and physical, but no continuation of the line higher up.

Now since the various faculties of man express themselves down here only through their appropriate areas in the brain, it is obvious that the state of affairs which has been described entails some rather curious consequences. We are for the moment leaving entirely out of account the enormous differences which exist between the various egos, and also the differences in the impenetrability of their respective mind-bodies; yet we see what infinite possibilities of variety we have even in the arrangement of the threads of communication between the lower vehicles alone.

Take for example the power of metaphysical thought. We shall find many an ego in whom such a faculty does not yet exist at all, but even when it is beginning to develop, it will be with the greatest difficulty that any connection can be established with the appropriate area of brain matter. Until the ego can evolve the proper threads of communication, he will be able to operate that part of his physical brain only by the clumsy and roundabout expedient of sending his message down some other and quite inappropriate thread, and letting it spread out laterally, as it were, by transference from one cell to another in the physical brain. We can see at once how different would be the position of the man who had developed even one of the threads specially belonging to that type of thought, and how infinitely better yet would be the condition in which all the threads which feed that section of the brain were in full working order. This last-mentioned state of course exemplifies the ideal condition of that part of the brain in a seventh-round body, so it is needless to say that not even the highest philosophical thinkers among us are within anything like measurable distance of such a consummation as yet.

But that is the condition to which the Asekha has brought his physical brain, not as regards one part only, but the whole. So that although it is undoubtedly true that he is limited by his physical brain, since he has vast stores of knowledge which are altogether beyond even *its* power of expression, we shall be making a mistake of the most colossal

character if we suppose that that limitation is in any way comparable with those under which we constantly find ourselves labouring. We should remember that this fourth round is not the one specially intended for the development of Manas, and that we can at present have no conception of the glorious heights to which it will attain in its own fifth round, any more than we can realize how poor a thing the intellect of which we are so proud to-day will appear to us when we look back upon it from the standpoint which we shall then have attained.

QUESTION CCCCXVII.

G. B.—*In the case of very prominent public men, great conquerors and so on, are such individuals traced back to other characters occupying corresponding positions of power and influence in the past, or is it possible for an ego, hitherto working in an unobtrusive fashion, suddenly to spring up into fame and power?*

E. G.—Great faculty in any department of life is always a matter of growth, and presupposes attention directed thereto through a series of lives. A "prominent" public man would hardly begin by being prominent, but would gradually work his way into the position. "Aspirations and desires," we are told, "become capacities; repeated thoughts, tendencies; and wills to perform, actions," but in the earthly lives between those of devachanic assimilation, the physical body would need training and scope for action along the lines on which the ego was advancing. In order, for instance, to possess the powers of organisation, foresight and endurance required by a great general, there would have to be opportunities on the physical plane for the exercise and gradual externalisation of such powers. But the training, I suppose, might take place in a relatively unobtrusive fashion.

So also with great philosophers, great artists, etc. But here again, as the evolution of faculty proceeded, a certain amount of self-expression, it seems to me, would always make itself felt in the various lives, and make itself felt in ever-widening circles in proportion to the growing power within.

A. A. W.—When we fully realise the principle that powers in one life are the results of efforts in previous ones, we shall at once see that it is nearly certain that any one who displays extraordinary talent, or, as we call it, genius, must be the temporary manifestation of a soul who has worked at his subject for many lives before, though possibly this may be the first time he has brought it to such a pitch as to "spring up into fame and power." A great mathematician, who sees at a glance what an ordinary man would take volumes of calculation to prove—a Mozart who can play before he can speak—a poet who "lisps in numbers, for the numbers came," are all results of labour spent, very

possibly for many thousand years, upon their various arts. The same must be the case with a man like Napoleon, who had a true *genius* for the art of war. But there are many prominent public men, and even great conquerors, of whom we need not think so highly; who owe their position more to outward circumstance than to inward power. It would, for example, not be hard to recognise Napoleon as a reincarnation of Julius Cæsar, if we were so informed; but that Cæsar should have become the Duke of Wellington (who was *only* a great general, and *not* a great man), would not be so easy to believe. The subject (like all which depend upon the workings of karma), is of almost inconceivable complexity. We all know that there are "spirits" who are in the habit of assuring all their friends that they have been very remarkable personages in past times. Buddha, Socrates, Plato, St. John the Evangelist, Cæsar—or at least George Washington or Ben. Franklin—but we don't take these *very* seriously. I fancy one rule might be laid down which would put aside a good many such identifications—once a great man, always a great man. I must explain, however. To take an old example, Bacon *may* have been forced by his evil karma to return as a mere money lender; but if such were the case, we should expect him to be a very remarkable money lender—a kind of Ralph Nickleby at the least; whatever his circumstances, the innate power and energy of the ego *must*, one would say, somehow shine out. He might be a *wicked* man, a miserable man, but never, surely, an insignificant one. And this consideration pretty well settles also the question implied in G. B.'s query—it is not very probable that any of *our* egos are likely "suddenly to spring up into fame and power."

QUESTION CCCCXVIII.

F. T.—*It is said that the Mysteries of antiquity were scenes of great debauchery; is this the fact?*

G. R. S. M.—F. T. should read the papers entitled "Notes on the Eleusinian Mysteries," which will begin in the April number of *The Theosophical Review*, and run through two or three issues. The greatest minds of classical antiquity speak in the highest terms of these Mysteries, and F. T. will find abundance of quotations and references in the papers referred to.

The subscription to THE VÂHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 26, Charing Cross, S.W. No back numbers can be supplied.

All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.

THE VĀHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—O. CUFFE, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. VII.

LONDON, MAY 1, 1898.

NO. 10.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

NOTICE.

Members are hereby notified that the financial year ended on April 30th, and that subscriptions for the forthcoming year 1898-1899 are now due. All cheques, etc., should in future be made out to the Hon. O. Cuffe, and not to G. R. S. Mead.

THE CONVENTION.

By resolution of the Executive Committee the Annual Convention of the Section will be held in London on Saturday and Sunday, July 9th and 10th.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY AND TREASURER.

The following resolution has been adopted by the Executive Committee of the Section:

That the Hon. Otway Cuffe be General Secretary *vice* Mr. G. R. S. Mead, resigned; and that Mr. Herbert Burrows be Treasurer in place of Mr. Cuffe; both appointments to date from May 1st.

THE EDITORSHIP.

There will be no change made in the editorship of THE VĀHAN consequent on the change in the office of General Secretary.

ACTIVITIES.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to April 20th: Thos. Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; Gilbert Graham, £3; Mrs. Garnett, £2 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Heymanson, £1;

Mrs. Lauder, £1; Mrs. Wilkinson, £3; Anon., 2s. 6d.; Anon., £5; A. B. A., £1; Miss Goring, 15s.; Total £18 2s. 6d.

New Branch.

March 27th. Charter granted this day to Bernhard Hubo, Friedrich Scharlan, Adolph Kolbe, Frau Johanna Kolbe, Fräulein Lilly Korner, Fräulein Ida Wagner, and Fräulein Victoria Paulsen, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society, to be known as the Hamburg Branch.

Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been placed in the Library and are now acknowledged with thanks: *Geschichte der Phönizier*, Dr. Richard Pietschmann, Berlin, 1889; *Das Mönchthum, seine Ideale und seine Geschichte*, Adolph Harnack, 4th ed., Giessen, 1895; *Texte und Untersuchungen, Die Uebersetzung der Jeremia Homilien des Origenes*, E. Klostermann, Leipzig, 1897; *Der Codex D in der Apostelgeschichte, Textkritische Untersuchung*, Dr. Bernhard Weiss, Leipzig, 1897; *Recherches sur l'Origine et la Nature des Mystères d'Éleusis*, M. P. Foucart, Paris, 1895; *Le Christianisme pour Tous*, Albin Valabrègue, Paris, 1895; *Questionnaire Théosophique Élémentaire*, D. A. Courmes, Paris, 1897; *Trois Milliards de Français*, F. Appy; *Levenstoestanden na den Dood*, Annie Besant, trs., Amsterdam, 1898; *Vier Voordrachten over Theosofie*, Annie Besant, Amsterdam, 1898; *The Elements of the Higher Criticism*, Andrew C. Zenos, New York, 1895; *Our Life after Death*, the Rev. Arthur Chambers, London, 1897; *The Memorabilia of Jesus, commonly called The Gospel of St. John*, William Wynne Peyton, London and Edinburgh, 1892; *Studia Sinaitica, No. 5, Apocrypha Sinaitica*, ed. and trs. into English by Margaret Dunlop

Gibson, London, 1896; *Texts and Studies: Vol. V., No. 3, The Hymn of the Soul, contained in the Syriac Acts of St. Thomas*, Professor A. A. Bevan, Cambridge, 1897; *Christianity and History*, Adolph Harnack, London, 1896; *Jesus Christ in the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, and the Liturgy of the Synagogue*, Texts and Translations by the Rev. Dr. Gustaf Dalman, with an Introductory Essay by Heinrich Laible, trs. and ed. by the Rev. A. W. Streane, B.D., Cambridge, 1893; *The Gospel according to Peter, a Study by the Author of "Supernatural Religion,"* London, 1894; *The Living Christ*, Paul Tyner, Denver, Colo., 1897; *Was Israel ever in Egypt?* G. H. Bateson Wright, D.D., London, Edinburgh, Oxford, 1895; *The Bible and the Monuments*, W. St. Chad Boscawen, 3rd ed., London, 1896; *Clairvoyance, a System of Philosophy*, J. C. F. Grumbine, Chicago, 1897; *The Holy Lance, an Episode of the Crusades*, W. Stewart Ross, London; *The Mummy's Dream, an Egyptian Story of the Exodus*, H. B. Proctor, London and Liverpool, 1898; *Addresses by the Swāmi Vivekānanda*, London, 1896; *The Philosophy of Ancient India*, Richard Garbe, Chicago, 1897; *Clear Round! Seeds of Story from other Countries*, E. A. Gordon, London.

ANNIE J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

Theosophical Lending Library.

The following books have been added to the Library:

The Gift of the Spirit, Prentice Mulford; *The Philosophy of Mesmerism*, John Bovee Dods, M.D.; *The Unknown World*, August, 1894, to January, 1895, edited by Arthur Edward Waite; *Reminiscences of H.P.B. and "The Secret Doctrine,"* the Countess Wachtmeister; *The Story of Extinct Civilisations of the East*, R. E. Anderson; *The House of the Hidden Places*, W. Marsham Adams; *The Journal of a Live Woman*, Helen Van-Anderson.

This Library is open alike to members and non-members of the Theosophical Society.

Terms of subscription: one month, 1s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W.

LILIAN LLOYD, *Librarian*.

Blavatsky Lodge.

The subject of consciousness in the lower animals, which had been chosen for Mr. Leadbeater as the subject of his lecture on March 24th, proved to be a very much wider and more difficult one than had been anticipated. Feeling that it needed far longer and closer investigation than he had been able to give to it, Mr. Leadbeater preferred to take up questions of general interest bearing upon the subject of consciousness, about which information is frequently asked.

Owing to continued ill-health, Mr. Burrows was unable to lecture on March 31st, as he had hoped, but Mr. Mead took his place, and gave the Lodge a most interesting continuation of his lecture upon "The Eleusinian Mysteries," which he had begun a fortnight previously. In the course of the lecture Mr. Mead said that his great wish had been to prove that the chief object of those who conducted the Mysteries was to give to the candidates a knowledge of the soul, and of the states immediately after death through which it has to pass, thus helping most effectually to remove the horror by which, in these more modern times, so many are overwhelmed at the approach of the death of the body. In summing up this lecture Mr. Leadbeater reminded the Lodge that the outer mysteries of ancient days were intended as a preparation to lead people up to the true initiations which were the realities that lay behind, and which are as freely open to-day to all those who will fit themselves to pass through them, as they have been open to all who have qualified themselves in the past.

On April 7th Mr. Chatterji gave a lecture entitled "The Middle Path of Buddhism," and the following week Mr. Leadbeater gave much instructive information upon "Types of Magic."

S. MAUD SHARPE.

"White Lotus Day."

The usual meeting to commemorate the work of H. P. Blavatsky will be held on Sunday evening, May 8th, at 7 p.m., in the Hall, 19, Avenue Road, N.W.

Rome Lodge.

Mrs. Besant's recent visit passed off without a single hitch—an augury, let us hope, of the future success of Theosophy in the city which she herself, in her public lecture in Rome, described as the "Western Centre of Occultism."

Mrs. Besant arrived from Nice at about 9 a.m. on Thursday, March 17th, accompanied by Miss Bright and Mr. Bertram Keightley. She was received at the station by the principal members of the Lodge, and conducted to Via Lombardia 31, where she stayed during her visit.

After a short drive through Rome, Mrs. Besant went to the handsome rooms at Via Piemonte 1, occupied by Mlle. de Moskvitinov, one of the oldest members of the Rome Lodge, who had invited all the other members and a few interested friends, to listen to a special lecture to the Lodge. Mrs. Besant was welcomed to Rome by the President, Signor Aureli, who offered for her acceptance an illuminated Roman parchment, as a "ricordo." In the evening Mrs. Besant again received the members at the Library. On Friday, 18th, after an early walk to the Pincio, she held a meeting at 8.15, and saw various members till luncheon. At 3.30 she was escorted by the President to the "Sala

dell' Assosiazione della Stampa," the most beautiful Public Hall in Rome, where she was received at the entrance by the Hon. Signor Deputato Bonfadini, Councillor of State and President of the Press Association of Italy, by whom she was presented to the public.

The Hall was crowded to overflowing, many standing the whole time, and even the corridors being filled. The lecture was well received throughout, and greatly applauded at the close.

After a drive along the Via Appia Mrs. Besant returned to the Library and again held a meeting for the members, from 8 till 10 o'clock.

Saturday morning, the 20th, began with a meeting at 8.15, and after a few visits from members, at 1 o'clock a photograph was taken of the Rome Lodge, a few members being unavoidably absent. Mrs. Besant then visited three members who were too ill to come to her, and finally was attended by the Lodge at the station at 5 p.m., *en route* for Brindisi, whither she was again accompanied by Miss Bright and Mr. Keightley, Mr. Keightley returning to Rome for ten days of unremitting and most useful work with the Lodge.

Mrs. Williams has presented the Lodge with all the books and furniture in use at the Library, and thus a nucleus is formed for the future growth of a permanent Headquarters of the T.S. at Rome.

There are now twenty-four members, and the number is increasing steadily.

The Roman papers all reported Mrs. Besant's lecture favourably, and much interest in Theosophy has been aroused.

A. C. L.

France.

The organ of Theosophy in France—*Le Lotus Blen*—is in future to be known by the name of the *Revue Théosophique Française*.

"Secret Doctrine" Class.

A course of studies in *The Secret Doctrine* will be given by Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, on the Sunday evenings in May, from 7 to 8 p.m., in the Lecture Hall, 19, Avenue Road, except on May 8th.

"Secret Doctrine" Correspondence Class.

The following contributions have been received : Mrs. Walter Tibbits, 1s. ; Miss Nelson, 5s. ; Mrs. Hendricks, £1.

Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. ; on Sundays, at 11 a.m. for study, and from 4 to 9 p.m. for enquirers.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, at 8.15 p.m. : May 24th, *Asceticism and Mysticism*, Mrs. Cuthbertson. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month, and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m. : May 1st, *Man and his Thoughts*, Miss Woodhead ; May 8th, *The Christian Creed* ; May 15th, *Life and Fruition*, Bertram Keightley ; May 22nd, *Wisdom, Love, Power*, Hodgson Smith ; May 29th, *The Holy Spirit*, Miss Shaw. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 8 p.m., at 67, Station Parade, for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at No. 9 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at 21, Briggate, on the first and third Mondays in the month, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE. Meetings held weekly at members' houses for the study of the philosophy of Pythagoras. Enquiries may be addressed to W. H. Bean, 9, Winstanley Terrace, Headingley, Leeds.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. For information as to meetings, etc., apply to the Corresponding Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m. : May 8th, *Ethical Culture*, H. J. Adams ; May 9th, *Thought Forms*, Miss Ward ; May 16th, *The Ancient Mysteries*, C. W. Leadbeater ; May 23rd, *Theosophy and Occultism*, Mrs. Leo ; May 30th, Bank Holiday.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: May 5th, *Forms of Desire*, Bertram Keightley; May 12th, *Some Irish Legends*, Otway Cuffe; May 19th, *Light on the Path*, I., C. W. Leadbeater; May 26th, *The Sibyl and Her Oracles*, G. R. S. Mead. Sunday evenings, 7 to 8, Studies in *The Secret Doctrine*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: May 2nd, *The Rounds and Races*, P. C. Ward; May 16th, *The World's Religions*, A. A. Harris; May 30th, *No Meeting*.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. General meetings at 79, Burdett Road, E., on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Private class on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m., at Millfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, 32, Chaucer Road, Forest Gate.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays at 7.30 p.m.: May 2nd, *The First Qualification*, Alan Leo; May 16th, *Imagination and Ideals*, Bertram Keightley; May 30th, *No Meeting*.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, on Fridays, at 8 p.m., alternately for lectures and the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. May 6th, *Links with the Past*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley; May 13th, *Animals' Rights*, E. Bell; May 20th, *The Pyramids and Stonehenge*, A. P. Sinnett; May 27th, *Vegetarian Difficulties*, Miss M. Pope.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square, on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor), on Thursdays, at 8 p.m. Alternate Thursdays, study of *The Astral Plane*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Monday evening at 8.15 p.m.

PARIS. Meetings for enquirers at 3, rue du 29 Juillet (office of *Le Lotus Bleu*), on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, at 2.30 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Open Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., alternately at 38 and 58, rue de Verneuil. Meetings for members only, 2nd and 4th Sundays in the month, at 58, rue de Verneuil, at 9.30 a.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "The Borough Arms" (Coffee Tavern), Bedford Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Information to be obtained from Miss Hunter, 6, Clarendon Gardens, Ramsgate.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 31, Via Lombardia, on Thursdays, at 6 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Oxford Temperance Hotel, St. James' Street, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH LODGE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thorntonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keene's Road, Croydon.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCCXIX.

M. S.—*In the answer to Question CCCXCV. it is stated that no one can renounce the bliss of Devachan until he has not only experienced it during earth-life, but can bring back into physical existence a clear and full memory of it. I have heard the contrary of this given as Theosophical teaching, and have supposed that realization when in the astral body would be sufficient; am I wrong in this, or is there an exception to the rule indicated?*

C. W. L.—The questioner is not wrong; there is such an exception as is described, but since it comes into operation only in a few very special cases, no reference was made to it in the general statement contained in the previous answer. Indeed, but for the fact that misapprehension has evidently arisen in the minds of some who have been permitted to know something of the exception (as is shown by the question under consideration), I should myself have considered it hardly a subject for mention in a paper which circulates unreservedly through our Society. But since the question is raised it may be as well to settle it so far as may wisely be done in print.

The general rule is undoubtedly as was stated in the previous answer—that no one is in a position to renounce Devachan until he has experienced it during earth-life—until he is sufficiently developed to be able to raise his consciousness to that plane, and bring back with him a clear and full memory of its bliss and its glory.

A little thought will make obvious the reason and the justice of this. It might be said that since it is the progress of the ego which is really in question, it would be sufficient for him to understand on his own plane the desirability of making the sacrifice of devachanic bliss, and then to compel his lower self to act in accordance with his decision. Yet that would not be just, for the enjoyment of devachanic bliss on the rūpa levels, though it belongs to the ego, belongs to him only as manifested through his personality; it is the life of that personality that is carried on in Devachan, with all its familiar personal surroundings. And so before the renunciation of all this can take place, that personality must realize clearly what it is that is being given up; the lower mind must be in accord with the higher on this subject.

Now such realization obviously involves the possession during earth-life of a consciousness on the devachanic plane equivalent to that which the person in question would have after death. But it must be remembered that the evolution of consciousness takes place from below upward, as it were, and that the comparatively undeveloped majority of mankind are effectively conscious as yet only in the physical body. Their astral bodies are for the most part still shapeless and unorganized—bridges of communication indeed between the ego and its physical vesture, and even vehicles for the reception of sensation, but in no sense as yet instruments in the hand of the real man or adequate expressions of his future powers on that plane.

In the more advanced races of mankind we find the astral body much more developed, and the consciousness in it in many cases fairly complete potentially, though even then in most cases the man is entirely self-centred—conscious of his own thoughts mainly, and but little of his actual surroundings. To advance still further, some few of those who have taken up the study of occultism have been regularly awakened on that plane, and have therefore entered upon the full use of their astral faculties, and are deriving in many ways great benefit therefrom.

It does, not, however, necessarily follow that such men should at first, or even for some considerable time, remember upon the physical plane the activities and experiences of their astral life. As a general rule they would do so partially and intermittently, but there are cases in which for various reasons practically nothing worth calling a memory of that higher existence finds its way through into the physical brain.

Any kind of definite consciousness on the devachanic plane would, of course, indicate still further advancement, and in the case of a man who was developing quite normally and regularly we should expect to find such consciousness dawning only as the connection between the astral and the physical became fairly well established. But in this one-sided and artificial condition which we call modern civilization people do not always develop quite regularly and normally, and so there are cases to be found in which a considerable amount of consciousness on the devachanic plane has been acquired and duly linked on to the astral life, and yet no knowledge of all this higher existence ever gets through into the physical brain at all.

Such cases are of course very rare, but they certainly do exist, and in them we see at once the possibility of an exception to our rule. A personality of this type might be sufficiently developed to taste the indescribable bliss of Devachan and so acquire the right to renounce it, while he was able to bring the memory of it no farther down than into his astral life. But since by the hypothesis that astral life would be one of full and perfect consciousness for the personality, such recollection would be amply sufficient to fulfil the requirements of justice, even though no shadow of

all this ever came through into the physical waking consciousness. The great point to bear in mind is that since it is the personality that must resign, it is also the personality that must experience, and it must bring back the recollection to some plane on which it functions normally and in full consciousness; but that plane need not be the physical if these conditions are fulfilled upon the astral. Such a case would be unlikely to occur except among those who were already at least probationary pupils of one of the Masters of Wisdom; so it is perhaps better merely thus to state the possibility, and not further to discuss it in a paper which may come under the eyes of members of the general public.

QUESTION CCCCXX.

P. S.—*What is the fundamental Creed of Christendom?*

G. R. S. M.—Perhaps the most authoritative orthodox answer to this most important question may be found in a recent lecture by Professor Adolf Harnack. Harnack is in the very highest rank of New Testament scholarship, and no one at present knows more of Christian dogmatics than the Professor of Church History in the University of Berlin. Harnack opens his lecture, entitled *Christianity and History* (Eng. Trans., by Thos. Bailey Saunders; London, 1896), with the following words:

"The name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth . . . neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we may be saved."

This is followed by the emphatic paragraph: "Such is the creed of the Christian Church. With this creed she began; in the faith of it her martyrs have died; and to-day, as eighteen hundred years ago, it is from this creed that she derives her strength. The whole substance and meaning of religion—life in God, the forgiveness of sins, consolation in suffering—she couples with Christ's person; and in so doing she associates every thing that gives life its meaning and its permanence, nay the Eternal itself, with an historical fact; maintaining the indissoluble unity of both."

The quotation in italics comes in a speech put into the mouth of Peter, in the document known as *The Acts of the Apostles* (iv. 10, 12). The passage is very corrupt in the MSS. Codex D, which is now considered to preserve a greater number of correct ancient readings than any other codex, omits the word "salvation" entirely.

The "name of Jesus Christ," does not signify the name "Jesus Christ," but the "name" or "power" (sci. of the Logos), which the great teacher, the Christ, used.

From this point of view, then, we may all admit the statement. It is by the Logos alone that we shall be saved.

If, however, we are to take the text in the narrow historical sense which orthodoxy assigns to it, it is tantamount to making the Christ responsible

for a doctrine which set aside, if it did not condemn, the work of all His teachers, colleagues, and pupils, and this is hardly the teaching one expects from a great Master.

But, indeed, we have only to turn back a page to the translator's preface, to read: "There is a great difference, as Lessing argued, between the Christian religion and Christ's religion; between the structure of dogma erected by Greek philosophy on a Jewish soil, and the faith held by Christ Himself."

It is "the faith held by Christ Himself" which is the fundamental creed of Christendom, and the creed advanced by Professor Harnack is, as he says, "the creed of the Christian Church."

The fundamental creed of Christendom consists of course in the basic truths of Theosophy; it breathes the spirit of universalism, and is free from the constricting bonds of narrow exclusiveness.

QUESTION CCCCXXI.

E. R.—Why did initiation into the Mysteries usually take place in a cave or subterranean building?

A. A. W.—The natural answer to this question would be, "Get yourself initiated, and you will know why. You can't expect the initiates to tell you before!" However, in this case, it is not hard for one of the profane to find a plausible explanation.

Whatever may have been the details of the Mysteries, we know well enough their main intention. The idea of immortality has been of late years so painfully *vulgarised* in every sense, that the one heart's desire of every right thinking man has come to be by every possible means to escape it, as usually conceived. It has grown almost impossible for us to understand the moral elevation it conveyed to the ancient Greek, when he received it as the crown of Initiation. Some of us have allowed ourselves to speak as if the chief glory of the Mysteries was the revelation that the earth moves round the sun, or the like; of *one* thing we may be quite sure, that it was not for mere scraps of *knowledge* that the candidates went down to the temple of the Great Mother. But to take a gay, cheerful, life-enjoying Greek and open his eyes to the existence of the world around him and within him in comparison with which his sunny, brilliant earth-life was but as darkness—the earth-damps of the tomb; *that* indeed was something worth the pains! It must all be done by symbol-representation; the active, stirring Greek was no Hindu metaphysician; and how could it be better done than by bringing him, physically, into the subterranean darkness which was henceforth to image to him his old life of ignorance? The aspirant must be *tried*—the phantom terrors of the darkness were not all imaginary, the mere stage thunder and colophonium the modern critics deem them; many a

man was kindly turned back before he came to the point where failure meant destruction—unavoidable and terrible. But for those who succeeded there was the Manifestation—the momentary glimpse, never to be forgotten, of the Higher world where there is no more division of souls—where Death is not conquered but vanishes away—the sight and companionship of the true God—the Ineffable Glory! What wonder that those who enjoyed it were henceforth new men, even though that one brief vision recurred no more? And how *could* that reality fail to be mixed up with the one thing in all physical nature which answers to it—the glory of the first rays of the rising Sun as they waked to the new life the entranced Aspirant, his trials ended; even as Dante, after his long and terrible night in Hell, came forth through the narrow hollow of the rock to the open sea-shore and the blue boundless Heaven, and the cloudless glory of the first rays of the rising Sun trembled along the ripples of the windless ocean to his feet. And to this soundless music the words are those of Seboua, "You have been into a darkness deeper than that of night, and you will see a brighter Sun—even than this!"

QUESTION CCCCXXII.

M. A. N.—What does Theosophy teach about "the Christ spirit;" and what is meant by the following quotation: "For that as soon as a man's nature contacted the Christ spirit, there was a revolution in the spheres, and the motion of half of them was entirely inverted," referred to in question CCCCII?

G. R. S. M.—The "Christ spirit" is that degree of the Eternal Wisdom of the Logos which "a Christ" has reached. It is *at least* the nirvânic consciousness, and may be any more transcendent state right up to the *full* consciousness of the Logos Himself. The quotation refers to the famous Gnostic treatise known as the *Pistis Sophia* (see pp. 24 *sqq.* of my translation). The Gnostic writer is dealing with the eternal mystic soteriology of the Logos. It is the eternal drama of "conversion," of which modern Evangelicalism has so much to say, although it confines its scope merely to the individual soul. The Gnostics, on the contrary, applied it to the Soul in general; not only to the souls of men, but also to the souls of globes, planets, systems, and universes. Thus the writer is treating of our system as a "living being," and working out the drama on the lines of mystic cosmogony and astronomy. The spiritual might of the Christ converts the forces or "powers" (represented as the motions of spheres), which previously tended all in one direction, with a "downward" tendency, that is to say with an impulse to material things, so that half of them "repent" or strive towards the spiritual nature. This produces a balance or equilibrium of the forces, and the Christ thus brings about conditions whereby those who follow Him can pass through these previously opposing spheres.

The soteriological drama, or drama of salvation, thus worked out on higher planes, is played in miniature in each individual soul that follows the Christ's example. Conversion and repentance are the necessary preliminaries to progress from a lower to a higher state. The Gnostic writer works out his spiritual theme with great acumen, and attempts to substitute a mystical, spiritual astrology for the vulgar astrology of the period. The subject, however, is too lengthy and abstruse for treatment in THE VÂHAN.

QUESTION CCCCXXIII.

M. B. O.—What is the vital difference between Theosophy and ideal Christianity, as represented by such teachers as Rev. Baldwin Brown, Prof. Drummond, and many living theologians who are in full sympathy with the "Higher Criticism"?

A. A. W.—The real difficulty is not to point out the "vital difference," but to discover any connection between the two. When you have purified your Christianity from its "absurd accretions," put aside all its "unfounded claims," and under the guidance of the "Higher Criticism," reduced your Bible to a chance collection of red, blue, and yellow rags of paper, you are not necessarily any nearer the solution of the great problem of life. You have escaped from the fold, but have gained nothing, so far, which can prevent you from dying in the wilderness. Many, however, who reach this point are quite content to look no farther, but to pass the rest of their lives in a private heaven of their own, singing hymns to the praise and glory of their own vast wits. Their position is that of the Soul in Tennyson's *Palace of Art*:

I sit as God, holding no form of creed
But contemplating all.

They are happy; the "riddle of the painful earth" cannot disturb their self-complacency, and their eyes are too dim so much as to perceive the phantasms and nightmares which the Powers used to drive Tennyson's happier soul to the despair which alone can save. Theosophy has no interest in or for such; it says to them with Browning:

The whole creation travails—groans;
Contrive your music from its moans
Without or let or hindrance, friend!

and passes by. Those of whom Theosophy has hope, take their position very differently. They are those to whose sensitive sympathy the world's misery is an ever-present horror—the Sphinx's riddle for which an answer must be found, or they die. The popular Christian solution fails, in their hands, to solve it; but life is far too real and serious a thing to them for them to stay to think how clever they are to find this out. The sorrow of the world is *their* sorrow; how it came about; how it is to be set right; nay, in what mysterious way, somehow or other, it *is* right (for right it *must* be, or else it were better to die than

to live)—all these questions press on them continually, and find no reply. To *them*, wandering in darkness and the shadow of death, Theosophy comes with light and hope, and they snatch at it, as the one thing between them and the abyss. Unless Theosophy is all this to a man he is better without it; he has not grown up to the unselfish love which cannot be satisfied with anything less. As long as anyone has any question in his mind whether the "ideal Christianity" of the Rev. Mr. This or Professor That is not all he wants, he may take it for granted that it *is* all he wants, for this incarnation at least. For the Theosophist such a man as Professor Drummond himself is of great interest; he is one of those who are *dissatisfied* with all "ideal Christianities," one who looks beyond them all, and who, sooner or later, may be expected to attain freedom. The "vital difference" between him and such followers of his as the querist expresses himself to be, is that *they* are satisfied, and have laid themselves down and gone to sleep on the spot *he* has left behind him. *Requiescant in pace!*

QUESTION CCCCXXIV.

A. E. J.—Cremation versus Burial.—The Theosophical Society, I believe, advocates the former, but would not the burying of, say, bodies of a pure type, help on the evolution of the lower forms of Nature, and therefore be preferable to cremation?

B. K.—The grounds on which Theosophy advocates cremation are manifold; but, I think, they may be briefly summarised under the following heads:

(1) *Sanitary.* Occult and ordinary physical science both agree that the products resulting from the putrifying processes in animal bodies are exceedingly dangerous and injurious to the living; the bacteria and microbes which multiply so enormously, and by which the process of decay is effected, are liable to do most serious injury to the living when, by means of water, air, or otherwise, they gain access to the living body; while the germs of specific disease, typhus, small-pox, scarlet fever, consumption, diphtheria, etc., etc. (spread through the earth by the percolation of water through the soil of the cemetery in which the corpse of one dying of the disease in question has been buried), also carry the infection far and wide.

From the occult standpoint, the sanitation of these subtler influences, which play a far larger part in human life than is generally recognised, is most seriously impeded and hindered by the presence of decaying animal bodies and the subtle influences accompanying them. Every one of these dangers is entirely removed by cremating the dead body at a high temperature.

(2) *As affecting the soul.* The onward progress of the soul is more or less delayed, and the breaking up of the astral body retarded, by the slowness of ordinary decomposition; while the destruction of

the corpse by fire causes the immediate break up of the etheric double and thus severs the magnetic tie which otherwise tends to hold the soul back.

(3) As to the specific point raised, it seems to rest upon a complete misconception of what the process of decay involves. A distinction must be made between the chemical elements, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, of which the body ultimately consists, and the highly complex compounds of these which form the organic cells. Now the fact is that *none* of the lower forms of life assimilate the cells themselves as *living cells*. These are first killed, broken up and chemically changed before assimilation, so that it is the chemical elements, *not* their organised compounds, which are taken up by the lower forms. And hence it does not in the least matter, so far as the evolution of these lower forms goes, whether the oxygen, nitrogen, etc., are supplied to them direct by the process of cremation, or through intermediate stages of chemical decomposition by burying the body.

All organic bodies are broken up into their chemical elements, either quickly or slowly; and though undoubtedly the body of a highly evolved and pure man is built of the finer orders of physical matter, that matter is just as available for other uses when set free by cremation, as when more slowly resolved by putrefaction. Indeed I myself believe that the finer and purer kinds of matter are much more likely to be kept available for the purposes they are needed for when a body is cremated than when it is buried. For on cremation, all the heavier and more complex forms of matter are first broken up and refined by the fire, and then set free to follow their natural affinities; while when burial is resorted to, a set of highly specialised conditions are set up which seem well calculated to force the purer and finer kinds of matter to enter into gross and complex combinations of lower orders, and so actually lessen the amount of fine and developed matter available for building the higher and purer types of body.

In chemistry, by means of specially adjusted conditions and the expenditure of energy, we can *force* chemical elements to enter into combinations which are "un-natural," *i. e.*, which are more or less repugnant to the nature of the elements in question; and I see no reason why a similar result should not be brought about in the case of burial. Certainly, when it is desired to purify and set free the various orders of matter in their present condition, fire is usually employed to effect that purpose. And it seems to me that this principle must hold good in the case of the human body.

But the case for cremation is so absolutely overwhelming in every aspect, that one can only wonder at the curious strength of a prejudice which delays the adoption of a method of disposing of the dead body that simply has everything

in its favour, whether from the standpoint of the living or from that of the soul which has been set free from that encasement.

QUESTION CCCCXXV.

M. C.—Members of the Church state that Christianity is the highest revelation yet given to man. Is this consistent with Theosophical teaching?

G. R. S. M.—The members of the Church are compelled to make this claim, otherwise they would no longer remain in that body. If they would add the words "to them," and say that Christianity is "*to them*" the highest revelation yet given to man"—then the theosophical student would have no fault to find with the statement. But when he finds that the Buddhist makes a similar claim for the Dharma of the Buddha, when he sees the Hindu claiming the Upanishads as containing the end of all knowledge (Vedānta), when he hears the Muslim proclaiming "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet"—then he finds reason to pause and review the various claims. He then discovers that the matter is on all fours with the natural fact that some creatures live in air, some in water, some in earth, and so on. Just as such creatures proclaim that their particular element is the one life-giving source, and the natural philosopher draws the deduction that each is in his suitable element, while the elements themselves are all of equal dignity in their proper place of evolution, none being greater or less than another; so also the Theosophist who is beyond the creeds refrains from putting one Master above another, or one "revelation" below another. They have each served and are still serving their own appointed end. The cobbler of the story thought that the best defence of his town against the enemy was leather; the Christian of the cobbler's mental calibre contends that his creed is the best and the highest. But the fact is that while each world-faith is richer than the others in some particular element, and poorer in others, they all come from the same source, all are evolved according to need and law, and are directed by the same Wisdom. Let then the children quarrel about their toys, and let us hope that Theosophists at least will begin to put away their childish things, and try to think as men.

The subscription to THE VĀHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 26, Charing Cross, S.W. No back numbers can be supplied.

All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.

THE VÂHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—O. CUFFE, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. VII.

LONDON, JUNE 1, 1898.

NO. 11.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

NOTICE.

Members are hereby notified that the financial year ended on April 30th, and that subscriptions for the forthcoming year 1898-1899 are now due. All cheques, etc., should in future be made out to the Hon. O. Cuffe, and not to G. R. S. Mead.

THE CONVENTION.

The Eighth Annual Convention of the European Section will be held in London on Saturday and Sunday, July 9th and 10th.

On Friday evening, July 8th, there will be a Reception at Westminster Town Hall. At 9 p.m. Mrs. Besant will lecture in the Great Hall; foreign and provincial delegates will be provided with tickets for the lecture.

The morning meeting, beginning at ten o'clock, will be held in the French Drawing-room, St. James' Restaurant, Regent Street.

On Saturday afternoon there will be a reception and afternoon tea at headquarters, from 3.30 to 5 p.m.

The evening meetings will be held in the Small Hall, Queen's Hall, on Saturday at 8 p.m., and on Sunday at 7 p.m. These meetings will be mainly devoted to lectures. The names of the speakers will be announced later on.

All delegates (except presidents of branches present in person) and proxies should bring their credentials in writing.

All branches should send in a correct list of their members seven days before Convention for the revision of the registers.

It would be a great convenience to have all reports sent in at least ten days before Convention, to aid in the drawing up of the general report.

With this number of THE VÂHAN the account of receipts and expenditure goes to all members.

OTWAY CUFFE,
General Secretary.

A BEQUEST.

A property called Lamolie House, in St. George's, Grenada, B.W.I., has been bequeathed to "The Trustees for the time being of the Theosophical Society in Europe, appointed or acting under an Indenture dated the 4th day of August, 1890," by the will of the late Mr. Thomas Edmund Passee, a prominent inhabitant of the island, and a member of the Society.

ACTIVITIES.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to May 20th: Thos. Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; Mrs. Hooper, £4; Mr. and Mrs. Dowall, £1; W. G. Long, £9 15s.; Miss Bruce, £5; Mrs. Hunt, £1 12s.; Anon., £1 11s. 6d.; A. F., 7s. 6d.; Miss Webster, 5s.; Iona, 5s.; M. S. Johnson, 5s.; S. Bartram, 15s.; G. H. Richardson, 1s.; Mrs. Judson, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Chapman, 5s.; S. W. Romaine, 5s.; William Harnden, junior, 5s.; Samuel Harnden, 5s.; Miss Lowthime, 10s.; Miss E. Marsden, 10s. 6d.; Capt. Rooke, 10s.; William Davies, 5s.; Mrs. Callow, 5s. Total £29 2s. 6d.

Notice to Presidents and Secretaries of Branches.

Forms of Application for Membership.

Presidents and Secretaries of Branches are earnestly requested to see that forms of application for membership in the Theosophical Society are *fully* filled up before being forwarded to the General Secretary. The name of the Branch which the candidate proposes to join should always be written on the form in the space provided for that purpose, and accompanied by the signature of

the President or Secretary of the Branch. If the form is sent on behalf of a candidate desiring to be unattached, this should be indicated.

A number of forms of application for membership have recently been returned from Adyar in consequence of non-compliance with these rules.

OTWAY CUFFE,
General Secretary.

New Branches.

May 2nd. Charter granted this day to M. W. Sharples, Herbert Warren, G. H. Shepherd, J. Rowland Acton, Mrs. Warren, Miss Rosa Warren, and Miss Florence Smith, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society to be known as the Wandsworth Branch.

May 18th. Charter granted this day to Victor Lafosse, M.D., Ernest Nysseus, M.D., Paul Marlier, Maurice Demiomandre, Emile A. Bertrand, Eudore de Vroye, Louis Depont, Madame Keelhoff, Miss Lilly Carter, Mlle. Valérie Verleysen, and Mlle. Julia Eyckholt, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society to be known as the Branche Centrale Belge.

Headquarters' Reference Library.

This Library is open to students who are members of the Theosophical Society, from 2 to 10 p.m. every day except Thursday.

The following books are now acknowledged with thanks: *The Secret Societies of all Ages and Countries*, Charles William Heckethorn, 2 vols., London, 1897; *The Polychrome Bible*, ed. Paul Haupt; Pt. 7, *The Book of Judges*, trs. G. F. Moore, London, New York, and Stuttgart, 1898; Pt. 10, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, trs. T. K. Cheyne; Pt. 14, *The Book of Psalms*, trs. Horace Howard Furness; *Appendix on the Music of the Ancient Hebrews*, J. Wellhausen, D.D.; *My Quest for God*, John Trevor, London, 1897; *The Royal Dukes and Princesses of the Family of George III.*, Percy Fitzgerald, Vol. I., London, 1882.

ANNIE J. WILLSON, Librarian.

Magazines.

Branches and members whose back volumes of magazines are imperfect are informed that the following odd numbers can be procured at the Headquarters' Reference Library. An early application is advisable.

The Theosophist, Vol. VIII., 86; XV., 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; XVI., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11; XVII., 1, 2, 7, 9; XIX., 2; *Arya Bala Bodhini*, III., 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; II., 6; I., 11; *Theosophic Gleaner*, III. complete; IV. complete; V. complete; VI., 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; *The Buddhist*, VII., 48; *Mahā Bodhi Society, Journal of*, I., 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12; II., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9; III., 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12; IV., 3, 6; *Sanmārga Bodhini*, III., 2, 7, 1897; 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, 19, 21,

22, 26; *Theosophic Thinker*, I., 1, 7, 9, 45; II., 1-7, 9-12, 14-24, 26, 27, 30; IV., 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 17, 27-29; *Sophia*, 1894, Sep., Nov., 1895, January, March, May; 1896, April, *Antahkarana*, 1894, 1, 2, 3, 7, 8; 1895, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23; 1896, 25-30; *Teosofik Tidskrift*, 1896, May, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.; 1897, Jan., Feb., May, June, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.; *Mercury*, III. complete; IV., 1, 2, 3, 4; X., 10; XI. complete except 12; XII., 1; *Theosophy in Australasia*, from April, 1897, to Feb.; 1898; *Sphinx*, Dec. 1895; *Theosophia*, 1896, Nov.; *Branch Work: Indian Section*, 1891, Oct., Dec., 1862, Jan., Feb., May, Oct.; *American Section* 22-46; *Theosophical Forum*, Nos. 35-70; *Oriental Department, European Section*, many odd numbers. Also odd numbers of *The Vāhan*.

ANNIE J. WILLSON.

Theosophical Lending Library.

This Library is open alike to members and non-members of the Theosophical Society.

Terms of subscription: one month, 1s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W.

LILIAN LLOYD, Librarian.

Rome.

White Lotus Day was observed with much affectionate interest by the Italians, who brought beautiful white flowers, and held a meeting from 6 to 7.30. Passages from *The Voice of the Silence* were poetically rendered in Italian by Signor Calvari, who prepared, also, extracts from *In Memoriam H.P.B.*

Harrogate.

Our sixth annual meeting was held April 29th 1898, when the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, Mr. Hodgson Smith; Vice-President, Mr. Lumley; Secretary, Miss Shaw; Treasurer, Mr. Bell; Librarian, Mrs. Hodgson Smith.

Reports from the various officers showed that during the past year we have had an increase in membership from twenty-five to twenty-eight, an increase in average attendance both at our Lodge and public meetings, an increase in the sale of theosophical literature (amounting this year to £35, as compared with £31 last year), and an increase in the number of books borrowed from our theosophical lending library.

Since last October we have rented a suitably furnished room in the centre of the town, to serve as Lodge Room and Theosophical Library. To this room members have always free access, and this has made possible the formation of one or two classes for theosophical study in addition to our usual meetings.

Our public meetings we have now held regularly each Sunday for the past five years.

For the past four years we have adopted a practice which we think has done much to promote and to preserve unity, harmony, and vitality in our Lodge life. Each month we decide upon a subject for meditation, and some of our members aim to devote at least five minutes each day to keeping the subject in mind. Also at the beginning of each Lodge meeting, after an introductory reading of a more or less devotional nature, we unitedly spend five minutes in trying to fix our minds on the subject for the month, before proceeding to our regular study.

L. S.

Blavatsky Lodge.

Besides the usual number of lectures delivered on Thursday evenings, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley has held a series of lectures upon *The Secret Doctrine* in the Lecture Hall at 7 o'clock on Sunday evenings.

The lecture list for the month has included Mr. Mead, Mr. Keightley, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, and Mr. Leadbeater.

Mrs. Cooper-Oakley took as her subject "The Knights of Light," and conclusively proved, by many quotations from a private document of their own, the exceedingly high moral standard and rigid life which was required of those who were candidates for admission into their body.

It is to be hoped that at some future date we shall know something further about the Knights of Light.

On May 12th, Mr. Cuffe being unable to lecture, Mr. Leadbeater filled his place, and gave the Lodge information upon various points which had been made the subject of questions at different times.

But the most important event of the month was the celebration of White Lotus Day, on May 8th. On this occasion, as previously, the Lecture Hall was made beautiful with flowers sent by members, and the number of those who gathered for the meeting in the evening was larger than for many previous years. Passages having been read from *The Light of Asia* and from *The Song Celestial*, short speeches were made by Mr. Mead, Mr. Leadbeater, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, and Mr. Keightley.

There are very many among us who had not the privilege of knowing H. P. Blavatsky personally, and therefore it is well, apart from any other reason, that we should meet together annually—not to mourn her death, for we know that death is not, not even to grieve over her departure from among us, for we know that she is with us still, though hidden for a time from our physical eyes—but to remind ourselves, and to be reminded, of the ideal which she so bravely proclaimed and so steadfastly upheld, and of the deep gratitude which every member of the Society owes to her who, under those whom she served, was its founder. And so we may hope that for a time longer this anniversary may continue to be kept by Theosophists all the world over—"lest we forget."

S. M. S.

Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.; June 7th, *The Cycle of Evolution*; June 21st, *Human Ancestry*, E. G. Palmer. Classes on alternate Tuesdays for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Meetings on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, at 8.15 p.m. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month, and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: June 5th, *Theosophy in Modern Poetry*; June 12th, *God Manifest*, William Bell; June 19th, *Emerson's Theosophy*, Charles N. Goode; June 26th, *Womanhood*, Miss Shaw. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 8 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings at No. 9 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings every Monday at 8 p.m., at 133, Spencer Place, for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE. Meetings held weekly at members' houses for the study of the philosophy of Pythagoras. Enquiries may be addressed to W. H. Bean, 9, Winstanley Terrace, Headingley, Leeds.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. For information as to meetings, etc., apply to the Corresponding Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: June 6th, *The Value of Astrology*, Alan Leo; June 13th, *Some Aspects of Karma*, H. J. Dyer; June 20th, *The Work of a Lodge*, J. M. Watkins; June 27th, *The Ethics of Suicide*, A. Candler.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: June 2nd, *Jacob Boehme*, Bertram Keightley; June 9th, *Atoms and Vibrations*, M. U. Moore; June 16th, *Light on the Path, II.*, C. W. Leadbeater; June 23rd, *The Sibyl and Her Oracles, II.*, G. R. S. Mead; June 30th, . . .
. . . . Mrs. Besant. Sunday evenings, 7 to 8, Studies in *The Secret Doctrine*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at Millfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Private class for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*, on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m., at 32, Chaucer Road, Forest Gate. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, at latter address.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays at 7.30 p.m.: June 6th, *The Opportunity Theosophy Affords*, Mrs. Leo; June 20th, *The Value of Silence*, Alan Leo; June 13th and 27th, Class for Study.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.: June 3rd, *Dante*, Rev. W. Charter Piggott; June 10th, *Savage Beliefs*, Mrs. Hooper; June 17th, *At Home*; June 24th, *The Mighty Atom*, Miss E. Ward.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square, on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor), on Thursdays, at 8 p.m. Alternate Thursdays, study of *The Astral Plane*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Monday evening at 8.15 p.m.

PARIS. Meetings for enquirers at 3, rue du 29 Juillet (office of *Le Lotus Bleu*), on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, at 2.30 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Open Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., alternately at 38 and 58, rue de Verneuil. Meetings for members only, 2nd and 4th Sundays in the month, at 58, rue de Verneuil, at 9.30 a.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "The Borough Arms" (Coffee Tavern), Bedford Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Information to be obtained

from Miss Hunter, 6, Clarendon Gardens, Ramsgate.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 31, Via Lombardia, on Thursdays, at 6 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Oxford Temperance Hotel, St. James' Street, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH LODGE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thorntonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keene's Road, Croydon.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCCXXVI.

G. L.—Which help is the most efficient; prayer, or intense thought direct to a person?

S. M. S.—There is no antagonism between prayer and thought used as agencies either for helping or hindering, and any distinction which in our minds we may draw between them will depend upon our limited conception of both.

But there are many who ceased to believe in prayer for a longer or shorter period before they came to understand something of the real power of thought, and who, perhaps, during that period, learnt to look upon prayer in a rather contemptuous fashion. Nor can it be denied that the way in which prayer is very frequently used gives grave justification to those inclined to scoff at it.

In considering prayer as a means of helping others, however, we conceive of it at its best, eliminating from it, presumably, all idea of selfishness, of desire for personal gain or advantage, and endowing it with purpose and determination—just the qualities which prayer, so-called, so often lacks.

Considered in this way, there can be, surely, very little difference between prayer and "intense thought" directed to a person for his helping. It would, then, seem to follow that to suggest thought as a substitute for prayer to those who habitually pray would be an error, both in judgment and in understanding, for to one who has only a very limited idea of what we mean by thought, the imagined substitution will seem somewhat cold and repellent; while, on the other hand, the more fully we learn to understand both thought and prayer, the more, I think, will the apparent differences between them fade away. It is the loss of any firm belief in the reality of prayer on the part of so large a number of professing Christians which has led to its degradation.

There is no doubt that even a partial understanding of the power and working of thought, such as every member of the Theosophical Society can hardly fail to possess, does add enormously to the efficacy of prayer as an agent either for good or for evil; for the better understanding gives us greater faith, and faith gives determination, and strong determination carries with it the power of accomplishment.

But it may be said that it is by this very insistence in Theosophical teaching on the power of the individual will that at first many are repelled. This feeling will pass away with the advent of a fuller understanding. What though the humble petition of the devout Christian for the welfare of his friend, "May he be blessed," be changed by the Theosophist into the confident cry, "He *shall* be blessed!" or the reverent aspiration "May I be worthy," be transformed into the strenuous determination, "I *will* be worthy!" do these alternative forms of expression imply less of reverence, less of noble aspiration? Not so. "Deep calleth unto deep"; the unrealised divinity within each cries out to the Divinity beyond, which is its source and its life, and no such appeal, even from the humblest, ever goes unheeded. The Theosophist believes as truly as any that "Every good and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of Lights." There is no gift so much to be desired as loving thoughts directed to others, with purpose and determination for their helping; and although most of us can as yet make only a beginning, we can, if we will, daily purify our small offerings by trying more and more persistently to fix our thoughts and aspirations upon Him in whom, indeed, is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

For the God of the Theosophist does not dwell far away in some uttermost extremity of a distant Heaven, but is consciously present at every point in His universe. "He is far, far off, but He is also very near"; and it is the growing realisation of this which in time will give to us the faith that shall remove mountains.

QUESTION CCCCXXVII.

J. A. R.—*Is it supposed to be a fact that persons of great powers of mind, perhaps also combined with elevated thought and goodness of heart, must have experienced countless incarnations before arriving at that excellent state? If so, how is another fact accounted for, viz., that together with those high qualities the same men not seldom possess, in one or another form, deep baseness of soul? What could be the original state of such egos; and by what process have they developed so curiously? What will be their future course of progression or retrogression?*

B. K.—All high development along any line is the fruit of long effort and many births; but it is not an absolute fact that people "of elevated thought and goodness of heart" do possess "deep baseness of soul." People of great intellectual or artistic development may of course, though exceptionally, be very undeveloped morally, and so exhibit "baseness of soul"—or what the world considers as such—but to imagine that a person of really high moral development should do so is absurd, simply because it is self-contradictory. For if a man is highly developed morally, he cannot *ipso facto* act otherwise than nobly, because

just in so far as he does act ignobly, just so far and in such respect is his moral development imperfect.

As to the latter part of the question, since in the long run "all souls develope all powers," each must make up and develope whatever is lacking in his perfect full divinity—but that is in "infinite" time. Speaking finitely, a man may go a very long way along one line—say the intellectual—but remain very backward on another—say the artistic or moral. But the conditions of human evolution are such that the tendency is always towards equilibrium, and the law of pain may almost be said to ensure by its action a fairly rounded and harmonious growth for the individual human soul, by the time the seven rounds of his pilgrimage are completed.

QUESTION CCCCXXVIII.

E. R.—*What is the origin of the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence in the bread and wine at the celebration of the Mass?*

A. A. W.—To give even an outline of the *origin* of the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence would require a series of volumes, and *lives*—not one life only—of research. Perhaps the suggestion made by the author of *The Life of Michael Scot* (reviewed a month or two back in *The Theosophical Review*) may give the clue—that at the time the doctrine was finally put into shape the ruling idea in all existing science was that of Transformation, as now it is Evolution. It may very possibly, however, answer the purpose of the querist, to remind him that the words of institution given in the Gospels can, in their literal meaning, convey nothing less. The position of the Catholic Church on this matter is that of Luther himself, who, when pressed by his Calvinistic adversaries on this very point, chalked on the table the words, *This is My Body*, and fairly roared down all their arguments by constant repetition of them. To say, as so many Christians now do, "This is impossible, and hence Jesus *could* not have meant what he said!" was to take a liberty with Scripture he had not learnt to allow himself. It has become in these later centuries so habitual a matter to pick out of the Bible just the texts which seem to confirm our own view, and pass over the others as being (if we only dared say it), "unscriptural," that we forget how entirely *illogical* such a proceeding is, and find it hard to enter into the mind of the Catholic theologian, to whom *every word* of the Bible is the "Word of God" and must find its place in his system. Modern theology is so entirely polemical—its Bible consists so exclusively of "texts" against Popery, "texts" against Infant Baptism, "texts" for justification by Faith, and the like, that we can hardly picture to ourselves the early Christian who, finding in his Gospels that Jesus said, "Take, eat, this is my Body," "Drink, this is my Blood," proceeded without misgiving or hesitation to frame his theology accordingly. For many centuries all Catholic

doctrine and worship have been founded on the simple belief that Jesus *would* not have said it unless He had meant it. The world has moved since then ; we now permit ourselves to reason on such matters, and our reason disagrees ; but it might be well for Christians of the present day to examine a little more carefully how much of the *authority* of the Bible, as in any sense a Revelation above and beyond human reason, is, in truth, left when we allow ourselves to say that the unquestioned words of Jesus on this matter may safely be set aside as "unreasonable." This much, it seems to me, we may claim from them, amongst other things ; that they should cease to assert an eternal Hell on the ground of one single phrase in the Gospels which, literally translated, does *not* mean anything of the kind, and so has far less in its favour than the doctrine of the Real Presence.

For the Theosophist the doctrine, like all the other Christian doctrines, is true in a far higher sense. The Divine presence is not limited to fragments of a physical body, however Divine may have been the spirit which once animated it. In each one of us dwells the very same Divinity which dwelt in the flesh and blood of Jesus of Nazareth. We pay no reverence to the "Sacrament of the Altar" because altar and priest and sacrifice are equally within ourselves. We call a man Saviour, Teacher, Master, when the veil of flesh is so thin that the glory shines through, but in every one of us, even the lowest, under whatever thick crust of ignorance, sin and shame it may be hidden, shines the Light of the Logos—that Light which lightens every man that cometh into the world !

QUESTION CCCCXXIX.

M. C.—Is it true that it is not advisable to convert any Eastern nation to Christianity on the ground that Christianity requires the development of the sixth principle, which Eastern nations cannot yet use, so that conversion to it only makes them hypocrites ?

G. R. S. M.—I am ashamed to have to print such an overweeningly arrogant statement in THE VĀHAN. Surely for any theosophical reader it stands condemned of itself in all its brutal presumption, and needs no further words to point out how it sins against the spirit of Christianity, in its invincible ignorance of the most elementary teachings of the Christ. No, a thousand times no ; it is *not* true.

If the reported statement, however, means by "Christianity" the unlovely dogmas which have made such a statement possible, then if we take *the first clause of the question alone*, "Is it true that it is not advisable to convert any Eastern nation to Christianity ?"—it must be answered, emphatically "Yes," for we want no more of such a spirit of pride.

But if by "Christianity" is meant the teaching of the Christ, the answer must be "No," for that is universal, and requires the development not only

of the "sixth," but also of the "seventh principle," and not only of these but also of the "fifth"—the intellect, a little attention to which would have prevented the enunciation of such an absurd proposition as the one reported.

To be brief, however, and conclude, if Nirvāṇa is the perfect development of the "seventh principle" of the Ātman, then the Buddha, the "Teacher of Nirvāṇa and of the Law," taught the development not only of the "sixth," but also of that which lies beyond the sixth "principle," and they who truly followed his teaching, his Arhats, reached the Divine state. Was He then a hypocrite ; were they hypocrites ; or does not the cry, "Woe unto you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites," rather refer to those who formulate such un-Christlike statements as the one quoted by the questioner ?

QUESTION CCCCXXX.

H. D.—What relation does Free-will bear to a man's Karma ?

A. A. W.—It is well enough known that in the great controversy as to Free-will the Theosophical doctrine agrees with *both* parties. To have developed a Will which shall be *free*, that is, shall be determined wholly or chiefly from the interior, and not by the surrounding circumstances, is by no means a matter of course at our present stage, and (as Mr. Leadbeater says) very few people have anything worth calling a Will at all. As long as this is the case they simply live blindly amongst the kârmic effects of their actions, which to them are no more than blind chance. Karma, to them, is not a matter of reward or punishment, but merely the result of causes they have set in motion ; as a child might open an animal's cage, all unknowing whether the creature were a toy to play with or a tiger to devour him. But as the personality comes more and more under the influence of the Higher Ego, which in itself is free in the fullest sense, living as it does on a plane where what we down here call motives and circumstances do not exist at all ; it comes to understand what it is doing, and is able to mould its Karma according to its Free-will. We are told that in proportion as a soul develops, it becomes less and less possible to predict its actions. For the common herd the law of averages will seldom fail to guide our expectations aright ; the Adept knows what he is doing, and is thus able to free himself completely from all Karma, good and bad alike. For we must never forget that, after all, the great Law of Karma and everything with which it deals are but a portion of the great Illusion—the Mâyâ which defends our weak eyes from the overpowering radiance of the Divine glory.

G. R. S. M.—See the quotation from *The Book of the Laws of Countries* in the March number of *The Theosophical Review* (pp. 13-16), art. "Bardaisan the Gnostic."

Bardaisan makes Free-will, Fate, and Nature the three great factors of the kârmic law, all three being ultimately in the hand of God. Each reacts

on each, none is absolute. Nature has to do with body, Fate or Fortune with soul, and Free-will with spirit. None of them is absolute; the absolute being in God alone.

QUESTION CCCCXXXI.

E. M. D.—(a) It is stated that a thought-form when once created is a real living entity, no longer under the control of its creator, but living out its own life; is such an entity a self-conscious sentient being, capable of experiencing pleasure and pain?

(b) Is the character created by an author such a thought-form, and is this the explanation of the statement made by some novelists that their characters when once created insist upon working out their own life-story, irrespective of the will of the writer? Is such an entity consciously passing through the pleasure or pain which the author finds himself compelled to describe?

C. W. L.—(a) A thought-form is a living entity, but is certainly not self-conscious, nor in any way capable of experiencing pleasure or pain. Its ensouling principle is capable of action in one direction only; it is a kind of living Leyden jar, existing only for the purpose of discharging itself, and always seizing the first opportunity of doing so. Only instead of passively waiting for this opportunity, it goes about seeking for it. But it is no more (and no less) self-conscious than is the electricity in the jar, and has no more pleasure in being discharged, or pain in not being discharged, than the electricity has. The questioner has perhaps not fully realized that we are dealing with a form built up of elemental essence, which is at a stage of evolution even earlier than the mineral kingdom.

Of course this applies merely to ordinary thought-forms made by ordinary people, and not to entities specially created by the magical arts of powerful occultists, such as the mysterious creatures mentioned in *The Secret Doctrine* as belonging to the "Lords of the dark face" in Atlantis, or the terrible tribal gods who were kept alive through many ages by blood-sacrifices. These latter entities at any rate seem undoubtedly self-conscious, and capable of experiencing some kind of pleasure; but their case is an entirely different one, and factors enter into their composition with which we are not concerned just now.

(b) The character created by a novelist may no doubt be considered as a thought-form, though of a somewhat different type from those we have just mentioned. But it cannot possibly be supposed to rejoice or to suffer, or to have any will of its own apart from the impulse which its creator may have put into it. If authors find themselves carried away as described, it would more probably be the result of an attempt to inspire or guide them made by some outside intelligence—most likely some other author, recently departed and now on the astral plane, who when he sees a story in the making cannot resist taking hold of

it and trying to work it out in his way. It seems certain from observation that a good deal of poetry and a good deal of music comes through from another plane in this kind of way; so why not occasionally the plot of a story?

QUESTION CCCCXXXII.

H. M.—What is the difference between etheric and astral sight, and by which of these can one comprehend the fourth dimension?

*B. H. S.—*There is a distinct difference between etheric sight and astral sight, and it is the latter which seems to correspond to the fourth dimension.

The easiest way to understand the difference is to take an example. If you looked at a man with both the sights in turn, you would see the buttons at the back of his coat in both cases; only if you used etheric sight you would see them *through* him, and would see the shank-side as nearest to you, but if you looked astrally, you would see it not only like that, but just as if you were standing behind the man as well.

Or if you were looking etherically at a wooden cube with writing on all its sides, it would be as though the cube were glass, so that you could see through it, and you would see the writing on the opposite side all backwards, while that on the right and left sides would not be clear to you at all unless you moved, because you would see it edgewise. But if you looked at it astrally you would see all the sides at once, and all the right way up, as though the whole cube had been flattened out before you, and you would see every particle of the inside as well—not *through* the others, but all flattened out. You would be looking at it from another direction, at right angles to all the directions that we know.

If you look at the back of a watch etherically you see all the wheels through it, and the face *through them*, but backwards; if you look at it astrally, you see the face right way up and all the wheels lying separately, but nothing on the top of anything else.

QUESTION CCCCXXXIII.

J. F. B.—How is it that although Theosophists recommend a pure (i.e., a vegetarian) form of diet, we are distinctly told, in Luke xxiv., 42-43, that Christ, our greatest teacher and example, ate fish?

*G. R. S. M.—*Not only do the orthodox canonical Gospels relate that Jesus ate fish after the "resurrection"—a term which that party in early Christendom which afterwards became the "orthodox" Catholic Church, translated as connoting the resurrection of the actual physical body—but they further state that he was accused of being a "wine-bibber," and the incident of the turning of the water into wine would further lead us to suppose that he was not only not an advocate of abstinence from alcohol, but rather an aider and abettor of its

consumption. On the other hand, the Essenes, with whom there is little doubt that Jesus had intimate relations, were strict partisans of purity in diet, and refrained from flesh-eating and wine-drinking. The Gospel of the Egyptians, an early document, was strongly encratic; that is to say, not only taught to refrain from flesh and strong drinking, but also to preserve absolute physical chastity, and this not as a mere accident but as one of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. The rigid striving after purity that was suitable to communities of people devoted to the mystic life, was found to be impossible, as a "rule" for the generality, when Christianity began to develop into a popular religion, and so a basis of compromise had to be found. The canonical Gospels in many respects represent that compromise, and were and are more suited to the "common conscience" than the more rigid rule. That the Christ through the mouth of Jesus, during the years of the ministry, protested against the fanatical purity of the Essenes and pointed out that "vegetarianism" was not an end but only a means, is quite credible; that He taught the people the middle path, while to his immediate disciples he taught a higher rule, is also in keeping with the practice of the wise; but that he taught that wine-drinking and flesh-eating were the better way, and became an "example" for indulgence in them, is hardly to be believed. It is as difficult to believe as is the doctrine of the resurrection of the actual physical body. The Christ is certainly the greatest teacher known to the West; but the documents ascribed to "Matthew," "Mark," "Luke," and "John," beautiful as they are in parts, can never be taken as literal historical records by the theosophical student, and in this he is supported by the critical work of the best thought of Christendom during the last century.

QUESTION CCCCXXXIV.

J. K. H.—How does a person rid himself of impurities in Kāmaloka, and is he alive to the necessity of getting rid of the evil which detains him?

C. W. L.—He does *not* rid himself of evil tendencies in Kāmaloka, any more than he would in this life, unless he definitely works to that end. The length of his astral life may be said to depend on two factors—the strength and persistence of his desires, and the material which he has built into his astral body during earth-life. The desires are chiefly such as need a physical body for their satisfaction, and since he has that no longer they often cause him acute and prolonged suffering; but in process of time they wear themselves out, they become, as it were, atrophied and die down

because of this very impossibility of fulfilment. In the same way the matter of the astral body slowly wears away and disintegrates as the consciousness is gradually withdrawn from it by the half unconscious effort of the ego, and thus the man, by degrees, gets rid of whatever holds him back from Devachan.

But the worst of the trouble is precisely that indicated in the second clause of the question—the man is generally *not* alive to the necessity of getting rid of the evil which detains him. It is obvious that if he realizes the facts of the case and gives his mind to the work, he can greatly expedite both the processes referred to above. If he knows that it is his business to kill out earthly desires and to withdraw into himself as quickly as may be, he will earnestly set himself to do these things; instead of which he usually, in his ignorance, broods over the desires and so lengthens their life, and clings desperately to the grossest particles of astral matter as long as he possibly can, because the sensation connected with them seems nearest to that physical life for which he is so passionately longing. Thus we see why one of the most important parts of the work of the "invisible helpers" is to explain facts to the dead—also why even a merely intellectual knowledge of Theosophical truths is of such inestimable value to a man.

QUESTION CCCCXXXV.

M. M.—Were the Solar Systems preceding this of greater or less material density than our own?

B. K.—As none of our investigators know anything of what lies beyond the Solar System, it is quite impossible to answer this question. Students of Theosophy would do well to try to realise something of the practical limits within which inquiries can usefully be carried on, for by doing so they will themselves obtain clearer and more accurate conceptions as to the powers and faculties employed in such investigations, as well as strengthen their own sense of the actuality and reality of such powers.

The subscription to THE VĀHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 26, Charing Cross, S.W. No back numbers can be supplied.

All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.

THE VĀHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—OTWAY CUFFE, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

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NO. 12.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

THE CONVENTION.

With this number of THE VĀHAN a programme of the Convention goes to each member.

It is specially requested that those provincial and foreign delegates who desire to be provided with seats at Mrs. Besant's lecture on Friday, July 8th, will kindly notify the fact with as little delay as possible, so as to give time for arrangements to be made.

It is hoped that as many members as possible will attend the reception on Friday, July 8th, and they are reminded that they are at liberty to invite friends.

The meetings on Saturday and Sunday evenings, July 9th and 10th, are free to the public, and if members will kindly do what they can to fill the hall, the success of the meetings will be increased.

OTWAY CUFFE,
General Secretary.

ACTIVITIES.

Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to June 20th: Thos. Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; Mrs. Wilkinson, £3; Mrs. Finnemore, £1; Gilbert Graham, £1; Ludwig Deinhard, 15s.; Mrs. Greene, 15s.; Mrs. Jeffcock, 10s.; Charles Harvey, 5s.; R. C. Minton, 5s.; Anon., 15s.; 15s.; 15s.; 6s. Total £11 3s. 6d.

Headquarters' Reference Library.

This Library is open to students who are members of the Theosophical Society, from 2 to 10 p.m. every day except Thursday.

Books acquired during the month: *The Encyclopædia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Science and General Literature*, ninth edition, 1875-89, Reprint 1898, 25 vols.; Edinburgh, Adam and Charles Black. Books presented and now acknowledged with thanks: *Telluris Theoria Sacra*, 2 vols., T. Burnetius, Londini, 1689; *La Force Vitale*, Dr. H. Baraduc, Paris, 1893; *The Secret of Happiness*, Ellen S. Gaskell.

ANNIE J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

Magazines.

Branches and members whose back volumes of magazines are imperfect are informed that the following odd numbers can be procured at the Headquarters' Reference Library. An early application is advisable.

The Theosophist, Vol. VIII., 86; XV., 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; XVI., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11; XVII., 1, 2, 7, 9; XIX., 2; *Arya Bala Bodhini*, III., 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; II., 6; I., 11; *Theosophic Gleaner*, III. complete; IV. complete; V. complete; VI., 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; *The Buddhist*, VII., 48; *Mahā Bodhi Society, Journal of*, I., 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12; II., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9; III., 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12; IV., 3, 6; *Saṃmārga Bodhini*, III., 2, 7, 1897; 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, 19, 21, 22, 26; *Theosophic Thinker*, I., 1, 7, 9, 45; II., 1-7, 9-12, 14-24, 26, 27, 30; IV., 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 17, 27-29; *Sophia*, 1894, Sept., Nov., 1895, January, March, May; 1896, April, *Antahkarana*, 1894, 1, 2, 3, 7, 8; 1895, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23; 1896, 25-30; *Teosofik Tidskrift*, 1896, May, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.; 1897, Jan., Feb., May, June, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.; *Mercury*, III. complete; IV., 1,

2, 3, 4; X., 10; XI. complete except 12; XII., 1; *Theosophy in Australasia*, from April, 1897, to Feb., 1898; *Sphinx*, Dec. 1895; *Theosophia*, 1896, Nov.; *Branch Work: Indian Section*, 1891, Oct., Dec., 1892, Jan., Feb., May, Oct.; *American Section* 22-46; *Theosophical Forum*, Nos. 35-70; *Oriental Department, European Section*, many odd numbers. Also odd numbers of *The Vâhan*.

ANNIE J. WILLSON.

Theosophical Lending Library.

The following books have been added to the Library:

Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras, translated by Thomas Taylor; *The Perfect Way*, Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland; *Discourses on the Bhagavad Gîtâ*, Subba Row; *Golspie, Contributions to Its Folklore*, collected and edited by Edward W. B. Nicholson.

This library is open alike to members and non-members of the Theosophical Society.

Terms of subscription: one month, 1s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W.

LILIAN LLOYD, Librarian.

Blavatsky Lodge.

Mr. Leadbeater has given two most interesting lectures in the past month, dealing with the little book called *Light on the Path*. In these lectures he has explained some of the inner meaning of the teachings which it conveys, so much of which does not appear upon the surface to many who read its pages. Mr. Leadbeater concluded his second lecture, given on June 16th, by impressing upon the members of the Lodge the importance of this book, and by advising all to possess it and to give it earnest study, adding that only to those who try to act upon its teaching will come glimpses of its deepest meaning.

On June 2nd, Mr. Keightley gave the Lodge some interesting information about Jacob Boehme, giving first a sketch of the state of Europe generally at the time at which he lived, and then passing on to consider the man himself, so far as anything is known of him, and the people and circumstances influencing his life and writings.

On June 9th, Mr. Moore lectured on the subject of "Atoms and Vibrations," making his subject clearer to his hearers with the help of diagrams.

On May 26th, Mr. Mead took as his title "The Sibyl and her Oracles," but had so much of interest to say, for which the time was too short, that he had to devote an additional evening to the same subject.

S. M. S.

Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

BOURNEMOUTH LODGE. Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

BRISTOL LODGE. Meetings at 39, Park Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: July 5th, short papers on *Theosophy and Socialism*. Classes on alternate Tuesdays for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Meetings on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, at 8.15 p.m. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month, and by appointment.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: July 3rd, *Theosophy and Education*, Hodgson Smith; July 10th, *Deathless Life*, Baker Hudson; July 17th, *Symbolism*, Mrs. Bell; July 24th, *What is Theosophy?* C. Corbett; July 31st, *Evidences of Reincarnation*. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 8 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings suspended until October.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings every Monday at 8 p.m., at 21, Briggate, for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE. Meetings held every Monday, at 133, Spencer Place, 8 p.m., for the study of early Greek Philosophy. Enquiries may be addressed to W. H. Bean, 9, Winstanley Terrace, Headingley, Leeds.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. For information as to meetings, etc., apply to the Corresponding Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: July 11th, *Brotherhood*, S. F. Weguelin-Smith; July 25th, *The Druses and their Religion*, J. M. Watkins.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: July 7th, *Emotion, Intellect and Spirituality*, Mrs. Besant; July 14th, *Methods, Ex-*

perimental and Intuitive, Bertram Keightley; July 21st, *Individuality*, Mrs. Besant; July 28th, *Our Occult Ancestry*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at Millfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Private class for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*, on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m., at 32, Chaucer Road, Forest Gate. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, at latter address.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m.: July 4th, *Devotion and Service*, Mrs. Besant; July 11th, Class for Study.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square, on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings suspended until October.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor), on Thursdays, at 8 p.m. Alternate Thursdays, study of *The Astral Plane*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Monday evening at 8.15 p.m.

PARIS. Meetings for enquirers at 3, rue du 29 Juillet (office of *Le Lotus Bleu*), on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, at 2.30 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Open Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., alternately at 38 and 58, rue de Verneuil. Meetings for members only, 2nd and 4th Sundays in the month, at 58, rue de Verneuil, at 9.30 a.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "The Borough Arms" (Coffee Tavern), Bedford Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Information to be obtained from Miss Hunter, 6, Clarendon Gardens, Ramsgate.

ROME LODGE. Meetings will be suspended and the Library closed during July and August.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Oxford Temperance Hotel, St. James' Street, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH LODGE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thorntonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keene's Road, Croydon.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

Mrs. Besant's Lectures.

Mrs. Besant arrived in town on June 20th. The programme of her London lectures is as follows:

At the Westminster Town Hall, on Friday,

July 8th, at 9 o'clock, a lecture upon "The Reality of the Unseen World."

In the Small Queen's Hall, Langham Place, W., a course of lectures on Sunday evenings, at 7 o'clock, upon *Esoteric Christianity*, beginning with "The Hidden Side of Religions," July 3rd, July 17th, "The Trinity: Divine Incarnation;" July 24th, "The Atonement and the Law of Sacrifice;" July 31st, "Sacraments and Revelation;" August 7th, "Natural and Spiritual Bodies, Resurrection and Ascension."

Tickets, and small bills containing particulars, can be obtained at Queen's Hall, from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 26, Charing Cross, and at 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W.

"Theosophical Review" Club.

An additional *Theosophical Review* Club is in course of formation, the subscription to which will be 3s. per annum. Intending subscribers are requested to communicate with Miss Goring, 62, Brondesbury Road, Kilburn, N.W.

ENQUIRER.

QUESTION CCCCXXXVI.

M. V.—*Are there organs in the astral body corresponding to those in the physical?*

C. W. L.—This is a question which is very often asked by those who are trying to realize the physiology of the astral body, and it is one of the many apparently simple questions a short answer to which is almost inevitably misleading. The reply cannot but be in the negative, but to make it satisfactory to the mind further explanation is necessary.

It is not improbable that the questioner has in mind some of the statements that have been made as to the perfect interpenetration of the physical body by astral matter, the exact correspondence between the two vehicles, and the fact that every physical object has necessarily its astral counterpart.

Now all these statements are true, and yet it is quite possible for people who do not normally see astrally to misunderstand them. Every order of physical matter has its corresponding order of astral matter in constant association with it—not to be separated from it except by a very considerable exertion of occult force, and even then only to be held apart from it as long as force is being definitely exerted to that end. But for all that the relation of the astral particles one to another is far looser than is the case with their physical correspondences.

In a bar of iron, for example, we have a mass of physical molecules in the solid condition—that is to say, capable of comparatively little change in their relative positions, though each vibrating with immense rapidity in its own sphere. The astral counterpart of this consists of what we often call solid astral matter—that is, matter of the lowest and densest sub-plane of the astral; but, nevertheless, its particles are constantly and rapidly changing their relative position, moving among one

another as easily as those of a liquid on the physical plane might do. So that there is no permanent association between any one physical particle and that amount of astral matter which happens at any given moment to be acting as its counterpart.

This is equally true with respect to the astral body of man, which, for our purpose at the moment, we may regard as consisting of two parts—the denser aggregation which occupies the exact position of the physical body, and the cloud of rarer astral matter which surrounds that aggregation. In both these parts, and between them both, there is going on at every moment of time the rapid inter-circulation of the particles which has been described, so that as one watches the movement of the molecules in the astral body one is reminded of the appearance of those in fiercely boiling water.

This being so, it will be readily understood that though any given organ of the physical body must always have as its counterpart a certain amount of astral matter, it does not retain the same particles for more than a few seconds at a time, and consequently there is nothing corresponding to the specialization of physical nerve-matter into optic or auditory nerves, and so on. So that though the physical eye or ear has undoubtedly always its counterpart of astral matter, that particular fragment of astral matter is no more (and no less) capable of responding to the vibrations which produce astral sight or astral hearing than any other part of the vehicle.

It must never be forgotten that though we constantly have to speak of "astral sight" or "astral hearing" in order to make ourselves intelligible, all that we mean by those expressions is the faculty of responding to such vibrations as convey to the man's consciousness, when he is functioning in his astral body, information of the same character as that conveyed to him by his eyes and ears while he is in the physical body. But in the entirely different astral conditions specialized organs are not necessary for the attainment of this result; there is matter in every part of the astral body which is capable of such response, and consequently the man functioning in that vehicle sees equally well objects behind him, beneath him, above him, without needing to turn his head.

There is, however, another point which it would hardly be fair to the questioner to leave entirely out of account. Theosophical students are familiar with the idea of the existence in both the astral and the etheric bodies of man of certain centres, sometimes called *chakrams*, which have to be vivified in turn by the sacred serpent-fire as the man advances in evolution. Though these cannot be described as organs in the ordinary sense of the word, since it is not through them that the man sees or hears, as he does here through eyes and ears, yet it is apparently very largely upon their vivification that the power of exercising these astral senses depends, each of them as it is developed giving to the whole astral body the power of response to a new set of vibrations.

Neither have these centres, however, any permanent collection of astral matter connected with them. They are simply vortices in the matter of the body—vortices through which all the particles pass in turn—points, perhaps, at which the higher force from planes above impinges upon the astral body. Even this description gives but a very partial idea of their appearance, for they are in reality four-dimensional vortices, so that the force which comes through them and is the cause of their existence seems to well up from nowhere. But at any rate, since all particles in turn pass through each of them, it will be clear that it is thus possible for each in turn to evoke in all the particles of the body the power of receptivity to a certain set of vibrations, so that all the astral senses are equally active in all parts of the body. Nevertheless, as has been said above, these cannot justly be described as organs, and so the reply to the question must be a negative one.

QUESTION CCCXXXVII.

E. L.—What is the occult meaning of the Holy Communion and other Sacraments?

A. B.—In the various great religions of the world rites are found analogous to the "Sacraments" of the Christian Church. These represent symbolically on the physical plane certain profound truths in nature manifested on the higher planes of being. Sometimes a fact in the spiritual world is reflected or imaged in the mental and astral worlds, and finally appears in the physical world as a "sacrament" or symbolical rite. Hence those who have learned some of the laws of the higher world regard these rites with respect based on understanding, and the various religious teachers have embodied such forms in the rituals devised by them for the instruction and guidance of the masses. In some sacraments, as in that of baptism, the inner meaning is obvious: water, the physical agent of purification, symbolises the spiritual energy which purifies the mental and astral bodies, and its typical character is the more marked from the fact that it readily takes up magnetic force, and thus affects the etheric and astral bodies in addition to the dense physical. The blessing of the water represents the magnetisation performed by the teacher, and it is well known that magnetised water may be used—quite apart from any idea of religion—for the curing of disease. In the "Holy Communion" the facts are more complex. First, it represents the all-important truth that the One Life is present in every material phenomenon, and that God may be seen and worshipped when veiled in form. Secondly, as the one sun, the symbol of the Logos, pours his life into the physical world, and his chemical and electrical forces draw together the elements that form corn and grape, imparting to them the qualities that—assimilated by other and higher living creatures—sustain and recuperate life; so does the One Life pour itself out to evolve forms, which in their turn sustain and recuperate other more complex vehicles of the same Life.

Thirdly, the material form is illusory, its qualities depending on the type of differentiated life embodied in the form; form does not give birth to life, but life shapes, moulds and gives qualities to form. Bread is bread while the monad informing the corn is manifesting in the vegetable kingdom, but if an influx of higher life is poured into the form, the qualities are changed, though the resistant matter cannot at once re-arrange its particles under the new impulse, and it becomes in fact, though not in appearance, "the body of the Lord." This is seen in the spiritual world, where the life is beheld as the moulding energy, and the slow changes in the heavy physical region are disregarded as unimportant. What *will be* in the lower *is* in the higher. These realities of the true world are symbolically taught in the consecration and the changing of the "bread" into "flesh." Fourthly, bread and wine stand as representatives of all objects which yield themselves to perish as forms in order that the life thus set free may aid in evolving higher forms; one aspect of the Law of Sacrifice is pictorially shown—that only by the breaking up of forms can life be set free thus to embody itself, that forms must be disintegrated, in order that their elements may be recombined to build the higher manifestations; the life does not perish with the form, but finds fuller expression as it escapes from the broken vessel.

Fifthly, a deeper aspect of the same Law of Sacrifice is shown; that which in the lower kingdoms is done involuntarily, under compulsion, and without knowledge, is done voluntarily, freely and with full understanding in the higher; Jesus, taken as symbol of divine humanity, yields himself as willing sacrifice that his out-poured life may be utilised for his brethren, and such a sacrifice has two chief aspects, Godwards and manwards. In the first there is the utter yielding up of the whole man to become nothing but a channel of the divine energies, a force of the Good Law: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. I am content to do it." In the second there is the identification of the sacrificial offering with the race, the recognised oneness of humanity, the transcending of separateness. The oneness with the Supreme is shown in the act of self-sacrifice; the oneness of the race is symbolised by the act of communion, the "partakers of the sacrifice" being those who consciously recognise that unity; as the shared bread and wine nourish all the bodies, so the life invigorates the spiritual nature, and one life is shared by all. Moreover, the divine humanity is the link between the evolving race and its Life-giver, and the partaking of the sacrifice is the condition of sharing in the life. This and far more is symbolically taught in Holy Communion, but the deeper mysteries can only be "seen," not "told." The veil of Isis must be lifted by each for himself, and no merely physical man may lift it; the God in him must awaken and put forth his energy ere that task may be successfully accomplished. And even then it is true of all the deeper verities, that

Veil after veil will lift—but there must be
Veil upon veil behind.

QUESTION CCCCXXXVIII.

C. J. B.—(a) *Is man's survival, after the death of the physical body, capable of being positively proved? What kind of evidence would suffice for the purpose?*

(b) *Upon what lines of thought is man likely to discover the best arguments in favour of the immortality of the Ego?*

(c) *Is the immortality of the Ego capable of being logically demonstrated?*

B. K.—The answers to all these questions involve as a preliminary a clear, definite understanding as to what shall be regarded as "positive proof." Leaving aside what may for the moment be called the metaphysical and philosophical arguments, and taking "positive" proof to mean for our present purpose "proof upon the lines recognised as valid by physical science," we may state the conditions of proof bearing on these questions as follows:

I. The existence of a material object is proved by the simultaneous and concurrent testimony of the senses of several observers, subject to the condition that these observations must be capable of repetition indefinitely at will.

II. The existence of material substance, though imperceptible to the senses, may also be proved by inference from actions and effects perceptible to the senses, as in the case of the luminiferous ether; but this method of proof does not possess the certainty attaching to I.

III. The existence and action of "force" is proved by observed changes in the condition of sensible matter.

IV. The presence of intelligence may be inferred from the actions of a body perceptible to the senses; though the nature of the relation which the intelligence bears to that body must be separately determined, *e.g.*, the signals in a telegraphic instrument.

Let us apply these canons to the various classes of evidence adducible as to (a).

(A) The evidence of the so-called spiritualistic phenomena.

1. *Materialisation.* There is a sufficient number of thoroughly well-authenticated instances of the materialisation of human forms to render the fact certain. But logically they do not "prove positively" man's survival after death, but only the appearance of a human form—which may or may not be adequately identified as the appearance of a known and once living man—from out of the invisible. But the main reason why this evidence is inadequate for *proof* is twofold: at present the records—especially as to identity—do not sufficiently satisfy the condition of there being "several simultaneous and concurrent observers," and second, because these observations are not as yet capable of "being repeated indefinitely at will."

When these conditions are satisfied, it may be possible to fill up the logical gap by convincing proof of personal identity, and then the survival of man would be proved.

2. *Communications through Mediums, etc.*—The

value of this line of evidence depends almost entirely on the establishment of the identity of the communicating intelligence. Dr. Richard Hodgson has recently been completely convinced by evidence along this line obtained through Mrs. Piper, but subjective, personal elements enter so largely into the estimation of evidence of this kind, that I question whether the "positive proof" which has convinced one person would convince another on hearsay or even in book form.

(B) *The evidence of persons possessing the so-called "psychic" senses.*—The first step is to establish the existence of such senses. On this head evidence is rapidly accumulating and before very long we may expect that unimpeachable proof on this point will be available.

Next would come the "simultaneous and concurrent" observation by several such psychic observers of human beings, still continuing to live and function intelligently in bodies of subtler matter after the disintegration of their physical bodies.

The careful use and observation of canons I., II. and IV. would furnish complete, logical and *positive* proof of this; but how far such observations, when read or heard at second-hand, would be more effective and convincing than the communications through mediums, is not easy to determine. Indeed, one may almost say that, practically speaking, until the opportunities of first-hand verification become so numerous and widespread that everyone can avail himself of them at little trouble or expense, it is very doubtful whether a majority of the thinking world will be convinced, and even then one may question whether anything short of the development of the psychic senses in themselves will really prove convincing to many sceptical temperaments. For evidence which is logically sufficient and amply authenticated is very often indeed singularly lacking in its power of impressing minds antagonistic to the idea in question. So that at last we came down to the bed-rock of human nature and find that in such matters every individual must, in the last analysis, obtain his own conviction for himself, and that not infrequently this conviction, is not in truth determined by either logic, reason, or evidence at all.

(b) On this point two lines of argument are open to us. The first is philosophical and metaphysical, and is indeed the only one *logically* valid. For the second, the argument from the use of the higher devachanic senses, though it proves the continuance and survival of the ego after the disintegration of the astral and lower mental bodies, and the fact of reincarnation, cannot prove logically the "immortality" of the ego, since though the powers of observation of these higher perceptive faculties extend backwards through millions of years, and can trace the evolution of the Ego throughout these enormous spaces of time, yet that time is *finite*, and as the ego itself has a beginning, so also it *may* have an end, for all that even such powers of observation can tell, since they do not cover *infinite* duration.

Hence we are in reality thrown back on the philosophical and metaphysical argument, strengthened and confirmed, however, by the verification of its accuracy within the tremendous scope of observation open to the consciousness functioning in the causal body.

(c) I hold that it is, on the lines indicated above. But again I must admit that what seems to me an absolutely convincing line of argument may not appeal equally to other minds. And the only *positive proof*—that of actual first-hand individual experience—is in this case unattainable, since it involves the experience of unbroken existence throughout *infinite* time, if the term "immortality" be taken strictly. But if for "eternal" immortality we content ourselves with "æonian" immortality measured by a cycle of years requiring fifteen ciphers for its expression, then such "positive proof" is accessible along lines analogous to those indicated in (b) for the demonstration of man's survival after the death of his physical body.

QUESTION CCCCXXXIX.

C. S.—*What interpretation does Theosophy put on the account of the healing the palsied man and our Lord's remark at the time (Mark ii. 5 and 10).*

G. R. S. M.—The incident of the healing of the paralytic is also given by the other synoptical gospel-compilers (Matth. ix. 1. *sqq.*, and Luke v. 18 *sqq.*). The wording of the "sayings" in the recital is nearly identical in these documents, while the introductory passages and the attendant incidents, on the contrary, are very divergent. The verses referred to read as follows: "He says unto the paralytic, Be of good courage, child, thy sins be forgiven" (Matth.)—"Child, thy sins be forgiven" (Mark)—"Man, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Luke). And again: "But that ye may know that the Son of the man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Matth., Mark, Luke). It is evident that all the accounts are based upon a shorter common document, which was probably first of all translated from the Hebrew into Greek. The point of the narrative is not the healing-wonder which was the commonplace of antiquity, especially as the power of working such cures was claimed by the most pious of the Pharisees, as the result of their ninth degree of purity; but the answer attributed to Jesus. First, he is made to claim to be the Son of the [Heavenly] Man, that is to say, in direct relationship with the Logos, and secondly, to have the power to forgive sins. To the orthodox Jew the latter claim was naturally pure blasphemy, for, according to him, no one could forgive sins but God alone. The Theosophical student, of course, has no difficulty in admitting the healing of the paralytic; thousands of far lesser mortals than Jesus have done as much. The question for us is whether we can admit the claim to forgive sins, for the claim that the Christ in Jesus was a "Son of 'the Man'"—was one of the Sons of God—presents no difficulty, provided that we have not to assent to the later dogma, that Christ was the *only* Son of God.

The writer of the incident plainly put forward the doctrine that physical suffering is the outcome of "sin," a common belief at the time, and one that a Theosophist may accept, though he may ascribe a different meaning to the term "sin" than the orthodox Christian signification, and find a scientific basis for offences against the law of evolution on the physical, psychic, mental and spiritual planes, all acting and reacting on one another in a distinct and *substantial* fashion. The doctrine of the forgiveness of sins has been worked out in a striking fashion by some of the Gnostic schools, there being many degrees of forgiveness—the sins being categorised from simple transgressions up to the most heinous crimes. These degrees of forgiveness could be exercised by disciples according to the illumination they had received and the stage of spiritual knowledge and purity at which they had arrived; but the ultimate forgiveness ever remained in the hand of the First Mystery, the Logos Himself, who for the world to which we belong is identical with God. The forgiveness of sins for these early Christian philosophers, however, meant the imparting of a certain power or "mystery," as they called it, whereby the recipient was enabled to gain a breathing space, and this power—whether given for physical healing or mental or spiritual help—could only be imparted by one who had knowledge of the past of the sinner; at the same time the doctrine that every deed had to be worked out, and every debt paid unto the last farthing, was strenuously maintained. The "forgiveness" might alleviate for the time, but the results of every cause set in motion had to be borne. This Gnostic doctrine seems to be also held by the best minds in Christendom to-day, who together with Theosophical students reject the idea of an entire wiping out of the past by miraculous means, and explain the "forgiveness of sins" as an imparting of what the theologian would call the "grace of God," whereby the man is strengthened to bear his karma.

The text of the account of the incident—which is plainly dressed out to suit doctrinal purposes—as it has come down to us, is evidently faulty, and the answer given has all the appearance of a *non-sequitur*. "But that ye might know that the Son of the Man hath power to forgive sins, he saith to the sick of the palsy, Arise," etc. We should rather have expected the reiteration of the first command: "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

Our questioner writes: "I am much interested in Theosophy, but I want to see that its views tally with the teachings of our Great Master." True Theosophy tallies in every detail with the teaching of the Christ, but the difficulty is to discover what the Christ really taught. We have such imperfect and contradictory accounts from the first two centuries that with the best will in the world it is impossible to get at the truth by ordinary means; but of course the ordinary believer in Christianity who has read nothing but the translation of a very few selected books out of a huge literature of which indeed he generally knows

not even the existence, cannot be expected even to appreciate the problem.

QUESTION CCCCXL.

H. A. S.—*We have been told that all who die suddenly from accident are consigned to the lowest subdivision of the astral plane until such time as their death would normally have occurred. Does not this seem somewhat hard, especially in the case of young children?*

C. W. L.—If the statement quoted were true it certainly would seem to be rather a hard case, but all the evidence with which we are yet acquainted goes entirely the other way. Large numbers of accidents, both to adults and children, have naturally come under the notice of those whose duty it is to try to smooth the path of the departing, and among them all no single case has yet been observed in which the suggested rule held good; so that if it is, or ever was, really a rule, it does not appear to be operative at the present time.

To quote a few only out of many examples well-known to me, there is first of all the case of the two brothers, so well described in *The Theosophical Review* for November last. It will be remembered that one of them, a boy of about fourteen, was killed by an accident in the hunting-field, so that he presents in many ways what might be considered a typical instance. Now it is, of course, quite impossible for us to say what would have been the natural limit of his life if this had not happened, but it seems hardly likely that it could have been adequately represented by the few hours of entire unconsciousness which were all that he passed upon the lowest subdivision of the astral plane. When he came to himself at the expiration of that time he found himself on the sixth sub-plane among the home surroundings with which he was so familiar, and it was there that the helper's attention was attracted to him—there also that he still remains, trying in his turn to pass on to others the aid which was so freely rendered to him.

The other example to which I referred was the case of a child killed by violence at the still earlier age of seven. He spent a few months only on the astral plane, not touching the lowest level consciously at all, and was in Devachan for about fifteen years; he then reincarnated in the ordinary way, and is alive at the present time.

Yet another case was that of a child drowned at the age of twelve, who did not reincarnate until forty-one years later; but as he spent thirty-seven of these in Devachan and did not consciously touch the lowest level of the astral plane during the four years of his life there, he can hardly be said to exemplify the supposed rule quoted by the questioner.

So far as we are able to see, the sub-plane of the astral upon which a man, whether young or old, recovers consciousness after death, is not at all determined by the nature of that death, but

by quite other factors. The human being starts in life with an astral body in which matter of all the sub-planes is mingled in proportions determined partly by the general development of the ego, and partly by the nature of his last earth-life. But whether as he grows up he retains this proportion depends entirely upon the use he makes of that astral body.

If he gives way to and intensifies all his lower desires he will steadily increase the amount of the coarser and denser matter in his kâmic vehicle, and there will be a proportionate decrease in the amount of the finer matter of the higher sub-planes. If on the contrary he steadily represses these lower tendencies, his astral body will develop on exactly opposite lines, becoming gradually more and more refined, and as the various particles in turn pass away from the body, the tendency will be always to replace them by others of higher quality.

It must by this time be well understood by all students of Theosophical literature how after death the kâmic elemental rearranges the matter of which the astral body is composed, and how consequently the length of a man's stay upon any sub-plane depends upon the amount of matter belonging to that sub-plane which he has built into himself during earth-life. To this rule there is no kind of exception, so far as we are yet aware, except that of course a man's actions when he finds himself conscious upon any sub-plane may within certain limits either shorten or prolong his connection with it.

But the amount of consciousness that a person will have upon a given sub-plane does not invariably follow precisely the same law. Let us consider an extreme example of possible variation in order that we may grasp its method. Suppose a man who has brought over from his past incarnation tendencies requiring for their manifestation a very large amount of the matter of the seventh or lowest sub-plane, but has in his present life been fortunate enough to learn in his very earliest years the possibility and necessity of controlling these tendencies. Of course it is very improbable that such a man's efforts at control should be entirely and uniformly successful; but if they were, the substitution of finer for grosser particles would progress steadily, though slowly.

This process is at best a very gradual one, and it might well happen that the man died before it was half completed. In that case there would undoubtedly be enough matter of the lowest sub-plane left in his astral body to ensure him no inconsiderable residence there; but it would be matter through which in this incarnation his consciousness had never been in the habit of functioning, and as it could not suddenly acquire this habit the result would be that the man would rest upon that sub-plane until his share of its matter was disintegrated, but would be all the while in a condition of unconsciousness—that is to say, he would practically sleep through the period of his sojourn

there, and so would be entirely unaffected by its many disagreeables.

It will be seen that both these factors of *post-mortem* existence—the sub-plane to which the man is carried, and the degree of his consciousness there—depend not upon the nature of his death but upon the nature of his life, and that no accident, however sudden or terrible, can seriously affect them. Nevertheless, there is reason behind the familiar old prayer of the Church “From sudden death, good Lord, deliver us.” For though a sudden death does not necessarily affect the man's position upon the astral plane in any way for the worse, at least it does nothing to improve it, whereas the slow wasting away of the aged, or the ravages of any kind of long-continued disease are almost invariably accompanied by very considerable loosening and breaking up of astral particles, so that when the man recovers consciousness upon the astral plane, he finds some at any rate of his great work there already done for him.

It is also undoubtedly true that the great mental disturbance and terror which sometimes accompany accidental death are in themselves a very unfavourable preparation for the astral life; indeed, cases have been known in which such agitation and terror persisted even after death, though this is happily rare. But enough has been said to show that the popular desire to have some time in which to prepare for death is not a mere superstition, but has a certain amount of reason at the back of it.

Naturally to any one who is leading the Theosophical life it will make but little difference whether the transition from the physical plane to the astral comes slowly or quickly, since he is all the time doing his best to make as much progress as possible, and the object before him will remain the same in either case.

To sum up then: it seems clear that death by accident does not necessarily involve any lengthy residence on the lowest level of the astral plane, though it may in one sense be said slightly to prolong such residence, since it deprives the victim of the opportunity of wearing out the particles belonging to that level during the sufferings of a lingering disease. With regard to young children, it is exceedingly unlikely that in their short and comparatively blameless earth-lives they should ever develop much affinity for the lowest subdivision of astral life; indeed as a matter of practical experience, they are hardly ever to be found in connection with that sub-plane at all. In any case, whether they die by accident or disease, their life on the astral plane appears to be a comparatively short one; their Devachan, though much longer, is still in reasonable proportion to it, and their early reincarnation follows, as soon as the forces they have been able to set in motion during their short earth lives work themselves out, precisely as we might expect from our observation of the action of the same great law in the case of adults.