

# 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.

VOL. VIII.

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NO. 1.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### CONVENTION REPORT.

With this issue of THE VĀHAN the report of the Eighth Annual Convention of the European Section is sent.

### GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE.

#### Notice to Secretaries of Branches.

As it is important that the Register of Members in this office should be kept posted correctly up to date, I shall be glad if Secretaries of Branches will be so good, in event of any member of their Branch resigning either from the *Branch* or the *Society*, as to notify me at once of the fact—and in case of resignation from the Society, the Secretary should also request a return of the certificate of membership, which can then be forwarded to this office. Owing to the neglect of this in the past, our list of members is very unreliable.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary*.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to July 20th: Thos. Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; Mrs. Marshall, £10; London Lodge, £5; A. C. P., £5; Mrs. Wallis, £1 1s.; Gilbert Graham, £1; Anon., £1; Mrs. Robinson, 16s.; F. Krüger, 10s.; Miss C. Cust, 10s.; Alexander Dencks, 10s.; H. Dawson, 5s. 9d.; Miss Evans, 5s.; C. J. Harris, 5s.; Miss Falkinder, 5s.; R. C. Minton, 5s.; E. S., 5s.; Miss Claxton, 2s. 6d.; Madame Mersch, 2s. 6d.; *Omitted from last issue*: Mrs. Tibbits, £5; Miss Cooper, 10s.; Mrs. Cullander, 10s.; Mrs. Midgley, 2s. 6d. Total, £34 7s. 9d.

### Section Reference Library.

This Library will be closed during the month of August.

The following books are acknowledged with thanks: *De Zeven Beginselen van den Mensch*, Annie Besant; *Vier Voordrachten over Theosofie*, Annie Besant; *Annie Besant; een Korte Levensschets*, Johan van Manen; *Levenstoestanden na den Dood*, Annie Besant.

ANNIE J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

### Theosophical Lending Library.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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*.

### Thornton Heath Branch.

The Thornton Heath Branch has changed its name, and in future will be known as the Croydon Branch.

### New Centre.

A new Centre, to be known as the Battersea Centre, has been formed at Battersea, under the direction of Mr. Philip Tovey.

### North of England Federation.

The quarterly meeting will be held at Harrogate on Saturday, August 20th, at 3 p.m. Mrs. Besant

has kindly consented to preside and will give an address on "Emotion, Intellect and Spirituality." Members of the Society, whether members of affiliated Branches or not, are cordially invited. Mrs. Besant will also deliver two public lectures in Harrogate on Sunday, August 21st; in the afternoon the subject will be "The Mystic Christ," and in the evening "The Good and Evil of Competition."

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

#### Musæus School and Orphanage.

In reply to an urgent appeal for help from Ceylon, one of our Dutch members has offered to go out, and Mrs. Higgins, the Principal of the Musæus School and Orphanage for Buddhist Girls, has gratefully accepted the offer. The Dutch Section now desires to raise the money to pay her passage out to Ceylon. If any English friends are willing to contribute, Miss Willson, 19, Avenue Road, will receive their donations and forward them to Mrs. Windust, Amsteldijk 76, Amsterdam.

#### Mrs. Besant's Lectures.

Mrs. Besant is giving a course of lectures upon "Esoteric Christianity," in the Small Queen's Hall, Langham Place, W., upon Sunday evenings, at 7 o'clock. On July 3rd, she spoke on "The Hidden Side of Religions;" on July 17th, on "The Trinity and Divine Incarnation;" on July 24th, on "The Atonement and the Law of Sacrifice;" on July 31st, on "Sacraments and Revelation;" and on August 7th, the course will conclude with a lecture on "Natural and Spiritual Bodies, Resurrection and Ascension."

#### Blavatsky Lodge.

The Lodge rejoices greatly in the presence, for all too brief a time, of its President.

Mrs. Besant has lectured three times to the Lodge since her return. On June 30th she took the place of Mr. Burrows, who was unable through illness to fulfil his engagement; on July 7th, she again lectured, her subject being "Emotion, Intellect and Spirituality;" and on July 21st, she spoke on "Individuality." It is needless to say that all these lectures were of the highest importance, and members of the Lodge and others will be glad to hear that they are to be printed, so that all who care to do so will have the opportunity of reading them—which is not the same thing, but is next best to hearing them.

On June 23rd Mr. Mead continued his subject of a previous occasion, "The Sibyl and her Oracles," and gave much information of a very suggestive character. The other lecturer for the month has been Mr. Bertram Keightley, who spoke most interestingly on "Methods Experimental and Intuitive." The lecture was based upon an explanation and comparison of the Aristotelian and Platonic methods of research.

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 "The Commercial Hotel," Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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 suspended until October.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: August 7th, *Two World-Saviours*, Miss Shaw; August 14th, *The Practical Application of Theosophy*, C. W. Leadbeater; August 21st (3 p.m.), *The Mystic Christ*, (7 p.m.) *The Good and Evil of Competition*, Mrs. Besant; August 28th, *Theosophy and the Conduct of Life*, W. H. Thomas. 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 suspended until September.

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.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings suspended until September.

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

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: August 2nd, *Self Realisa-*

tion, Mrs. Leo; August 9th; *Maya*, Fred. Horne; August 16th, *Intuition and Reason*, W. P. Swainson; August 23rd, *Spiritual Laws*, Philip Tovey.

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.

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. Meetings suspended 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 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.

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

Left, (5) Male and Female, (6) Stationary and Moved, (7) Straight and Curved, (8) Light and Darkness, (9) Good and Bad, (10) Square and Oblong. The first of each pair was looked upon as a good element, the second as bad, in the sense of negative. Moreover, the terms of the first column seem to be taken as synonymous, and so apparently are the elements of the second column.

Perhaps the statement of the questioner means simply that any pair of opposites produces equilibrium and so harmony.

Again if you take a unit square or monad and to it add three others (the three forming a gnomon), the whole figure of four will produce a new square, and the harmony will be restored; but the simplest oblong consists of two unit squares in juxtaposition. The union of the square and oblong (the gnomon) may thus be said to produce harmony. But I am not certain that this is the correct explanation of the problem, nor am I even sure that the statement in the question is correct. I would strongly urge students to send in references to all such queries.

There may, however, be other explanations. For instance, the Pythagoreans called such a sequence of numbers as 4, 9, 16, 25, "squares," and represented them diagrammatically by so many points or monads; equally so they called the sequence 3, 6, 10, 15 "triangles," representing them by diagrams of 3 points or monads, 5 points, etc., arranged in triangular figures. Perhaps they may also have had an "oblong" series, and a harmonical progression may have resulted from the square and oblong series; but this is a pure speculation, and I cannot see at present how it could have been possible.

Again in Mason's article on Pythagoras in the *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography* we read "as in the octave and its different harmonical relations the Pythagoreans found the ground of connection between the opposed primary elements, and the mutual relation of existing things, so in the properties of particular numbers, and their relation to the principia, did they attempt to find the explanation of the particular properties of different things, and therefore addressed themselves to the investigation of the properties of numbers, dividing them into various species. Thus they had three kinds of *even*, according as the number was a power of two, or a multiple of two, or of some power of two, not itself a power of two, or the even of an odd and an even number. In like manner they had three kinds of *odd*."

Now a square is an even number, and the simplest oblong is formed by the juxtaposition of two monad squares, the sum of square and oblong thus making three (the first odd number, for one is both odd and even), which number was spoken of "as defining or limiting the universe and all things, having end, middle and beginning, and so being the number of the *whole*." Perhaps the explanation may lie in this direction. These suggestions are put forward with all hesitation, and I can only repeat that it would have been better to give the reference to the author who makes the statement.

## ENQUIRER.

### QUESTION CCCCXLI.

A. C. L.—*Pythagoras amongst other groups of opposites gives the square and oblong, the union of which he asserts produces harmony. How can this be explained?*

G. R. S. M.—The ten pairs of opposites which the Pythagoreans termed the "elements" of the universe are: (1) Limited and Unlimited, (2) Odd and Even, (3) One and Multitude, (4) Right and

And by author I mean the classical author and not the speculations or inferences of the moderns.

QUESTION CCCCXLII.

*L. M. T.—Is it possible to throw a little more light upon the difficult and obscure question of repercussion? In An Astral Experience, published some time ago in LUCIFER, it was stated that the victim on waking found his feet stained with the blood of the elemental dragon which he had encountered while away from his body, which shows clearly the close sympathy between the physical body and the materialized form; yet with reference to a more recent story of the wider life given in In the Twilight I am told that the boy who materialized himself in order to save another from a burning house was in no kind of danger, and that his physical body would not have suffered in any way even though his materialized form had passed through the flames or fallen from the high ledge described. Why was there so much less sympathy in this case—supposing, that is, that both the stories are true?*

C. W. L.—Both the stories are undoubtedly true, and not at all irreconcilable. As the questioner quite rightly remarks, the subject of repercussion is a difficult and obscure one, and we have not yet sufficient knowledge of it to enable us to undertake any real explanation of its phenomena; yet several points of difference between the two cases cited at once suggest themselves which may probably account for the dissimilarity of result.

First it must be remembered that there are at least three well-defined varieties of materialization, as anyone who has at all an extended experience of spiritualism will be aware.

1. There is the materialization which, though tangible, is not visible to ordinary physical sight. Of this nature are the unseen hands which so often clasp one's arm or stroke one's face at a *séance*, which sometimes carry physical objects through the air or produce raps upon the table—though of course both these latter phenomena may be produced without a materialized hand at all.

2. There is the materialization which though visible is not tangible—the spirit-form through which one's hand passes as through empty air. In some cases this variety is obviously misty and impalpable, but in others its appearance is so entirely normal that its solidity is never doubted until some one endeavours to grasp it.

3. There is the perfect materialization which is both visible and tangible—which not only bears the outward semblance of your departed friend, but shakes you cordially by the hand with the very clasp you know so well.

Now while there is a good deal of evidence to show that repercussion takes place under certain conditions in the case of this third kind of materialization, it is by no means so certain that it can occur with the first or second class. There seems little doubt that in the case described in "An Astral Experience" we have an example of a full

materialization of the third class, judging from the footprints found the next morning in the sand on the shore of the island; whereas in the case of the boy helper it is probable that the materialization would not be of that type, since the greatest care is always taken not to expend more force than is absolutely necessary to produce whatever result may be required, and it is obvious that less energy would be used in the production of the more partial forms which we have called the first and second classes. The probability is that only the arm with which the boy held his little companion would be solid to the touch, and that the rest of his body, though looking perfectly natural, would have proved far less palpable if it had been tested.

But, apart from this probability, there is another undoubted difference between the two cases which would of itself be quite sufficient to account for the variety in results. When a full materialization takes place, whether the subject be living or dead, physical matter of some sort has to be gathered together for the purpose. At a spiritualistic *séance* this matter is obtained by drawing largely upon the etheric double of the medium—and sometimes even upon his physical body also, since cases are on record in which his weight has been very considerably decreased while manifestations of this character were taking place.

This method is employed by the directing entities of the *séance* simply because when an available medium is within reach it is very much the easiest way in which a materialization can be brought about; and the consequence is that the very closest connection is thus set up between that medium and the materialized form, so that the phenomenon which (although very imperfectly understanding it) we call repercussion occurs in its clearest form. If, for example, the hands of the materialized body be rubbed with chalk, that chalk will afterwards be found upon the hands of the medium, even though he may have been all the time carefully locked up in a cabinet under circumstances which absolutely precluded any suspicion of fraud. If any injury be inflicted upon the materialized form, that injury will be accurately reproduced upon the corresponding part of the medium's body; in one case at any rate, food of which the spirit-form had partaken was found to have passed into the body of the medium.

There seems little doubt that the materialization described in "An Astral Experience" (a very unusual experience, be it remembered), was managed in this manner, and that whatever matter may have been required for such materialization as was necessary was temporarily withdrawn from the etheric and physical bodies of the writer of the account. Since it is evident that the whole incident took place under the immediate eye of the Master there could be no possible danger, and as the theatre of operations was in the near neighbourhood of the bed on which the body was left, this method would be easy and convenient.

It would be far otherwise, however, in the second case quoted. Cyril was in America, thousands of miles from his sleeping physical body, upon which,



therefore, it would be quite impossible for him to draw, and the regulations under which all pupils of the great Masters of Wisdom perform their work of helping man would assuredly prevent him, even for the noblest purpose, from putting such a strain upon any one else. Besides, it would be quite unnecessary, for the far less dangerous method invariably employed by the helpers when materialization seems desirable would be ready to his hand—the condensation from the circumambient ether, or even from the physical air, of such amount of matter as may be requisite. This feat, though no doubt beyond the power of the average entity manifesting at a *séance*, presents no difficulty to a student of occult chemistry.

But mark the difference in the result obtained. In the former case we have a materialized form in the closest possible connection with the physical body, made out of its very substance, and therefore capable of producing all the phenomena of repercussion. In the latter we have indeed an exact reproduction of the physical body, but it is created by a mental effort out of matter entirely foreign to that body, and is no more capable of acting upon it by repercussion than an ordinary marble statue of the man would be.

Thus it is that a passage through the flames or a fall from a high window-ledge would have had no terrors for the boy-helper, and that on another occasion a member of the band, though materialized, was able without any inconvenience to the physical body to go down in a sinking vessel. While we are by no means as yet in a position fully to explain the very remarkable phenomena of repercussion, we yet know by observation some of the conditions which permit its action and some which definitely exclude it, and so we are able to answer the question as far as this; but in order to understand the subject perfectly, it would probably be necessary to comprehend the laws of sympathetic vibration on more planes than one.

#### QUESTION CCCCXLIII.

J. M. M.—*In vol. IV. of LUCIFER, page 98, is the following: "Only a generation ago Darwin tickled the scientific world and convulsed the religious by inventing 'natural selection,' by which animals passed on their types, so to speak, to the next of kin. No assumption of recent years partakes more of the character of a metaphysical delusion; nor perhaps does any other scientific fad conflict more with the bible doctrine that every animal and every tree is self-contained, 'having its seed in itself.' Every true physiologist ought to understand this profound truth and its striking confirmation in scientific analogies which cannot be explained here." Will you kindly give some of the scientific analogies and the names of the works from which they are taken?*

A. B.—Referring to the article, I find it is a reprint from an anonymous article in the *Pioneer*, inserted to show "how the belief in reincarnation

is gaining ground even among the uninitiated Western writers." The casual remark anent Darwin by an unknown non-theosophical writer is not one that we can either defend or explain, nor can we know what analogies he had in mind. Most educated persons would entirely disagree with him. Students, in reading Theosophical literature, and especially in reading magazines, should pay some attention to the mental position of the writers, or they will be apt to take up an even more confused idea of "Theosophy" than is unfortunately already too often the case.

#### QUESTION CCCCXLIV.

H. P. W.—*I have little difficulty in believing in the existence of Masters, of beings much more highly developed and further advanced in human evolution than we, but am in extreme difficulty in endeavouring to find evidence that these great ones are behind the work of the Theosophical Society. Briefly, here is the Theosophical Society and here are the Masters. Where is the "missing link" which connects the two? What, in short, is the evidence, or suggested course of study to pursue, to prove that the Theosophical Society is the medium of the teachings of these great souls?*

B. K.—There are a number of distinct lines of evidence which a student may follow, all of which form links going to establish the fact of direct connection between the Masters—whose existence and reality are admitted in the question—and the Theosophical Society. The value of each of these converging lines of evidence is increased in geometrical ratio by the fact that they are cumulative and coincident, so that it seems to me irresistible by any logical and impartial mind which is not caught in the toils of materialism. I propose to indicate very briefly in outline some of these lines of evidence—those which most appeal to my own mind; but I feel confident that other students will be able to add not inconsiderably to their number, as well as greatly to elaborate them and strengthen their cogency.

(a) DIRECT TESTIMONY. The existence of the Masters being admitted, the value of the personal evidence and declaration of those by whom the great volume of modern Theosophical teaching has been given to the world, becomes of great importance.

Madame Blavatsky—the first great modern exponent of Theosophy and the founder of the Theosophical Society—unswervingly asserted herself to be simply a humble pupil of the Masters, and maintained that she had founded the Society, and was devoting her whole life to its work, simply because her Master had desired her to do so, and because he took an active interest in its development and progress. As Madame Blavatsky was the first in the latter part of our century to revive with new life and reality the ancient ideal of the Masters of Wisdom, her evidence is important, but needs corroboration. This was obtained in the

early eighties in public print, at the hands of the late Mr. T. Subba Row and various other gentlemen in India, who possessed independent and first-hand knowledge not only of the existence of Masters, but of the two definite individual Masters who have been so intimately connected with the Theosophical Society. Mr. Subba Row and others have testified that they joined the Theosophical Society under the advice and direction of their respective Masters.

Then we have Colonel Olcott's testimony, to be found at length in his *Old Diary Leaves*, while later on we have the frank personal affirmations repeatedly made in public by Mrs. Besant of her own direct personal knowledge of the Masters and of their continued interest in the Theosophical Society. Similar testimony has been given by others, especially by those to whom we owe by far the largest and most valuable part of modern Theosophical literature, and as they one and all agree in asserting that all they have been enabled to give out of new teaching and illumination has come to them from the Masters, whom all alike identify and recognise, it seems to me that their statements as to the unbroken interest of these Masters in the Theosophical Society and their connection with it are unassailable by anyone who admits the existence of Masters at all, since absolutely no reason can be suggested why they should thus all conspire together to deceive on such a matter.

In addition to those I have mentioned, who are well known both in the Theosophical Society and outside it, I may cite the concurrent and confirmatory testimony of at least six other persons privileged in the possession of intimate, direct, personal knowledge of the Masters. These are all known to me personally, and can very possibly be identified by the closer students in the Society, though as circumstances have not hitherto made it needful for their names to be given in print, it is certainly undesirable to give them here.

We have thus a body of direct, first-hand testimony to the connection of the Masters with the Theosophical Society, beginning with Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, coming down in an ever-growing and widening stream, right to the present moment, and still continually broadening and deepening and growing in volume. And it is certainly significant that all the most valuable of modern Theosophic teaching has come to us from people who ascribe their own knowledge and power to help us invariably to these same Masters.

Lastly, as coming under this head of direct testimony, may be urged the personal experience of all those who have complied with the well-known conditions which the unvarying tradition of the ages has laid down as necessary for initiation. Each who has done so has found himself in direct relation with a Master, and has recognised that the Theosophical Society has been called into existence under the guidance of the Masters' Lodge in order to proclaim to the world and make less difficult of access the ancient and imperishable Pathway of Initiation.

(b) IDENTITY OF TEACHING. The claim made on behalf of modern Theosophical teaching that it is but the fuller, clearer, more systematical exposition of the truth underlying every world-faith, is year by year receiving more complete and detailed proof at the hands of students. For instance, Mr. Mead is in course of demonstrating, on unimpeachable literary and documentary evidence, the absolute identity of the teaching given in the Ancient Mysteries of classical antiquity, in the schools of Pythagoras, the Later Platonists, and the Early Christian Gnostics, with that of our present Theosophy; while Mr. Chatterji is applying the same key to proving the harmonious agreement in fundamental thought between the great Brâhmanical and Buddhist systems of teaching.

Now, if the Masters exist at all and play any part in the world's evolution, it is surely in these great monuments of human religious and philosophical thought that, if anywhere, we must seek for traces of their handiwork. The fact that all these great systems, so widely divergent in outer form and environment, should yet be identical in all fundamental teachings, is in itself the strongest evidence of a common source, and plainly suggests the influence of the Masters in their origination. Granting this—and the proof is daily becoming more and more irresistible—and finding that our modern Theosophic teaching gives the clue to a full explanation of all these older systems, can anyone resist the force of the inference that our modern teaching must come from the same source as that from which flowed the inspiration that has given such age-long vitality and power to the older systems? If we recognise in the systems of the old world the handiwork of the Masters, how shall we deny its presence in the Theosophy of to-day, when that Theosophy is proving so potent a clue to the unravelling and understanding of those ancient monuments of thought and wisdom?

But, some one may urge, there is a great break from the last of the great Gnostics to our own time. Not so; that break is covered by a continuous and unbroken tradition, of which Mrs. Cooper-Oakley is at present fitting together and verifying the successive links, and through it all runs the same identical keynote, in it all are found the same essential and fundamental features of teaching.

(c.) ARGUMENT FROM THE TEACHING ITSELF. As to our modern Theosophic teaching itself, we may argue as follows: either it is a mere product of the thought and imagination of Madame Blavatsky and her followers, or else it comes from some other source to which both she and they have access. But the latter alternative is equivalent to admitting that the teaching comes from the Masters, and hence that these Masters are directly interested in, and connected with, the Theosophical Society and movement. Let us then examine the former alternative a little more closely.

Subsequent to Madame Blavatsky, perhaps the persons mainly responsible for putting forward new teaching are three: Mrs. Besant, Mr. Sinnett and Mr. Leadbeater. Now, I am confident that among

those who have the honour of personal intimacy with these three, one and all will agree with me that it would be difficult to find three people more completely divergent in type and cast of mind, in temperament and in character, in previous training, experience and environment. Further, it is well known that each writes and works independently, as is abundantly evidenced by their respective writings. Compare, for instance, Mrs. Besant's *Ancient Wisdom* with Mr. Sinnett's *Growth of the Soul* and Mr. Leadbeater's *Manuals on the Astral and Devachanic Planes*, and his articles in the *Theosophical Review*. Now, if each of these three were simply elaborating, by his or her own thought and imagination, the data to be found in Madame Blavatsky's writings, it is obvious that they must produce mutually divergent, inconsistent and incompatible systems. But that, as a matter of fact, is not the case. On the contrary, the most striking and remarkable feature in their respective work is the marvellous way in which the work done by each dovetails and fits in with that of the others and harmonises into a consistent and coherent whole. I appeal on this to the judgment of every close and well informed student of Theosophy, confident that he will endorse the above statement to the fullest extent.

Moreover, not one of the three is a "scholar"; not one of them has any classical knowledge or any special acquaintance with Later Platonism, Gnosticism, or the ancient traditions of the Mysteries in the Graeco-Roman world. Yet a thorough and accurate scholar like Mr. Mead finds their results and work not only in agreement with, but throwing floods of light upon, these obscure and little-known subjects, which he has made so especially his own.

Thus it seems to me wholly impossible to accept the theory that these three writers have simply expanded and elaborated by their own thought and imagination the data left by Madame Blavatsky; and hence we are reduced to the second of the above alternatives as an explanation, and can only find in a common source of teaching the basis for their agreement with each other, and for the illumination and usefulness which specialists like Messrs. Mead and Chatterji find therein in regard to their own particular lines of research.

This answer has gone to such a length that I must leave it to others to point out other lines of argument, and to elaborate the detail which adds so greatly to the cogency of those which I have all too briefly endeavoured to indicate.

#### QUESTION CCCCXLV.

H. D.—Why cannot karma generated in one life be worked out wholly in that life; or in other words, why do not effects immediately follow causes instead of waiting for several lives?

A. A. W.—The foundation of the difficulty the querist finds in the vast space of time karma may require for its complete working out, is the very common misconception of karma as a system of

rewards and punishments. Few who are or have been Christians can ever entirely get over the habit of mind which looks for an external Judge, who punishes crime and rewards virtue; and if you tell them there is none such they feel as if all the sanctions of morality were being destroyed. The conception that the effects of every action, good or bad, radiate through the universe as part of the vast system of causation which is karma, and return as reflected vibrations to the point whence they started, and to the person who sent them out—blessings as well as curses "coming home to roost"—is not at first easy to grasp. Unprejudiced observation shows that the facts of the world *are* so that a man suffers often for his good actions and makes a profit by evil ones; but we have been so long used, in the interests of what we call our morality, to force our observation and even our very senses to lie to us, habitually and at last unconsciously, that to be obliged to admit the unquestionable fact that the world is *not* governed by our moral laws (as we call them—apparently because they *don't* rule), is a very unpleasant cold water "douche," and raises much outcry. The real difficulty is to say how karma (thus defined) can ever come to an end except with the universe we have by our act disturbed, at what point the vibrations are so faint as to be practically lost; for it is evident that, *theoretically*, the universe, as the sum of all actions which have ever taken place, can never cease to be affected to *some* extent by it. If we keep in mind that not only our *circumstances*, but a very considerable part of our *character*, is the karmic result of our previous actions, we may find the matter easier. The natural weakness which makes it so specially hard to refrain from some injurious indulgence may very well have taken its rise many lives ago and been pampered by indulgence since. As we come to understand the harm of it we shall work against it; but every one of us must be familiar with cases in which one life has not been sufficient to gain freedom, however desperate the struggle may have been. The vulgar religion regards such souls as "lost" for ever by reason of their failure; the Wisdom knows that every such effort will have its reward in new strength for the next battle and that "no soul which holds *one* right desire goeth the road of loss." Talk of "comfort!" What comfort has popular religion to offer for ourselves and our beloved ones equal to the certainty that karma has *not* to be exhausted in the one life, but that each one will have as many new chances as he needs—that the world will endure for him until, at last, he *does* stand victor in the fight?

As long as our life lies in the pleasures of this lower world over which karma rules, so long, by the nature of things, must we be subject to its great Law. But, all the time, we have a life which is beyond "the opposites"—to which the pleasure and pain of the karmic evolution are equally unknown: the life of the spirit. When a man's higher ego gains full control over the lower self—when nothing which karma can bring

has power to gladden him, and nothing which karma takes away can grieve him—

Then sorrow ends, for life and death have ceased

What is there, in all the three worlds, which *could* bring it to an end before this point of deliverance is reached?

#### QUESTION CCCCXLVI.

*L. M. S.—Are those who die as lunatics still insane upon the astral plane after death, and if so, at what stage do they recover?*

C. W. L.—That would depend upon the type of their lunacy, and the depth to which it extended. Insanity is a deeply interesting subject, of which as yet we know but very little. Still, even the most superficial observation shows us that there are several different kinds of lunatics, and that the condition which we call madness down here may be brought about in various ways.

I think we may assume that it is always a karmic penalty, and one of the very heaviest that a soul can have to pay, since it means the possession of an unworkable instrument, and consequently either the partial or total loss of an incarnation. But as to the particular sins which are most likely to bring about so terrible a result we have little knowledge, except that we have been given to understand that cruelty is one of the chief among them.

But putting aside the karma which may be described as its remote cause, let us see what is usually the immediate cause of lunacy. We find that from the occult standpoint we may group the insane into four great classes, each of course having many subdivisions with which we have neither the time nor the knowledge to deal now.

1. Those who are insane merely from a defect of the dense physical brain—say from its insufficient size, or from some accident like a heavy blow, or some growth which causes pressure upon it. These are cases which may often be cured by purely physical operation, showing that nothing was wrong with any of the higher principles, but only with the physical vehicle, so that when that is put in order, all once more goes well.

2. Those who have something wrong with the etheric part of the brain, so that its particles no longer correspond perfectly with the denser physical particles, and so cannot properly bring through the vibrations from the higher vehicles.

3. Those in whom the astral body is in fault instead of the etheric—in whom there is a want of accurate adjustment between its particles and those of the vehicles either above or below it.

4. Those in whom the mind-body itself is in

some way out of order, and consequently unable to bring through the instructions or wishes of the ego.

Now it is obvious that the *post-mortem* conditions of these broad classes cannot but vary considerably. Those belonging to the first and second types would be quite sensible when out of the body in sleep, and of course they would also be all right as soon as they were dead; and fortunately these are much the commonest kinds of insanity. But the third type would not recover perfectly until they reached devachanic levels, and the fourth type not until they returned into the causal body; so that in both these cases the men would still be lunatics, even on the astral plane.

This is of course a mere rough sketch of the outline of a very large subject; but it may serve as a superficial answer to the question.

#### QUESTION CCCCXLVII.

*O. L.—To what language belongs the word "Dangma" of the Stanzas of Dzzyan, and what is its meaning?*

J. V. M.—The word Dangma is a pure Tibetan word. It is properly spelt Dwañs' ma', but pronounced Dangma. As H. P. B. tells us in *The Secret Doctrine* (i. 80, 3rd ed., note), it signifies "a purified soul" in its technical meaning.

Its first and literal signification, however, is "the chyle" (Sk. *rasa*), from the root dwañs' pa' = pure, clean, clear.

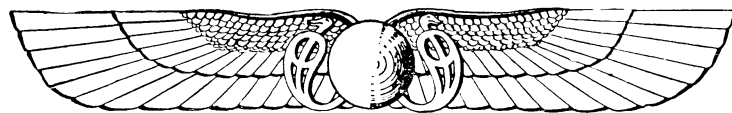
Jäschke, in his Dictionary, tells us that he has not found the word in its first-named signification in any book, but according to a Lama's statement the word denotes the soul when purified from every sin, and thus comparable to a clear and limpid fluid, in which every heterogeneous matter has been precipitated. Prof. Schmidt gives in his Wörterbuch simply the significations—"the spirit, the soul."

The root of the word seems to be connected with the simpler root dañ' ba' = to be pure, as a verb, and pure, clear, as an adjective.

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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

## 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.

VOL. VIII.

LONDON, SEPTEMBER 1, 1898.

NO. 2.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### TO OUR QUESTIONERS.

The editor desires herewith to circulate a growl. Our questioners are not playing fair with our pandits, and the editor finds it difficult to keep things in proportion. For one question on any other subject we have at least ten on matters astral. Now these psychic things can only be answered by one or two people, for THE VĀHAN does not propose to turn itself into a literary midden into which the frequent rubbish of guesses may be shot. The editorial sanctum possesses two or three drawers full of questions such as: Can the psychic eye see through a brick wall; if so why so, if not why not? Or: I frequently see specks before my eyes; do you think this is the astral light? Now all these things are important in their own sphere, and no one appreciates the information elicited from those who answer such questions in our columns more than the writer, but when his editorial eye runs over the questions to apportion them to answerers, and finds hardly one on any other subject, he protests that the thing is out of all proportion.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to August 20th: Miss Stephenson, 5s. 6d.; W. G. Wrattan, 5s.; A. Lloyd Burrell, 6s.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; G. Graham (monthly), £1. Total, £2 16s. 6d.

#### Section Reference Library.

The Reference Library is open to students, who are members of the Society, from 2 to 10 p.m., except on Thursday.

The following books are acknowledged with thanks: *Sonnige Welten, Ostasiatische Reiseskizzen*, Emil und Lenore Selenka, Wiesbaden, 1896; *Die Berechnung der Lehre, Eine Streitschrift zur Berichtigung der buddhistischen Chronologie*, verfasst im Jahre 1591, von Sureçamatibhadra. Aus dem Tibetischen übersetzt von Emil Schlagintweit, Munich, 1896.

ANNIE J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

### Theosophical Lending Library.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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*.

### Lecture List.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at "The Commercial Hotel," Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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 suspended until October.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Sept. 4th, *Phases of the Theosophical Movement*, O. Firth; Sept. 11th, *Conscience*, Miss Shaw; Sept. 18th, *The Theosophical Society*, E. J. Dunn; Sept. 25th, *Karma*, by members. 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, 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.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.: Sept. 1st, *Threads of the World-Web*, J. C. Chatterji; Sept. 8th, *The Religion of Chaldea*, C. W. Leadbeater; Sept. 15th and 22nd, *Hermes the Thrice-Greatest, I. and II.*, G. R. S. Mead; Sep. 29th, *Mystical Mohammedanism*, Otway Cuffe.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings suspended until October.

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Sept. 6th, *Esoteric Astrology*, Alan Leo; Sep. 13th, *Our Occult Ancestry: The Knights of Light*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley; Sept. 20th, *Karma*, C. W. Leadbeater; Sept. 27th, *The Work of a Theosophist*, Mrs. Sharpe. Students' Class, Sept. 8th and 22nd.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at Millfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Enquiries may be addressed to H. J. Stratton, 55, Carisbrooke Road, Walthamstow, E.

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, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.15 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 21, Rue Tronchet (office of *La Revue Théosophique Française*), on Mondays, Wednesdays 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.

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

### Blavatsky Lodge.

There have been two lectures only to record since last report, the Lodge being closed during August.

Mrs. Besant lectured both on July 21st and 28th, on the first of these dates taking her subject, "Individuality," as arranged, and on the 28th lecturing in the place of Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, who thought that the Lodge would appreciate the opportunity of hearing Mrs. Besant once more before her departure.

Mrs. Besant spoke upon "Some Difficulties of the Inner Life," a subject which had been suggested to her as likely to be of great help and interest.

At the close of her lecture, our President addressed a few farewell words to the Lodge.

S. M. S.

### ENQUIRER.

#### QUESTION CCCCXVIII.

S. v. W.—*Does Plato teach the theory of metempsychosis—by which I mean the incarnation of human souls into animal bodies and from these into human ones again? If he does so, how are we to reconcile this with the received opinion that Initiates of a high degree—like Plato—do not differ from each other in fundamental theo-*

sophical teachings? If he does not, how are we to understand the following passage in which he seems to do so? [Here follows a quotation in Greek from the *Phædrus* (249 B), which is italicised in the excerpt cited in the answer.]

G. R. S. M.—Let us first of all get the passage from the *Phædrus* and its context before us. As my text of this dialogue has mysteriously disappeared, I will use Taylor's translation (iii. 325, 326) in preference to Jowett's. Taylor does not write such good English, was not so fine a "scholar" as Jowett, but he is always more intelligent concerning things Platonic. The context of the passage runs as follows:

"No soul will return to its pristine condition till the expiration of ten thousand years: \* since it will not recover the use of its wings before this period; except it is the soul of one who has philosophised sincerely, or together with philosophy has loved beautiful forms. These, indeed, in the third period of a thousand years, if they have thrice chosen this mode of life in succession, and have thus restored their wings to their natural vigour, shall in the three thousandth year fly away to their pristine abode. But other souls, having arrived at the end of their first life, shall be judged. And of those who are judged, some proceeding to a subterranean place of judgment, shall there sustain the punishments they have deserved. But others, in consequence of a favourable judgment, being elevated into a certain celestial place, shall pass their time in a manner becoming the life they have lived in a human shape. And in the thousandth year, both the kinds of those who have been judged, returning to the lot and election of a second life, shall each of them receive a life agreeable to his desire. Here also the human soul shall pass into the life of a beast,† and from that of a beast again into a man, if it has first been the soul of a man. For the soul which has never perceived the truth, cannot pass into the human form."

Let us now turn to the disciples of the great Master for further light on this tenet, and first of all to Plotinus. The most sympathetic notice of this tenet in Plotinus is to be found in Jules Simon's

\* "The numbers three and ten are called perfect; because the former is the first complete number, and the latter in a certain respect the whole of number; the consequent series of numbers being only a repetition of the numbers which this contains. Hence, as 10 multiplied into itself produces 100, a plain [*sic*] number, and this again multiplied by 10 produces 1,000, a solid number; and as 1,000 multiplied by 3 forms 3,000, and 1,000 by 10, 10,000; on this account Plato employs these numbers as symbols of the purgation of the soul, and her restitution to her proper perfection and felicity. I say, as symbols; for we must not suppose that this is accomplished in just so many years, but that the soul's restitution takes place in a perfect manner."

† "We must not understand by this, that the soul of a man becomes the soul of a brute; but that by way of punishment it is bound to the soul of a brute, or carried in it, just as demons used to reside in our souls. Hence all the energies of the rational soul are perfectly impeded, and its intellectual eye beholds nothing but the dark and tumultuous phantasms of a brutal life."

*Histoire de l'École d'Alexandrie* (i. 588 sq.), based for the most part on En. I. i. 12; II. ix. 6; IV. iii. 9; V. ii. 2; and on Ficinus' Commentary, p. 508 of Creuzer's edition. After citing some "ironical" passages from Plotinus in which the philosopher disguised the real doctrine which in his day pertained to the secret teachings of initiation, Jules Simon goes on to say: "Even though admitting that this doctrine of metempsychosis is taken literally by Plotinus [which we are very far from doing], we should still have to ask for him as for Plato, whether the human soul really inhabits the body of an animal, and whether it is not reborn only into a human body which reflects the nature of a certain animal by the character of its passions. The commentators of the Alexandrian school sometimes interpreted Plato in this sense. Thus according to Proclus, Plato in the *Phædrus* condemns the wicked to live as brutes and not to become them, κατέλναι εἰς βῆδον θήρειον, καὶ οὐκ εἰς σῶμα θήρειον (Proclus, *Comm. Tim.*, p. 329). Chalcidius gives the same interpretation, for he distinguishes between the doctrines of Plato and those of Pythagoras and Empedocles, qui non naturam modo feram, sed etiam formas. Hermes (*Comm.* of Chalcidius on *Timæus*, ed. Fabric., p. 350) declares in unmistakable terms that a human soul can never return to the body of an animal, and that the will of the gods for ever preserves it from such disgrace, (θεοῦ γὰρ νόμος οὗτος, φυλάσσειν ἀνθρωπίνην ψυχὴν ἀπὸ τσαύτης ὕβρεως)."

Finally, Proclus in his Commentaries on the *Timæus*, in the place already referred to, writes definitely as follows: "It is usual to enquire how human souls can descend into brute animals. And some, indeed, think that there are certain similitudes of men to brutes, which they call savage lives; for they by no means think it possible that the rational essence can become the soul of a savage animal. On the contrary, others allow it may be sent into brutes, because all souls are of one and the same kind; so that they may become wolves and panthers and ichneumons. But true reason, indeed, asserts that the human soul may be lodged in brutes, yet in such a manner, as that it may obtain its own proper life, and that the degraded soul may, as it were, be carried above it, and be bound to the baser nature by a propensity and similitude of affection. And that this is the only mode of insinuation, we have proved by a multitude of arguments, in our commentaries on the *Phædrus*. If, however, it be requisite to take notice, that this is the opinion of Plato, we add that in his *Republic* he says, that the soul of Thersites assumed an ape, but not the body of an ape: and in the *Phædrus*, that the soul descends into a savage life, but not into a savage body. For life is conjoined with its proper soul. And in this place he says it is changed into a brutal nature. For a brutal nature is not a brutal body but a brutal life." (See *The Six Books of Proclus on the Theology of Plato*, Taylor's translation; London, 1816; p. 7, *Intro.*)

It is evident from the above that the same

question which puzzles S. v. W. also agitated the minds of the followers of Plato, and that it was keenly debated among them. It appears also that Chalcidius, who wrote in the fourth century A.D., was of opinion that Pythagoras taught metempsychosis in its crudest form; but in this he was but the forerunner of the scholasticism which has busied itself with Pythagoras without understanding even the elements of his psychology, and which has become a canon of criticism with our "Platonic" scholars of the nineteenth century of "enlightenment." *O tempora, O mores!*

The genuine followers of Pythagoras and Plato—the so-called Neo-Pythagoreans and Neo-Platonists—however, taught that the *soul* changed its nature and not the *body*, and who can deny that many a man and woman is a beast in human shape?

Is, then, the persistent popular belief, anciently current in the Græco-Roman world, and believed in by so many millions of Hindus and Buddhists to-day, that the soul of a man may pass back into the body of an animal, merely a baseless figment of priestly invention? H. P. Blavatsky teaches that such a transmigration was possible at a certain period of evolution, when the "door" from the animal kingdom into the human was still open, but that it is no longer possible, because that door has long been closed for our evolution. But there is an exception even to this rule; for those who choose evil for love of it, who set themselves in complete opposition to the current of evolution, gradually wear themselves out and incarnate in lower and lower types of life. It has often seemed to me that this exceptional possibility has been exaggerated out of all just proportion by the priestcraft of the ages in order to hold the possibility *in terrorem* over the heads of the faithful, just as the hell-doctrine has been elaborated and fantastically exaggerated in all the great religions. There is a nucleus of truth and a vast amount of fantasy and falsehood in it all. But experience teaches the theosophical student not to be too confident that his nineteenth century ideas of the possibilities of nature and his *bourgeois* science are large enough to embrace the universe, and every now and then he has the distinct feeling, if not the actual proof, that his philosophy is a very "poor thing—but mine own"; in fact, that just because of its being his own it is a poor thing, and that the possibilities of nature and man are so vast that so long as he is himself, that is to say, the mere reflection of the ignorant prejudices of his time, he stands but little chance of understanding the mystery of life. He must rise superior to his time and all those limitations of the mind which we regard as good sound common-sense and scientifically demonstrated facts. A little acquaintance with the phenomena of the so-called "astral plane," and with the possibilities of the immediate transformation of its substance into instant dramatic reality will give the student the key to most of the puzzles which ignorant commentators and readers have made out of clear and careful statements of great

teachers, and will explain how easy it is for a reader blind to everything but five sense consciousness to imagine that Plato taught transmigration into the "body" of an animal, when he spoke of degenerating into the "life" of a beast.

#### QUESTION CCCCXLIX.

*L. P.—Does a great statesman bear the karma of his political actions himself?*

A. M. G.—Surely if a man has to bear the karma of any actions, he must bear that of his political doings. But how karma is adjusted or how individual responsibility for public action is to be estimated, it is not likely that any of us should understand. It is difficult enough to get even the glimmering of an idea as to the way in which the actions of one life influence the surroundings and the events of a later one, but when we come to the complications of actions directly affecting perhaps millions of people the problem may be practically laid aside for a long time to come.

One may perhaps get some notion as to what is *not* likely to be the case. For instance, a man in a place of power may by a single act alter the lives of thousands of people whom he has never seen. It does not seem likely that he should have any individual karma to "work off" on all these people, nor does it look any more probable that his action will bring him into individual kârmic relations with them all. There must be "national karma." If there were not there would be no nation. That national karma which relates to the conditions of life is worked out largely by means of political acts, but for the conditions of a nation the nation itself must be responsible. The statesman is largely an agent, not a generator of karma. But in so far as his own peculiarities or prejudices influence affairs he must have a responsibility. As he does his work well or ill, so will he influence his own future.

The general question as to what is meant by "bearing karma" is itself a difficult enough one. A very general idea is that if we cause suffering to others we shall be repaid by just as much suffering in ourselves. Karma becomes a problem in occult arithmetic. How near to or how far from the truth this view may be it is not for me to say, but it is pretty evident that it is not a workable scheme when applied to political affairs. To take an example. Suppose compulsory military service to be established in a country by the act of its Government. The lives of the people would be altered to an immense extent. The adjustment to the new conditions would mean alterations in business, in the training of the young men, and so on. It can hardly be supposed that the whole of the suffering or of the benefit arising from the political change would form part of the karma of the few directly responsible people. It would be the karma of the nation, and those born into the nation would have some karma which could be worked off under the altered circumstances.



It seems to me that political karma, if such a term can properly be used, would be adjusted by political circumstances. If a man acted wisely in his government in one life, the karma he would bring back would be wiser and more fortunate government in the future, and confidence of the people in him and his work. If he governed ill, either by malice or lack of ability, his future political work would be fraught with difficulty and misfortune, and he would not find that trust in him which is so necessary to good work. But the happiness or misery ensuing from his good or bad governing would be the karma of the nation concerned.

A. A. W.—In one sense the answer is easy. Everyone must bear the karma of his own actions, political or otherwise; no one else can bear it for him. But I think the querist has rather in his mind the vast, far-reaching *consequences* of the actions of a man who has exercised great political power. As to these, the matter is more complicated. It is in the power of such a man to make great changes in the astral medium which surrounds the people of his nation, and possibly of other nations also. By his influence, even more than by his mere actions, he can, so to speak, modify the colour of that medium; he may change their views on the most important matters for many generations, and thus may make great alterations, either for good or evil, in what is known as their national karma. Besides this, it has been in his power to stir up all kinds of passions, good and bad, in a vast number of individual minds, to an extent probably no other man can equal. All this makes his responsibility (and in this word I include reward as well as punishment) far larger than that of other men; but I do not see that it is in any way changed in character. We all of us do the same, to the extent of our power; and if we keep in mind that it is thought far more than action which makes karma, we shall see that very possibly our own responsibility is not so much less than his, after all.

Speaking as a mere learner, and quite without authority, I would distinguish thus. For his intentions he is responsible; but, supposing he and those upon whom he has directly worked have made such a change in the mental atmosphere that it has actually become harder for you, as one of the nation he has affected, to avoid committing something clearly wrong—has prejudiced you, as is said, in that direction; why then it is a misfortune for you, of course, but no more. If you yield to the prejudice and *do* the wrong, it is *your* fault, and *not* his, for no influence can *force* a man to do what he knows to be wrong. As one of our teachers describes it, he may have put poison into the air, and if you breathe it you will die from it. But in such case your death will do you no harm. It is evident, however, that the mass of evil karma which may be incurred by a nation in consequence of the acts of even one bad ruler may be enormous, but this must be because

the nation has made the sin its own. To take an example: it is impossible to avoid seeing the hand of karma in the manner in which, time after time, the United States of America have been brought into conflict with the Spanish-speaking nations—the retribution of the evils which Spain has inflicted on America in former times. But this cannot be laid to the fault of Philip, or Cortez, or Pizarro; the nation, as a nation, threw aside the noble austerity of its ancestors and plunged recklessly into the gold-hunt. It had its will; in the Biblical phrase, gold became as stones in the streets of Madrid; and for the last two hundred years Spain has been paying its price—to the last farthing. I have seen it stated that the gold we have received from America and Australia has cost us actually more in hard cash than its value; if the rulers of Spain could have seen what price of national honour, of blood and treasure, the nation would have to pay for the countless innocent lives spent in getting their wealth, they surely would have refused the fatal gift. I do not see that the death of the equally innocent Spanish soldiers in Cuba to-day can be in any way a new burden of karma upon those who allowed the sins of the gold-seekers in the sixteenth century. But I speak always under correction.

#### QUESTION CCCCL.

F. A.—*What justification can be given for Buddha's desertion of his wife and child, even though its object was spiritual enlightenment? Marriage confers both duties and rights; one is at liberty to sacrifice one's own rights but not one's own duties, much less the rights of others. How, then, was Buddha at liberty to sacrifice the rights of his wife, she not consenting? Theosophy in the present day forbids this; why should it not in his?*

J. C. C.—The whole question, it seems to me, is based upon the assumption that what we call our rights and our duties are the same under all circumstances.

The questioner assumes that it is the duty of a husband always to stay by the wife unless she permits him to go away. Any deviation from this rule, in the opinion of our questioner, is a neglect of duty on the part of the husband and a sacrifice of the rights of the wife which she has by virtue of marriage. Let us, however, take an illustration and see if this be so.

Suppose there lives in a country a heroic man who has a very devoted but cowardly wife. And also imagine that his beloved country and all his people are attacked by an enemy, whose creed is to rob, plunder, kill and take possession of the wives and daughters of the conquered nations. Now the man sees that if he rush forth into the battlefield and lead the army of his country, he can save not only his own wife and children, but the whole country. But he finds that his wife is absolutely opposed to such a step on his part, she

demanding that her husband should remain with her, no matter what may happen to the country, to the women and children, nay even to herself. Does F. A. think that under such circumstances it is the duty of the husband to fulfil the wishes of the wife? I hope not.

Now what a brave and patriotic man sees of danger under the circumstances described, is nothing compared with the peril and danger which the Bodhisattva sees hanging over the whole of the human race, unless it be guided in the proper direction. The "desertion" (?) of wife and family on the part of the Bodhisattva for the sake of mankind is therefore a thousand times more justified than the action of our heroic man, however noble that may be.

Thus if we try to understand the question of right and duty with reference to the surrounding circumstances, and the position of the person concerned, we learn that no particular course of action is invariably a duty. And when we learn this, we no longer harbour such a thought as the injustice of the action of a Buddha. No longer do we think that Gautama was wrong in leaving his wife and child—a step which would certainly be wrong if it were taken only to avoid the burden of a married life, or from any other selfish motive. And I do not think that such a step in our own days, as in those of the Buddha, will in any way be opposed to the teachings of Theosophy, which, nevertheless, will always forbid anything involving, in the slightest degree, the neglect of duty. But duty, like everything else in the manifested universe, is always relative, and never absolute.

G. R. S. M.—"And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not (*μισῶ*) his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life [soul rather, *ψυχή*] also, he cannot be my disciple"—so run the 25th and 26th verses of the xivth chapter of the third synoptic Gospel. Let us take these verses of one of the basic Christian documents and the pertinent query of F. A., based on the Buddha-saga, together.

The first question that the theosophical student asks when confronted with such apparently "immoral" doctrine and practice in the case of the two greatest ethical teachers generally known to the world is: Before I break my brains or my heart over so formidable a difficulty, am I certain that the Buddha did anything of the kind or that the Christ said anything of the sort?

Personally I have no more confidence in the presumed historical content of the Buddha-saga than I have in the so-called historical settings of the Sayings of the Christ. What Shākya Muni actually did during the years of his teaching or what Jesus really did during the years of his ministry, has long been hidden beneath a thick veil of myth and legend, allegory and phantasy, beautiful or grotesque, faith-compelling or unthinkable, according to the mental and emotional temperament of the

reader. What Shākya Muni and Jesus of Nazareth actually were or what they really did as living men, is unknown to all except the privileged few who can re-live those ancient times in present consciousness.

Therefore until we are sure of the facts and the actual words it would be imprudent to invoke the authority of these two great teachers for the puzzle which their followers have set us to solve. Our point of departure is centred in the sure ground that whether or not Shākya Muni abandoned his wife and child, or whether or not Jesus of Nazareth told the multitude that none of them could be his follower unless he abandoned wife and child, their followers who wrote down the story of what they thought their Master's life and teachings ought to be, approved of the deed and the saying.

The problem, then, resolves itself into an enquiry as to whether they had any justification for such apparently extraordinary assertions.

The doctrine of Jesus is characteristically the doctrine of love, and yet he is here represented as distinctly teaching us to hate, for you cannot get over the *crux* by the weak-kneed ruse of the apologists who tell us that "to hate is not always to be understood rigorously; it frequently signifies no more than a lesser degree of love" (see Cruden *in loc.*). The Greek word *μισῶ* means squarely "hate" and nothing else. To believe that the Christ, through the mouth of Jesus, taught us to actively hate anyone, would be an outrage, revolting to all that we hold as most precious. Are we, therefore, compelled to reject the Saying as apocryphal? By no means; the newly discovered Sayings and a number of others which the "orthodox" Church has excluded, are evidently "dark sayings" to be explained by further instruction. Fortunately, one of the lines of tradition of the inner teaching of the Christ has been preserved to us (though doubtless in a garbled form) and that too, dealing with this very point. In the Gnostic treatise, *Pistis Sophia* (pagg. 341-343) we read as follows: "[Jesus saith]: 'Hearken, therefore, while I speak with you concerning the soul as to how I have said that the five great rulers of the Great Fate of the Æons, and the rulers of the disk of the Sun, and the rulers of the disk of the Moon, breathe into that soul, and that there issueth therefrom a portion of my power, as I have just said unto you, and the portion of this power dwelleth within the soul so that it can endure, and the counterfeit spirit [*kāma-rūpa*?] is stationed without the soul, watching over it and dogging it, and that the rulers bind it to the soul with their seals and their bonds, they seal it to it that it may force it at all times to commit its mischiefs and iniquities unremittingly, that it may be their slave for ever, and be under their subjection for ever in the transmigrations into bodies; and they seal it to it that it may be in every kind of sin and all the desires of the world.

"It is because of things of this kind, then, that I have brought the mysteries into this world [mysteries] which break all the bonds of the

counterfeit spirit and all the seals which are attached to the souls, which make the soul free, and ransom it from the hands of its *parents*, the rulers, and transform it into pure light, to bring it into the kingdom of the true father, the first father, the first everlasting mystery.

"For this cause have I said unto you aforetime, *'He who shall not leave father and mother to follow after me is not worthy of me.'*" What I said then was, "Ye shall leave your parents the rulers, that ye may be all children of the first everlasting mystery."

"And when the Saviour had said these words, Salome came forward and said: 'How then, O Master, since the rulers are our parents, is it written in the Law of Moses, *'He who shall leave his father or mother, let him die the death.'*" Surely the Law doth not, then, speak of the same matter?'

"And when Salome had said these words, the light-power which was in Mary Magdalene, seethed in her, and she said to the Saviour: 'Master, bid me speak with my sister Salome, and tell her the interpretation of the word which she hath uttered.'

"It came to pass, therefore, when the Saviour had heard the words which Mary had said, that he proclaimed her blessed again and again. The Saviour answered and said unto Mary: 'I bid thee, O Mary, utter the interpretation of the words which Salome hath spoken.'

"And when the Saviour had said these words, Mary hastened to Salome, and kissed her, saying: 'Salome, sister, concerning the saying which thou hast uttered, to wit, that it is written in the Law of Moses, *'He who shall leave his father and mother, let him die the death'*; now, therefore, sister Salome, the Law hath spoken this neither concerning the soul, nor concerning the body, nor concerning the counterfeit spirit, all of which are the children of the rulers, and came forth from them, but the Law hath spoken it concerning the power which came forth from the Saviour, and which is the indweller of light in [each of] us unto this day. The Law hath further said, *'Whoever shall remain without the Saviour and his mysteries which are all his parents, let him die the death, nay let him be lost in utter destruction.'*"

It is to be noticed in the first place that the "Saying" we are discussing is given quite differently in the Gnostic tradition and that the objectionable word "hate" is entirely absent from it. It is further to be remembered that the *Pistis Sophia* document was *intended* originally (though it may not have been circulated) as a propagandist gospel written on the same lines as the synoptic popular compilation but from the inner Gnostic standpoint; it was thus an *intermediate* document and not a really esoteric one. Hence the anxiety to reconcile the new doctrine with the old law. The student will also notice that the early followers of the Christ-teaching held women in the highest honour and did not ostracise them from the hierarchy of apostleship, as did the Jews and subsequently the orthodox church.

But are we to suppose that the Christ actually

spoke such dark sayings to the ignorant multitude; should we not rather assume that such doctrines pertained to a more intimate circle? If we are not to reject such Sayings entirely, I think we must hold to the latter alternative. The question then arises: Are the teachings of the *Pistis Sophia*, and especially the interpretation of our Saying, the unbroken tradition of the teachings given by the Christ to his immediate circle of devoted disciples? This I do not entirely believe. The *Pistis Sophia* tradition was as far from the real spiritual teaching of the Christ as the pseudo-historical synoptic account was foreign to the real life of Jesus. Indeed, it was *meant to be so*. So much only could be said. It was meant for an intermediate circle and not for the innermost group of those striving for perfection. Its exegesis, though interesting and instructive, is therefore strained and hampered with the authority of texts, whereas the real doctrine is based on the authority of no spoken or written word, but on the silent Word of Truth.

The Gnostic teaching regarding this Saying thus *implies* that you must fulfil all your family duties as long as you remain in the family stage of development; and until you have fulfilled them you are not free to go on to the next stage. For the Gnostic is at pains to explain that these "parents" are our "mystical" parents and not our physical progenitors, thus plainly showing his anxiety to confirm the moral law of duty to our physical parents and all immediate family ties.

This is the general rule. The question that now arises is: Are there any exceptions to this rule? To answer simply Yes or No is fraught with equal danger. If you answer No, you strengthen the feeble morality of the "general" it is true, but at the probable sacrifice of truth; for it is *possible* that the Buddha did actually leave wife and child, and we certainly cannot suppose that so great a Master broke the moral law. It has always seemed to me absurd to suppose that the Buddha was ignorant of his Buddhahood until the moment of his attainment of Bodhi. The legend of his life seems to me the antipodes of actuality in many respects, if we suppose that the Buddha occupied the body of Shâkya Muni from infancy onwards. If, on the contrary, the Buddha only took possession of the body at the time of enlightenment, then the question is another one, but I have never heard this suggested.

It follows then that the Buddha, who reached the highest step of perfection in the body of Shâkya Muni, must have known his past and his destiny as soon as the body was old enough to bear the strain of the higher consciousness, that is, from early childhood onwards. If Shâkya Muni married, his consort must have been one kârmically attached to him by more than physical or psychic bonds, by nothing short of bonds of adeptship or discipleship, and so with his son. The question then arises: Cannot a Master leave a disciple for a short space, especially when at his return he bestows the highest privileges of Illumination upon his pupils, for Yashodhara and Rahula eventually became Arhats and reached Nirvâṇa? We thus see

that if we were to answer Yes to the question, Are there any exceptions to the general rule? we should be probably stating the truth, but at the expense of weakening the grasp of the "general" on the common ideal of morality, for only the very few can at present understand the possibilities of the higher stages of human evolution.

Do we, however, by this mean that there is a different moral law for the uninitiated and the initiated—a doctrine which has wrought so much havoc with the lives of certain mystic communities? By no means. Once there has been a "real marriage," neither can the husband abandon the wife, nor the wife the husband to follow the holy life the one without the other. Happy are those husbands and wives who are united not only in body, not even in body and soul, but also in spirit. And if this be so, the marriage of the Buddha must have been a "real marriage," for he *loved* Yashodhara. Is it then for us to carp and criticise and interfere between husband and wife with our paltry ideals of marriage; is it possible for us to understand the tie which bound these two great souls together?

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#### QUESTION CCCCLI.

*H. D.—What kind of karma should be generated by a man, if he aspires to the attainment of Mukti?*

A. A. W.—Although the particular question asked would be sufficiently answered by referring the querist to almost any page of almost any book on the subject of Theosophy, the question of Mukti—the Deliverance—is one which is so apart from the ordinary European ideas that it will repay a somewhat more detailed consideration. The assumption that at death every good person is taken from everything which has made life dear to him and set down in some heaven of abstract nature to find his happiness in what is called the Vision of God, is demanded by every form of Christianity, but is one which the public opinion of all Christian people unanimously repudiates. "Enlightened" Christians speak contemptuously of the "golden streets," the "harps and crowns" of the New Testament heaven, and would have us think they are not sufficiently spiritual for them. If they dared confess the truth they would say plainly they are not sufficiently carnal for them! In America people are more outspoken; and a "Scientific Demonstration of a Future Life" is not complete without a chapter to show that that future life will not be worth living without marrying and giving in marriage, schools, museums, lectures and all the paraphernalia of the Spiritualists' "Summerland."

Do we Theosophists despise this? By no means—it is quite natural at this particular stage of development. But it shows forcibly how true it is that every "good karma" (if one *must* use that very objectionable phrase) holds back—binds—one who desires liberation. These souls have done good and been happy on this physical plane; they have (probably) made little or no karma which binds them to come back to earth to *suffer*. And yet, just as certainly as if they had they *must* come back, because all their wishes, desires and hopes are set upon things purely of the earth—earthy. It has been forcibly said that as long as earth has *anything* which can attract you, you must come back to it. And the *evil* of coming back, for however good a purpose is, of course, the danger of it; to make *only* good karma is a task even more difficult than that which the aspirant to Deliverance sets before himself—to make none at all.

It would be easy to moralise over this—to bid everyone ask himself whether in actual fact the prospect of Deliverance from every tie to earth—from all that he has loved and enjoyed here, the giving up of every hope of future happiness, as we call happiness, is *really* desired by him. For most of us such a future presents itself as colder and less desirable than the Christian heaven itself. It is well that it should do so; for we have no business in Nirvāṇa as long as the world has anything to teach us. We are here to learn our lessons—to make ourselves *worth* reuniting with the All; and for most of us the only way is the steady persistence, life after life, as of successive days of school, until all is learnt; and not to hanker after holidays which will only leave us far behind our fellows in the race. At present earth has much which is delightful—needful for our experience; let us honestly confess it, only lifting our hearts in rare hours of contemplation to the time when the power within us shall grow strong enough to break through all which holds us back, and we shall pass triumphant to the new life of the new world which awaits us. Do you think you will stop to count up how many earth-lives have gone to gain you the power when the Golden Gates once open for you?

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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.—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. 3.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

*Book of the Beginnings*, Vol. II., Gerald Massey, London, 1881.

ANNIE J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received from August 20th to September 20th : G. Graham (monthly), £1 ; R. C. Minton, 10s. ; Mrs. Bowring (monthly), £1 ; Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, 5s. Total, £2 15s.

#### "Vâhans" Wanted.

The General Secretary would be very glad if any members or branches could send him copies of the VÂHAN for last July. All copies of this issue have been sent out, and it is necessary to keep a few in the office for future reference.

#### The East London Lodge.

This Branch has returned its Charter, and will in future be known as "The East London Centre." This course has been adopted owing to the reduction in membership. The Centre will, however, continue the meetings as before.

#### Section Reference Library.

The Reference Library is open to students, who are members of the Society, from 2 to 10 p.m., except on Thursday.

The following books are acknowledged with thanks : *The Making of Religion*, Andrew Lang, London, 1898 ; *The Polychrome Bible, Leviticus*, the Rev. S. R. Driver, D.D., and the Rev. H. A. White, M.A., 1898 ; *Reinkarnatie*, Annie Besant, Dutch translation by Johan van Manen, Amsterdam, 1898 ; *The Sacred Maya Stone of Mexico and its Symbolism*, Francis Parry, London, 1893 ; A

#### Lapsed Centres.

The Peterborough and the Plumstead Centres have ceased to exist. The Secretary of the Peterborough Centre, Mr. Stanley Jast, has removed to Croydon.

#### Theosophical Lending Library.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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*.

#### Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle will meet at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. Children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

#### Blavatsky Lodge.

The Lodge reopened on Sept. 1st, when Mr. J. C. Chatterji gave his last lecture before starting on his winter's work in America. Under the title "Threads of the World-Web," the difficult subject of the *guyas* was treated.

Mr. Leadbeater, on Sept. 8th, gave a sketch of "The Religion of Chaldaea." This was a most interesting account of the star-worship of the Chaldaeans and of the elaborate ceremonies connected with it.

On Sept. 15th, Mr. Mead's first address on "Hermes the Thrice Greatest" was delivered. A translation of the *Shepherd of Men*, by the lecturer, was read to the Lodge with illuminative comments, and a further explanation of this valuable treatise was given on Sept. 22nd.

The attendance of members during the month was fairly good.

### Lecture List.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at "The Commercial Hotel," Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Oct. 2nd, *Quakerism in the 17th Century*, Christopher Corbett; Oct. 9th, *The Story of Atlantis*, Miss Woodhead; October 16th, *The Growth of the Soul*, Hodgson Smith; Oct. 23rd, *What think ye of Christ?* Mrs. Bell; Oct. 30th, *Giordano Bruno*, W. H. Thomas. 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.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings on Mondays 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.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.:

Oct. 6th, *What Theosophy does for us*, C. W. Leadbeater; Oct. 13th, *The Secret Sermon on the Mountain: A Study in Christian Origins*, G. R. S. Mead. [We have unfortunately not yet received the full syllabus of the Lodge; lectures will of course be given on Oct. 20th and 27th.]

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

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

LONDON, EAST LONDON CENTRE. Meetings at Millfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Enquiries may be addressed to H. J. Strutton, 55, Carisbrooke Road, Walthamstow, E.

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, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.15 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8 p.m. Oct. 7th, *Self-Realisation*, Mrs. Alan Leo; Oct. 14th, *Types of Magic*, C. W. Leadbeater; Oct. 21st, *The Theosophy of Taoism*, Hon. Otway Cuffe; Oct. 28th, *Finer Forces in Photography*, H. Snowdon 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.

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 21, Rue Tronchet (office of *La Revue Théosophique Française*), on Mondays, Wednesdays 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.

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

## ENQUIRER.

## QUESTION CCCCL.

(continued).

H. A.—*What justification can be given for Buddha's desertion of his wife and child, even though its object was spiritual enlightenment? Marriage confers both duties and rights; one is at liberty to sacrifice one's own rights but not one's own duties, much less the rights of others. How, then, was Buddha at liberty to sacrifice the rights of his wife, she not consenting? Theosophy in the present day forbids this; why should it not in his?*

A. A. W.—This question raises a point of duty which may perhaps be profitably discussed without entering on the further question whether (in point of fact) the Lord Buddha did anything of the kind. Was it indeed the right of his wife that he should remain with her, shut up in the palace with the singing girls, for all his life, and leave the world to perish? Does the law of sacrifice really require that a man shall throw away the treasure of his own progress and that of others for his whole life because he is married? Is it indeed a sufficient reply to all summons to help the world to say, as in the Gospel, "I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come"?

I suppose that all will admit that, in this particular case at least, the wife was the inferior, and hence that I may widen the question out to the more general one: "What self-sacrifice does a man owe to his inferiors?" without stirring a hornets' nest about my ears. Let us see what they expect from him. To the frogs, a man's sole virtue is to keep his clumsy feet off them. Good; but if he is rushing to save another's life, you don't seriously find fault with him if he does not stop to pick one up from the road and lay it in safety before proceeding. His virtue to his dog is, I suppose, to take him out walks and throw stones for him all day long, but you would not have him spend his days thus. In that pretty allegory of Buddha giving his body to feed the starving tiger, you may admire, but you can't *approve*. What would a Master say if his best pupil should give his body—good perhaps for a hundred years' work—thus to feed a beast? To proceed: a father's virtue to his little child is, in the child's mind, not much more. It cannot understand anything higher than being well-fed and clothed and all day long played with; but the father must do more than that, whether the child approves or no. Next—I seem to have worked back to the hornets' nest of which I was speaking, but I *must* face it with what caution I can—as to the wife. I should not have had courage to suggest that there *are* wives whose demands upon their husband are hardly higher than the child's, if F. A.'s question had not implied that Yasodhara herself was such a one; an insult to the sex I should not have perpetrated, old bachelor as I am. But for a man who thus neglects his own life to devote himself to the lower pleasures of his wife there are names provided in

the English language: the learned call him "uxorious," the vulgar "hen-pecked"; and neither is a sign of approval or respect. It is instinctively felt that he is sacrificing the higher to the lower.

The foundations of this instinct must be looked for before Christian times. The first of these is the understanding of a fact which modern religious society often overlooks, and which Ruskin in his *Ethics of the Dust* has put very beautifully and unanswerably—that *mere* self-sacrifice is never good; it may sometimes be a *necessary* evil, but the sacrifice of the higher for the lower is *always* a misfortune, for the world as for the individual. The second and more important is a faint recollection still surviving, of the true relation of husband and wife, familiar in Buddha's days in India, but nearly destroyed in Christian society. It is a strange and sorrowful fact that a few words, surely presented by some evil spirit or spook—certainly not by the "Holy Ghost"—to St. Paul, whilst writing (if he did write) to his converts at Corinth, should have had power for near 2,000 years to degrade the married relation in Europe to an ideal very nearly that to which F. A.'s question suggests the Buddha should have limited himself—the joint occupations of the luxurious house and the bridal chamber, and nothing more. How different would be our present English life if, for all these generations, a young couple, instead of being instructed that their duties to each other enforced only that "the husband hath not power over his body, but the wife," and so the wife with the husband, had learnt from their childhood up, to think of marriage as, beyond all question, Siddhartha and Yasodhara, and every Indian boy and girl of those far-off days were taught. There is no need to appeal to his knowledge as Buddha; merely as an Indian prince he would imbibe almost with the "noble milk" with which he was nourished, the faith that he and his wife were to be fellow travellers on the Upward Road, he her guide as the elder and stronger, but their mysterious link firstly and essentially the means of advance beyond what either could make alone. It has pleased Sir Edwin Arnold, for the sake of effect, to represent her as unsuspecting of her husband's intention, but this pathos is a purely Western feeling. As an Indian woman, she knew well that her husband, having obtained an heir, might leave her and pass away into the wilderness, to gain the power to show his love in something better than kisses and sweet speeches; and we *cannot* imagine the woman who was noble enough to love and be loved by Him, refusing the permission which hundreds of her fellow countrywomen are brave and noble enough to give their husbands every year of this nineteenth century. Had she done so, we know He would have answered in the spirit, and most likely in the very words of the Scripture, an ancient writing in His time, nearly 3,000 years ago; words strange to us modern English, but whose lesson will remain when England has followed Atlantis into the ocean depths, "Not for the sake of the wife is

the wife dear, but for the sake of the Self is the wife dear—for the sake of the Self is the wife dear."

### QUESTION CCCCLII.

J. v. M.—*With regard to the answer (Question CCCXLVII.) on Plato and Reincarnation. (i.) Granting that the explanations of the cited passages, and of those quoted in support of this interpretation are true, why is it that Plato, so great a teacher, expressed himself so ambiguously that even his followers were "agitated" about so fundamental a tenet of his teaching? (ii.) Is it possible to give in modern Theosophical phraseology the equivalents for, or to arrange into some system, such technical Platonic terms as [here follows a list of twenty-one Greek words]. (iii.) Is not the possibility of explaining by "life" instead of by "body," the entity into which the soul transmigrates, excluded in the following passages from The Republic [here follow three passages in Greek, sandwiching objections]?*

G. R. S. M.—(i.) It should be remembered that a period of five hundred years and more separated Plato from the followers whose works were referred to in our last answer. In these five hundred years the greatest upheaval of thought which the Grecian world, nay, which the Western world, ever experienced had taken place. The Mysteries had been practically disclosed. In the time of Plato they were still jealously guarded in closest secrecy and Anaxagoras had only recently been condemned to death on a charge of revealing them, mixed up with other political charges. Plato could only hint at the inner teaching, and had to resort to a literary disguise when he touched on any details of the mystery-teaching, as we shall see later on. His followers, the later school of Platonists, were far less hampered, for the breaking down of part of the secrecy of the inner schools—inaugurated by the public teaching of the great Master, the Christ, by the mouth of Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, which in time gradually forced out into the field of propaganda much that had been previously kept back—enabled the later followers of Plato, or rather the adherents of the Orpheus-Pythagoras-Plato tradition, to draw aside the veil with which Plato had been compelled to cover his cosmogonic and psychologic teachings.

(ii.) It certainly would be possible to give equivalents in the terms used by some of our modern Theosophical writers for the technical Platonic terms quoted by our questioner. But the matter is one of great difficulty and requires a far more intimate acquaintance with Plato's voluminous writings than any member of the Theosophical Society possesses at present. Part of the work, however, is being done by the writer elsewhere in connection with work on subjects which, if not technically Platonic, almost invari-

ably employ the common philosophic language of Greece.

(iii.) The passages referred to all come from the famous "Story of Êr, Son of Armënus," which Plato quotes at the end of the last book of *The Republic*. Whether or not "Êr, Son of Armënus," is the correct reading or translation must be left to a less popular month-sheet than THE VĀHAN. It is the story of a man "killed in battle," whose body was brought home on the tenth day still fresh and showing no sign of decomposition. On the twelfth day, when laid on the funeral pyre, Êr awakes and tells a strange story of his experiences in the unseen world. This story should be taken in close connection with Plutarch's similar but far fuller story of Aridæus upon which I commented at length in my recent "Notes on the Eleusinian Mysteries" in *The Theosophical Review*. I there stated that the experiences of Aridæus were either a literary subterfuge for describing part of the instruction in the Mysteries, or the popular story was so true a description of the unseen world that it required little alteration to make it useful for that purpose. I would also suggest that the Story of Êr is used by Plato for a similar purpose, although the story is less detailed than the recital in Plutarch. It is interesting to notice that one of the characters in the Story of Êr is called Aridæus (Ἀριδαῖος), while in Plutarch the main character is called Aridæus (Ἀριδαῖος). The transposition of a letter is so slight as to make the names identical, and the subject matter is so similar that we can hardly doubt that Plutarch was inspired by the example of Plato. The Story of Êr deserves as careful treatment as we have bestowed on that of Aridæus but space does not permit us to deal with it here in detail. Êr in a certain spiritual plane (τόπος τῆς δαιμόνιος) is made a spectator of a turning-point or change of course in the ascent and descent of souls. Omitting all the rest, we come to the description of their choosing of lots for a new life, in which we find the passages referred to by J. v. M. (617 D. *et sqq.*, ed. Stallbaum). We will therefore append a translation and follow it with a few comments. The kârmic world-whorl is represented by seven spheres (surrounded by an eighth) whose harmonious spinning is adjusted by the three Fates, the daughter of Necessity.

"Now when [Êr and the souls] arrived\* they had to go immediately to Lachesis [she who administers the karman of the past]. Next an interpreter† first of all arranged them in their proper order and taking from the lap of Lachesis both lots‡ and samples of lives he ascended to a kind of raised place and said: 'The word of the virgin Lachesis, the daughter of Necessity! Ye souls, ye things of a day, lo the beginning of

\* The whole story is in indirect speech; but I have changed it into the direct to make it run more easily for the reader.

† Lit., prophet or proclaimer.

‡ Or number-turns.



another period of mortal birth that brings you death. It is not your genius\* who will have you assigned to him by lot, but ye who will choose your genius. He who obtains the first turn let him first choose a life to which he will of necessity have to hold. As for virtue, necessity has no control over her, but everyone will possess her more or less just as he honours or dishonours her. The responsibility is the chooser's; God is blameless.' Thus speaking he threw the lots to all of them, and each picked up the one that fell beside him except Ēr, who was not permitted to do so. But everyone who picked up a lot knew what turn he had received.

"After this he set on the ground before them the samples of the lives, in far greater number than the souls assembled. They were of every kind, not only lives of every kind of animal, but also lives of every kind of man. There were lives of absolute power [lit., tyrannies], among them, some continuing to the end, some breaking off half way and ending in poverty, exile and beggary. There were also lives of famous men, some famed for their beauty of form and strength, and victory in the games, others for their birth and the virtues of their forebears; others the reverse of famous, and for similar reasons. So also with regard to the lives of women. As to the natural rank of the soul, it was no longer in the power [of the chooser], for the decree of necessity is that on its choosing another life it should change into that life. As for other things, riches and poverty were mingled with each other, and these sometimes with disease and sometimes with health, and sometimes a mean between these."

Hereupon Plato breaks into a noble disquisition on what is the best choice, and how a man should take with him into the world an adamant faith in truth and right. And then (§ 619 B.), continues: "And this is just what the messenger from that unseen world reported that the interpreter said: 'Even for him who comes last in turn if he but choose with his *mind*, and live consistently, there is in store a life desirable and far from evil. So let neither him who has the best choice be careless, nor him who comes last despair.'

"And when he had thus spoken, the one who had obtained the first choice, Ēr said, immediately went and chose the largest life of absolute power, but through folly and greediness, he did not choose with sufficient attention to all points, and failed to notice that there was wrapped up with it the fate of 'dishes of his own children,'† and other ills. But when he had examined it at leisure, he began to beat his breast, and bemoan his choice, not abiding by what the interpreter had previously told him; for he did not lay the blame of these evils on himself, but on fortune and the genius, and everything rather than himself. And he was

one of those who came from heaven,\* who in his former life [on earth], had lived in a well ordered state, and been virtuous from habit and not from conviction [lit., philosophy].

"In brief it was by no means the minority of those who were involved in such unfortunate choices, who came from heaven, seeing that such souls were unexercised in the hardships of life. But most of those who come from earth [direct],‡ as they had suffered hardships themselves, and seen others suffering them, did not make their choice off-hand. Consequently many of the souls, independently of the fortune of their turn, changed good for evil and evil for good. For if a man should always, whenever he comes into this life, live a sound philosophic life,§ and the turn of his choice should not fall out to him among the last, the chances are, accordingly to this news from the other world, that he will not only spend his life happily here, but also that the path which he will tread from here to there, and thence back again, will not be below the earth§ and difficult, but easy and through heaven.

"Yes, the vision he had, Ēr said, was well worth the seeing, showing how each class of souls|| chose their lives. The vision was both a pitiful and laughable and wonderful thing to see. For the most part they chose according to the experience of their former life. For Ēr said that he saw the soul which had once been that of Orpheus choosing the life of a 'swan,' through its hatred of women, because, owing to the death of Orpheus at the hands of women, it did not wish to come [again] into existence by being born in a woman. He further saw the soul of Thamyras choose the life of a 'nightingale.' On the contrary he saw also a 'swan' change to the choice of a human life, and other 'musical animals'¶ in like fashion. The soul that obtained the twentieth lot chose the life of a 'lion.' It was the soul of Ajax, son of Telamon, escaping from being a man because it still remembered [what it considered the unjust] decision about the armour. The next soul was Agamemnon's; and it too, out of hatred of the human race on account of its sufferings, changed into the life of an 'eagle.' The soul of Atalanta obtained its lot in the middle, and letting her eyes fall on the great honours paid to an athlete, was unable to pass it by, but took it. The soul of Epeus, son of Panopeus, he saw pass into the nature of a

\* Some of the souls in the intermediate state, between two lives, fail to reach heaven.

† That is, without going into the heaven-world.

‡ ἑγιῶς φιλοσοφεῖ, —both these are technical terms of the Pythagorean school. The pentagon was the sign of "health" or mental soundness; and philosophy, or love of wisdom, was what we to-day call theosophy.

§ The Tartarean spheres of the unseen world were popularly believed to be beneath the earth.

|| ἕκασται αἱ ψυχὰι —not each soul. What he saw was a typical vision (θεά), not a certain happening.

¶ ζῶα μουσικά, —musical does not mean merely devoted to music in our modern sense, but to all the arts and sciences.

\* δαίμων, lit., daemon; e.g., the daemon of Socrates, sometimes translated "god," sometimes "genius," sometimes "conscience."

† Evidently a quotation from the tragic Muse of Greece, and its mythical recitals of Thyestian banquets

woman skilful in the arts. And far away among the last he saw the soul of the buffoon Thersites assuming an 'ape.' It happened also that the soul of Ulysses, having obtained the last lot of all, came to make its choice. From memory of its former labours it had given itself a rest from love of renown, and for a long time went about to find the life of a man in private life with nothing to do with public affairs, and with great difficulty found one lying in a corner and thus passed over by all the rest; on seeing it, it declared that it would have done the same even if it had had first turn, and been glad to do it. And, Êr said, even some of the other animals passed into men, and into one another,\* the vicious changing into wild ones, and the good into tame; in fact they were mixed up in every kind of blending.

"When, then, all the souls had chosen their lives, according to the number of their turn, they went in order to Lachesis [the singer of the past, in the harmony of destiny], and she sent along with them [on their journey into earth life], the genius each had chosen, to be the watcher over his life and to bring to pass the things each had chosen. And the genius first of all brought the soul to Clotho [the singer of the present], to be touched by her hand, that is, to be brought within the general influence of the whirling of the spindle,† thus ratifying the destiny each soul had chosen in its turn. And after having brought it into contact with her, the genius brought the soul to the loom of Atropos [the singer of the future], thus making the threads of destiny spun into it irreversible. So thence, without turning back, they passed beneath the 'Throne of Necessity.' And when Êr had passed by it, and the rest of them had also done so, they all passed on to the 'Plain of Forgetfulness' (Lêthê), in a frightful and stifling heat, for it was bare of trees and vegetation of every kind. As it was now evening, they camped by the river Unmindfulness, whose water no vessel can keep out.‡ They are all, therefore, compelled to absorb a certain proportion of the water, and those that are not protected by prudence, absorb more than the proper quantity. And each as he drinks forgets everything. And when they had been lulled to sleep, and it was about midnight, a thunderstorm and earthquake occurred, and suddenly they were hurried upwards§ to birth,

\* καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἄλλων δὴ θηρίων ὁσαύτως εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἵέναι καὶ εἰς ἄλληλα.

† The spindle of destiny is described as being composed of seven spheres of varying motions, with one of the same motion, the eighth. The eighth is the *present* motion, and this Clotho (with Necessity her mother) sets going with her *right* hand. Atropos sets the seven inner spheres moving with her *left* hand, the spinning of *future* karman. Lachesis, the *past*, moderates both motions with either hand.

‡ οὐ τὸ ὕδωρ ἀγγεῖον οὐδὲν στέγειν—that is to say, no vessel of the soul is water-tight enough to keep this water from soaking into it. One of the technical Pythagorean terms for taking a new body was μετ-αγγισμός, meaning a change of vessel, also a pouring of water from one vessel into another.

§ The Plain of Forgetfulness is thus represented as below the earth plane.

some one way, some another, shooting [through space] like stars. Êr, however, was prevented from drinking the water; but in what manner and by what means he got back to his body he could not say, only, suddenly awaking in the morning, he found himself lying on the pyre."

The passages quoted by J. v. M. come from this description of the transformation of souls, and on the surface would seem to prove Plato guilty of the charge of a belief in metempsychosis in its crude popular form, and make the explanation of his later followers, who laid great stress on the "life" of an animal, as distinguished from the "body" of an animal, appear mere casuistry. But there are certain further considerations which we must take into account.

Firstly, did Plato endorse all the details of the vision of Êr or did he merely cite a popular story the better to point a moral lesson? I think that Plato did fully endorse the story of Êr, and that he would not have concluded his great dialogue on the ideal Republic with such a story without full intention.

Secondly, we should notice that the vision is *typical*. The types given are all well-known characters in Grecian legend and mythology; they are all so well known that it is hardly necessary to refer to their stories; we may however add that Thamyras (or Thamyris) was a Thracian bard, and that Épeus was the famous engineer of the Trojan Horse who was also notorious for his cowardice, hence his rebirth as a woman.

Thirdly, the life, or "way of life," was a distinct component part of the man, thus in *The Shepherd* of "Hermes," we read that on the dissolution of man, the body is dissolved into the physical elements; the "way of life" (ἦθος) becomes latent and is handed over to the charge of the genius (δαίμων); the senses become latent and pass back into the energies of nature; and the passion and desire nature become latent or inactive and are gradually distributed among the seven zones of the "harmony," the seven spheres of the kârmic whorl. This desire nature is the irrational soul of man; the rational soul passes to the eighth sphere, and finally the *man* is united with the Great Mind beyond.

Now this "way of life" is something which is decidedly physical, and yet invisible. The only component part of man answering to this description so far known to our practical students, is the so-called "etheric double." The "ways of life," the lives which the souls choose, are thus the manner of make up of the "etheric double." Now we know that this is protean in its nature and can take any mould. May it not then take on the life of a "swan," a "nightingale," a "lion," an "eagle," or an "ape"? May not these "animals" be chosen as *types*? If we refer to the so-called "diagram of the Ophites," which is still traceable in a fragmentary form in the polemic of Origen against Celsus, we shall find the seven creative spheres of animal types each characterised by one of the known animals, such as the lion, the eagle, etc. May there not be some inter-

mediate line of birth with which we are unacquainted, a birth into an etheric body without a physical? May not the etheric body even of many souls on earth be in the type of certain of the main animal lives, although their physical bodies may be quite human? Again Orpheus and Thamyris were both poets, bards and singers. How do we account for the stupendous development of music in our own days along the ordinary lines of evolution or reincarnation? Nowhere in the history of the past can we point to anything approaching it. What again of the Gandharvas, Kinnaras, etc., in Hindu mythology—belonging to another line of evolution, and having no physical bodies? The Gandharvas especially are the musicians of the Gods and are represented, if I recollect rightly, as winged. Do our swan and nightingale come in here, and our eagle and lion and ape come in in the same connection, though along another line, the Kinnaras? I do not know. But this much I will say, that an occultist cannot be sure, with such considerations in mind, that Plato taught the reincarnation of the souls of men into the *physical bodies* of animals as a general rule. He might have done so in the very exceptional case to which I referred in my last answer, but not otherwise.

Finally, we had better remember that we modern students of Theosophy do not know the last word on the mysteries of reincarnation; I doubt if we even know the first. There are still more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy, and we cannot as yet afford to put the writings of the great teachers of antiquity on one side as merely interesting fossils, compared to the living expositions of our own students.

#### QUESTION CCCCLIII.

*E. S.—Is there any information available as to what it is that influences the race or nation in which a man is born, and why he need be born in more than one?*

C. W. L.—Before we are able to speak with complete certainty about the order of race-incarnations for humanity in general, it will be necessary for us to collect a far greater number of instances than we have at present at our disposal. But a few broad principles are already obvious, and perhaps a brief statement of these will be at any rate of some help to the questioner.

It is, of course, clear that the ultimate object of human evolution is the production of the perfect man—the adept, the *all-round* man, so to speak. But manifestly out of the hundreds of incarnations which seem needed to produce this result some are devoted to the development of one side of the man's character only, while others are spent in the unfolding of quite different sides. It is therefore very natural that various races, each with its own special conditions, so arranged as to be favourable to the production of a particular set of virtues, should be required to provide an

appropriately varied series of surroundings of the evolving ego.

Evidently the great root-races (and in a minor degree the sub-races also) are arranged with this object in view. In the earlier days of our Theosophical study, noting the obvious coincidence between the number of races and the number of principles, we jumped to the conclusion that each race must be devoted to the unfolding of one of the principles. While fuller knowledge and closer study scarcely encourage us to hope that the scheme is so delightfully simple as that, they still give us evidence that with regard to some, at any rate, of the races the idea is broadly true. Such information as we have at our command about the Atlantean race goes to show that in it desire was rampant, and that the astral body was therefore the part of man's economy principally cultivated under its influence. It is fairly evident that in our Aryan race, the attention of the powers guiding our evolution is chiefly directed to the unfolding and strengthening of the intellectual faculties or *manas*, and it seems probable that when the great sixth race dominates the world it will be the buddhic vehicle of man that will occupy the principal place in their consideration.

Of course man is all the while making a certain amount of slow progress all along the line, and it is not intended to suggest that at any moment the possibilities open before him are confined to the development of one principle, but only that it is to that part of man that for the time special attention is being directed, and for its unfoldment special facilities are offered.

Even in the existing sub-races of our fifth root-race there are signs of a similar arrangement, for undoubtedly the fourth or Keltic sub-race possesses a very sensitive astral body, and the emotions play a far larger part in its life than in that of the more phlegmatic Teuton; while the latter, though far less psychic, is certainly swayed more by reason and less by feeling than its predecessor. When, however, in the case either of root-races or sub-races, we come to deal with those before the fourth, we are on much less certain ground, and it will probably be well to await the result of further investigation before definitely assigning to each of the earlier ones the office of evolving some one special principle selected from the seven usually mentioned in Theosophical literature.

Be this as it may, there is no doubt that each root-race has its own special characteristics and offers its own special facilities, and that each sub-race has its own particular modifications of these. It now remains for us to consider how the incarnating ego takes advantage of these varied opportunities.

As regards the vast majority of humanity, which belongs to the various lower classes of the lunar pitris, this is not yet fully known to us. The general principle clearly is to take the races and sub-races in their order, but how many incarnations might be considered as an average number in each sub-race we have not yet sufficient data to show. It

seems clear that both second and third class pitris take a considerable number of successive births in each sub-race, differing therein entirely from the method of the first class pitri, which appears to be peculiar to himself.

It may be that the first class pitri being on the whole a much further developed entity than the other classes, is able more readily to assimilate the teaching which the environment of each successive sub-race has to give him; at any rate, his usual custom seems to be to incarnate only once in each before passing to the next. That is to say, instead of taking, say, a dozen births in the first sub-race, and then a dozen in the second, and so on, he would but take one in the first, and would then pass on to the second, third, fourth and fifth in turn.

But when he has thus gone the round of all the sub-races which happen to be in existence at the moment he returns to the first of them, and begins his course over again, so that, except for his much longer periods of devachan he might get as many births into a given time as the second class pitris, but would take them in an entirely different order. It is evident that his method would be more likely to tend to the even evolution of the different sides of his character, and so his progress would be on the whole more balanced, and he would less easily fall into the serious difficulties which are inseparable from unequal development.

Just as the sub-races offer modifications of the general tendency of a great root-race, so they in their turn are modified in various ways by difference of surroundings into numerous branch-races. Birth into every branch-race, however, does not appear to be a necessity, in the case at any rate of the first class pitri, and it is probable that the particular branch selected for his incarnation depends not only upon the general conditions offered, but also upon the extent to which his individual karman is entangled with that of others who are taking birth in the same nation. Cases differ so widely that no general rule can yet be laid down, but it is hoped that the few considerations offered above may to some extent help the questioner in his difficulties.

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

#### QUESTION CCCCLIV.

*A. J. R.—In THE VÂHAN of June 1st, 1898, in answering Question CCCCXXXIV., on p. 8, C. W. L. writes: "The desires are chiefly such as need a physical body for their satisfaction," meaning the desires of the "kāma rūpa." That desires for knowledge, wealth, glory, etc., may exist in that body after the loss of the dense body, I will not deny. But how is it possible to have a desire for food when there is no stomach to feed, a desire for sexual intercourse when there are no sexual organs to use; when there are no organs that cause such desires?*

C. W. L.—The objector appears to make the mistake of supposing that what we usually call desire is a function of the physical body, or at least originates in it. But surely this is not so. Of course when the stomach is empty it intimates that fact by the feeling of hunger, and that might perhaps be considered as a purely physical form of "desire," quite unconnected with the astral body. We should not, however, usually give that name to it in Theosophical study, but should rather apply it in such connection to the desire of the gourmand for the delights of the palate, which has no necessary relation to the condition of his physical stomach.

The craving of the drunkard for the bestial so-called "pleasures" of intoxication is in no way connected with physical thirst, though often confounded with it by the thoughtless; for water, which readily quenches physical thirst, in no way satisfies that desire. In this physical life, men are constantly led by desire both to eat and drink what is in no way needed by their dense body and even what is extremely injurious to it. All these desires take their origin in the astral body, and one who has been foolish enough to let himself fall into their power while alive, is still subject to them when he has lost the physical form through which alone they can be gratified.

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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.

# 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.

VOL. VIII.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 1, 1898.

NO. 4.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### THE GENERAL FUND.

I regret that I have to remind members of the necessity of keeping their donations to the General Fund up to a proper level. On reference to the September and October VĀHANS it may be seen that the donations acknowledged amounted to only £2 16s. 6d. and £2 15s. This month £17 15s. is acknowledged. The total for the three months is thus £23 6s. 6d. As members have been several times informed, the average monthly amount of donations should be £30, in order to supply the necessary funds, and it will be seen that there is a large sum required to bring the average to the desired figure. In fact the amount received for the three months falls short of the desired sum (£90) by no less than £66 13s. 6d. I trust that members will pay due attention to this notice, and will shortly make up the deficiency.

HERBERT BURROWS, *Treasurer*.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Convention of the Indian Section.

The Executive Committee appointed Mrs. Besant to act as representative of the European Section at the Convention of the Indian Section, held at Benares, on October 25th, 26th and 27th.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to October 20th: Anon., £2 2s.; Miss Carr, £3; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; Hon. O. Cuffe, £1; E. J. Geary, £1; Mrs. Brown, £1; Mrs. Wilkinson, £3; G. R. S. Mead, £1; Mrs. Kilburn, 5s.; Miss Cooper, 10s.; A Member, 10s.; Miss Marsden, 10s. 6d.; Mrs. Truslove, 10s.; H. Demirgian Bey, £1; A. F., 7s. 6d.; Mrs. Hall, £1. Total, £17 15s.

### Section Reference Library.

The Reference Library is open to members of the Society, from 2 to 10 p.m., except on Thursday.

The following books are acknowledged with thanks: *Die Uralte Weisheit*, Annie Besant, trs. Ludwig Deinhard, Leipzig, 1898; *Im Vorhof*, Annie Besant, trs., Leipzig; *The Morning Star*, Vitruvius, London, 1898.

A. J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

### Theosophical Lending Library.

The following books have been added to the library: *The Upanishads*, Vol. II., trans. by G. R. S. Mead and J. C. Chatterji; *Your Forces and How to Use Them*, Vol. V., by Prentice Mulford; *Zoroastrianism in the Light of Theosophy*, compiled by Nasarvanji F. Bilimoria.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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*.

### Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle will meet at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. Children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

### Lecture List.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at "The Commercial Hotel," Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: Nov. 22nd, *The Constitution of Man*, Miss K. R. Moffat. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

**EXETER CENTRE.** Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Thursday 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. 6th, *War*, Hodgson Smith; Nov. 13th, *The Theosophy of Taoism*, Hon. O. Cuffe; Nov. 20th, *Catharine of Siena*, Miss Shaw; Nov. 27th, *Weal and Woe*, Baker Hudson. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 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.: Nov. 1st, 8th and 15th, *Yoga Philosophy*; Nov. 22nd, *Ethereic Vision*; Nov. 29th, *Spiritualism and Theosophy*. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

**HULL CENTRE.** Meetings on Thursdays, at No. 9 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street.

**LEEDS LODGE.** Meetings on Mondays 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, BLAVATSKY LODGE.** Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: Nov. 3rd, *Our Theosophical Ancestry, I.*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley; Nov. 10th, *Studies in Christian Origins, II.*: "The Cup," G.R.S. Mead; Nov. 17th, *Elementals*, C. W. Leadbeater; Nov. 24th, *Our Theosophical Ancestry, II.*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

On Sundays at 7 p.m.: November 6th, *The Source of Theosophical Teachings. How they have been made public. The Purpose of the present Theosophical Movement*; November 13th, *Revelation and direct Knowledge. Intuition. Conscience. The Impressions on the Soul from its various States of Existence*; November 20th, *The Relation of Theosophy to popular*

*Religions. The Origin of Religions. The necessity for successive Presentations of Spiritual Teachings*; November 27th, *Spirit and Matter. Creation and Evolution. The Great Cycles of Evolution. The Downward and Upward Arcs and the Middle Point.*

**LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE.** Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: Nov. 7th, *Astrology*, Alan Leo; Nov. 21st, *What is Conscience?* Miss Ward.

**LONDON, CROYDON LODGE.** Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Nov. 1st, *The Theosophical Meaning of Prayer*, Mrs. Leo; Nov. 8th, *Are Animals Immortal?* F. Horne; Nov. 15th, *The Necessity for Meditation*, Mrs. Lauder; Nov. 22nd, *Purification: Outer and Inner*, Mrs. McDouall; Nov. 29th, *Some Misconceptions of Theosophy*, P. Tovey. Students' class on alternate Thursdays for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*: Nov. 3rd and 17th. Meetings on Sundays, at 11 a.m.

**LONDON, EAST LONDON CENTRE.** Meetings at Millfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. Enquiries may be addressed to H. J. Strutton, 55, Carisbrooke Road, Walthamstow, E.

**LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE.** Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m.: Nov. 14th, *The Work of a Theosophist*, Mrs. Sharpe; Nov. 28th, *Psychic Experiences*, R. King. Alternate Mondays, study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

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

**LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE.** Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.15 p.m.

**LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE.** Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8 p.m.: Nov. 4th, *Spiritual Astronomy*, Alan Leo; Nov. 11th, *Nature's Devices, II.*; *Among the Flowers*, Miss Pope; Nov. 18th, *Some Thoughts on Professor Drummond*, Mrs. Whyte; Nov. 25th, *Some Correspondences of Acoustics and Theosophical Teachings*, Miss Van Sandau.

**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.

**MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE.** Meetings at the Albany Temperance Hotel, Linthorpe Road, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.: Nov. 10th, *The Building of Character*, Miss Shaw; Nov. 24th, *Weal and Woe*, Baker Hudson. Alternate Thursdays, at 20, Albert Road, 8.15 p.m., study of *The Devachanic Plane*.

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

**PARIS.** Meetings for enquirers at 21, Rue Tronchet (office of *La Revue Théosophique Française*), on Mondays, Wednesdays 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.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meeting at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

### Blavatsky Lodge.

We think that students of Theosophy should specially welcome all attempts to set forth the reality behind the varying forms of religion; and although many have thought that of all the great faiths which have swayed large sections of the human race Mohammedanism has least that can be justified or explained, yet the very interesting information given by Mr. Cuffe in his lecture on September 29th was more than sufficient to show that it has a most mystical side, a side which has without doubt been largely overlooked and ignored, and about which very little indeed is at present known. In the course of his lecture Mr. Cuffe read passages of exceeding beauty and insight from two of the Persian poets.

On the following Thursday Mr. Leadbeater lectured, his subject being "What Theosophy does for us." In this lecture he showed how even an elementary knowledge of the fundamental teachings of Theosophy will, provided that knowledge be sound, illuminate many problems, and alter entirely the point of view from which the student looks at life.

On October 13th Mr. Mead was the speaker, and read to the Lodge his own translation of a wonderful dialogue between the great Hermes and a pupil of his; and on October 20th Mrs. Hooper spoke upon "The Beliefs of Savages," comparing the beliefs of the different savage tribes regarding the Deity and the soul, as well as giving examples of several of their customs and legends.

Special notice is called to the fact that the Sunday evening meetings will be resumed this month (November). Mr. Leadbeater will be the lecturer. The subjects for the month are given in the Lecture List. These meetings are open to visitors.

S. M. S.

### Brussels Branch.

The work of this Branch proceeds quietly but regularly, many of the members studying Theo-

sophy in a serious manner. Groups meet fortnightly for study and Branch meetings are held each month.

### Glasgow Centre.

This Centre has resumed its meetings, which were discontinued for a time, and now meets at the same time and place as before—on Sundays at 11.30 a.m., at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street. The members at present are taking up the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

### Athene Branch.

The annual business meeting of the Athene Branch was held September 14th, 1898, when the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, Mr. H. Saville; Secretary, Miss Annie Gale; Treasurer, Mr. H. Saville; Auditor, Mr. J. Midgley.

The number of members of this Branch is nine, one having left and one joined during the year.

Lodge meetings are held at the "Central Commercial Hotel," Westgate, every Wednesday at 7.45 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

ANNIE GALE, *Hon. Sec.*

### The Herne Bay Centre.

The winter session of this Centre began in October, and a regular series of subjects has been drawn up for the Christmas quarter's meetings. The meetings are held on Tuesdays, and the subjects for November are given in the Lecture List. The addresses in October were as follows: October 11th, *The Building of Individuality*; October 18th, *The Septenary Constitution of Man and the Corresponding Planes*; October 25th, *Reincarnation and Karma*.

### ENQUIRER.

#### QUESTION CCCCLV.

A. F.—*In the parable of the sheepfold, what was the inner meaning of the words, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." The orthodox explanation is "all other Teachers." But this is manifestly opposed to the teaching of One who was constantly referring to the authority of the Prophets, and who said, "They that are not against us are with us."*

G. R. S. M.—The only meaning of the words ὅσοι ἦλθον πρὸ ἐμοῦ is "all who came before me," referring to time. We may, therefore, dismiss all such twisting of the meaning as "without regard to me," "passing by me as the door," "instead of me," "pressing before me," and all the other "numerous shifts" (see Alford *in loco*) which pertain to apology and not to elucidation. Not, however, that we can agree with the orthodox position as summed up in the question, "*What pre-*

tended teachers then came before Christ?" (*Ibid.*) The answer to which is found in the fact, that though the writer of the fourth Gospel asserts that the Christ taught the Jews that Abraham and the Prophets "entered by Him" (viii. 56), he in the same chapter (v. 44) asserts that Christ set in strong opposition to Himself and His these same Jews and "their father *the Devil*." "*He*," says Alford, "was 'the first thief who clomb into God's fold.'" The orthodox interpretation would, therefore, refer the words to all *false* teachers and centre these round the dogma of the Antichrist. Some, however, would have the phrase refer to the Pharisees, etc., who taught the people before Christ appeared.

All of this is exceedingly unsatisfactory to one who regards the fourth Gospel as a human document, and remembers that this parable, or rather allegory, is found in it alone. Now although the writer of this document (c. the first quarter of the second century) was the most mystical of all the writers of the N.T. collection, he must have been acquainted with some of the literature of the circles in which he moved, and one of the most famous books of the period was *The Book of Enoch*. In chap. lxxxix. of this work is a very long vision describing the fortunes of Israel and its rulers under the figures of sheep and shepherds, and also other animals, but persistently of sheep. The whole vision is a product of the same literary circles as were responsible for the Sibylline and allied pseudepigraphs (see my articles in *The Theosophical Review*, July-November). The shepherds are either the incompetent Jewish heads of Israel, or their Babylonian, Persian or Grecian rulers. The writer of the fourth Gospel would seem in his allegory to regard the Christ as still the *King-Messiah*, and therefore all those who came before him are the temporal heads and oppressors of Israel who have all failed to bring Israel into its kingdom. This interpretation would take the question out of the domain of developed universalism and restrict it to the historical environment of the writer. The mystical temperament of the latter, and the time of transition of ideas out of the narrower area of Jewish national hopes into the less trammelled field of a nascent universalism would account both for the unqualified condemnation of all other shepherds and for the still faint clinging to the *King-Messiah* idea as set forth in *The Book of Enoch*. I am surprised that the last editor and translator of Enoch (R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*; Oxford, 1893), in the part of his introduction on "The Influence of Enoch on the New Testament," does not refer to this passage although he gives five other passages from the fourth Gospel indicative of this influence.

#### QUESTION CCCCLVI.

S. F.—Do the saints of the Roman Catholic Church and other great spiritual beings who have incarnated in this world, such as Buddha, Zarathustra, etc., hear

the prayers addressed to them? Has their consciousness expanded to such a degree that they are cognizant of all that takes place here, or at least of all that which concerns them?

C. W. L.—The form of this question shows an initial misconception which it will be well to clear out of the way before going further. The great world-teachers Buddha and Zarathustra are Adepts of an exceedingly high order, and æons of progress separate them from the mere saints of any church, great though these latter may be as compared with the ordinary unevolved human being. So that the answer naturally divides itself into two parts, referring to these very different levels.

So far as the founders of the Buddhist and Parsi religions are concerned, it has to be remembered that they never in any way encouraged their followers to pray to them, and that as a rule the latter have been far too enlightened to do anything of the kind. Whether a very strong thought directed towards them would reach them or not, would depend upon the line of evolution which they have since followed—in fact, upon whether they still remain within touch of this earth or not. If they were still so within reach, and if such a thought did reach them, it is probable that if they saw that it would be good for the thinker that any notice should be taken, they would turn in his direction the attention of some of their pupils who are still upon earth.

But it is quite inconceivable that a man who had any sort of conception of the magnificent and far-reaching work done for evolution by these great Adepts on higher planes could dream of intruding his own petty concerns upon their notice; he could not but know that any kind of help that he required would be far more fitly given to him by some one nearer to his own level. Even down here on this physical plane we are wiser than that, for we do not waste the time of the greatest scholars of our universities in helping babies over the difficulties of the alphabet!

As regards the saints of any of the churches the position is of course very different, though even with them the ability to hear prayers will depend upon their position in evolution. The ordinary saint, who is simply a very good and holy man, will of course take his Devachan as usual, and will probably have a very long one. His life on the astral plane would be likely to be but a short one, and it would be only during that that it would be possible for a prayer to reach him and attract his attention. If during that time it did so reach him, no doubt he would do anything that he could to satisfy the petitioner; but it is by no means certain that it would attract his attention, for he would naturally be very fully occupied with his new surroundings.

When he entered upon his long rest in Devachan he would be entirely beyond any possibility of being disturbed by earthly things; yet even in such a case a prayer to him might not be without effect in connection with him. Such a man would



almost certainly be pouring out a constant stream of loving thought towards humanity, and this thought would be a real and potent shower of blessing, tending generally towards the spiritual helping of those upon whom it fell; and there is no doubt that the man who was earnestly thinking of or praying to that saint would come into *rappor*t with him and draw down upon himself a great deal of that force, though of course entirely without the knowledge of the saint from whom it came.

If the saint were sufficiently advanced to be able to renounce Devachan and to enter upon a special series of births rapidly following one another, the case would be different again. He would then be all the time within reach of earth, either living on the astral plane or in incarnation upon the physical, and if the prayer were strong enough to attract his attention at any time when he was for the moment out of his body, he would probably give any help in his power.

But fortunately for the many thousands who are constantly pouring forth their souls in prayer—in the blindest ignorance, of course, but still in perfect good faith—there is something else to depend upon which is independent of all these considerations. Kṛṣṇa tells us in the *Bhagavad Gītā* how all true prayers come to him, to whomsoever they may have been ignorantly offered; there is a Consciousness wide enough to comprehend all, which never fails in its response to any earnest effort in the direction of increased spirituality. It works through many means; sometimes perhaps by directing the attention of a deva to the suppliant, sometimes through the agency of those human helpers who work upon the astral or mental planes for the good of humanity. Such a deva or helper so used would, if he showed himself, inevitably be taken by the petitioner for the saint to whom he had prayed, and there are many stories which show this. In this connection I would refer the questioner to some articles on the subject of “Invisible Helpers” which I published in *Lucifer* two years ago, and which are soon to be issued in pamphlet form.

#### QUESTION CCCCLVII.

S. F.—What is the difference between *Ātman* and *Ātmā*? Is the former the *Logos* and the latter the individual ray of each one of us?

C. J.—The difference is one only of grammatical form. All Sanskrit nouns go through two stages before the formation of the nominative case, *viz.*, 1st, a root; 2nd, the root, plus a formative suffix. This second stage is called the crude form. In this word the root (secondary) is *āt*, meaning to breathe, and with the formative suffix *man* forms the crude form or base *ātman*; and the nominative case of crude bases in *an* is formed by dropping the *n* and lengthening the final vowel, and thus we get the nominative *ātmā*. In quoting a word Sanskrit books always give the crude form, and hence *ātman* is the correct form, though we often

find instead the nominative case given in Theosophical books, *e.g.*, *ātmā*, *karma*, etc.

The term that in the Vedāntic philosophy corresponds to our Theosophical conception of the *Logos* is *īshvara*, “the Lord,” and in antithesis to this the idea of the individual soul is expressed by the word *prājñā*, “relating to intellect, intelligent.”

#### QUESTION CCCCLVIII.

S. G.—It is very generally supposed that the history of Christian Rosenkreuz is a fictitious one, that no such person ever existed, and that the Rosicrucians were only heard of through the writings of Johann Valentine Andreae. Can any historical evidence be given to show that the Rosicrucians existed before the time of the publication of the *FAMA FRATERNITATIS*, and the writings of Andreae?

I. C.-O.—There is undoubtedly a good deal of historical evidence relating to the Rosicrucians in the general histories of the times. It is very commonly supposed that the whole history of the Rosicrucians was invented by Johann Valentine Andreae (1586-1654), who wrote the *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreuz* (Strasburg, 1616). But as a matter of fact the diaries and annals of the time prove that the body of mystics called Rosicrucians were known in Hungary, Bohemia and Italy before the year 1604. In the *Memoirs of the Court, Aristocracy and Diplomacy of Austria*, by Doctor E. Vehse, translated by Franz Demmler, 1856, we get allusions to the relations of Rudolf II. with this body of people. Says Demmler, Vol. i, p. 236, writing of Rudolf II. [1576-1612]: “He kept up a constant intercourse with Rosicrucians, Alchemists, Adepts of every sort . . . Doctor John Dee, the celebrated English alchemist and necromancer, was one of the most conspicuous characters . . . of itinerant adepts, who from time to time made their appearance at Rudolf’s court, and two famous Italians living in the grandest style, are also to be mentioned. These two philosophers, who, during the last half of the 16th century, were the astonishment of the whole of Europe, bore the names of Marco Bragadino and Hieronymus Scotto.” This Marco Bragadino was a native of Famagusta in Cyprus; his proper name was Manugna. “In 1578, he appeared as the Conte Manugnano in Italy, showed himself with the greatest magnificence in the circles of the Nobili at Venice . . . Count Hieronymus Scotto was a native of Parma. Khevenhüller expressly states that the whole of Europe had resounded with the achievements of this wonderful person.” We find he was travelling in Germany in 1573; he was at Nuremberg and Cologne and was very often at the Court of Prague. But the most important personage mentioned by Demmler is Michael Mayer, who was known as a Rosicrucian at the Court of Rudolf II. long before the above-mentioned book written by Andreae appeared. Of him Demmler says: “He was Rudolf’s physician and private secretary and he was Rudolf’s favourite writer, recording the Emperor’s own ideas and

experiences. He was moreover a Rosicrucian and a very fertile author. His works, bearing the mysterious signature 'Chevalier Imperial,' created an immense sensation. They were most of them published at Frankfort-am-Main and some were translated into French. Having afterwards entered the service of the Landgraf Maurice of Hesse-Cassel, Mayer died at Magdeburg in 1622." (Vol. i. pp. 236 and 238).

Perhaps one of the most important of his works is that entitled *Themis Aurea: The Laws of the Fraternity of the Rosie Crosse*, written in Latin by Count Michael Maierus, of which a translation was published in London, in 1656. From various allusions made by Khevenhüller in his *Annales Ferdinandeï* it is quite evident that the Rosicrucians were known at the Court of Rudolf II. for he gives interesting accounts of various experiments made at the Court of the Emperor. And it is more than probable that further investigation into the private histories of these Courts would furnish us with conclusive proof of the existence of the Rosicrucians before the year 1610, the important year when the famous *Fama Fraternitatis* first became public.

Another important point which Denmler gives us is the connection of the great Wallenstein with occultism. Writing of him he says (p. 338): "He stayed for some time at Padua to be initiated by Professor Argoli in the occult sciences and in the mysteries of the Cabala." The date which our author gives for this visit is 1603. From other sources we have found that Padua was at this period a great centre for mysticism, about which there will be more to say later on.

#### QUESTION CCCCLIX.

A. H. W.—*Is an ego at any time during the period in Devachan conscious of the nature of its next earth life?*

C. W. L.—If the ordinary life in Devachan is meant—the long period of bliss spent upon one or other of the rūpa levels—then the answer must be in the negative, for that life is merely a prolongation under the happiest auspices of the more spiritual part of the existence of the last personality; and in the vast majority of cases here in the West that personality would be entirely unaware that it had to be born again.

But after the period of what we usually call Devachan is over, there is still another phase of existence for the ego before it is reborn on earth, and though in the case of most people this stage is a comparatively short one, we must not ignore it if we wish to have a complete conception of man's superphysical life.

We are perpetually misunderstanding the life of man because we are in the habit of taking a partial view of it, and entirely disregarding its real nature and object. We generally look at it, in fact, from the point of view of the physical body, and not in the least from that of the true ego; and we therefore get the whole thing utterly out of pro-

portion. Each movement of the ego towards these lower planes and back is in reality a vast circular sweep; we take a little fragment of the lower arc of this circle and regard it as a straight line, attaching quite undue importance to its beginning and ending, while the real turning-point of the circle naturally entirely escapes us.

Think of the matter for a moment as it must seem to the true man on his own plane, as soon as he begins to be at all clearly conscious there. In obedience to the desire for manifestation which he finds within him, which is impressed upon him by that law of evolution which is the will of the Logos, he copies the action of that Logos by pouring himself forth into lower planes.

In the course of this process he clothes himself with matter of the various planes into which he passes—mental, astral and physical in turn, all the while steadily pressing outward. Through the earlier part of that little fragment of existence on the physical plane which we call his life the outward force is still strong, but at about the middle of it, in ordinary cases, that force becomes exhausted, and the great inward sweep begins.

Not that there is any sudden or violent change, for this is not an angle, but still part of the curve of the same circle—exactly corresponding to the moment of aphelion in a planet's course round its orbit. Yet it is the real turning-point of that little cycle of evolution, though with us it is usually not marked in any way. In the old Indian scheme of life it *was* marked as the end of the *grihastha* or householder period of the man's earthly existence.

From this point there should be nothing but a steady drawing inward of the whole force of the man, and his attention ought to be more and more withdrawn from mere earthly things, and concentrated on those of higher planes—from which we at once see how exceedingly ill-adapted to real progress are the modern conditions of European life.

The point at which the man drops his physical body is not a specially important one in this arc of evolution—by no means so important as the next change, which we might call his death on the astral plane and his birth on that of Devachan, although really it is simply the transfer of the consciousness from astral matter to devachanic matter in the course of the same steady withdrawal of which we have already spoken.

The final result of the life is known only when in that process of withdrawal the consciousness is once more centred in the ego alone on his own arūpa-devachanic level; then it is seen what new qualities he has acquired in the course of that particular little cycle of his evolution. At that time also a glimpse of the life as a whole is obtained; the ego has for a moment a flash of clearer consciousness, in which he sees the results of the life just completed, and something of what will follow from it in his next birth.

This glimpse is perhaps what was in the mind of the questioner; in any case it is the nearest

approach which we find in the soul's *post-mortem* history to the consciousness about which he enquires. It can hardly be said to involve a knowledge of the nature of the next incarnation, except in the vaguest and most general sense; no doubt the main object of the coming life would be seen, but the vision would be chiefly valuable to the ego as a lesson in the kârmic result of his action in the past. It offers him an opportunity, of which he takes more or less advantage according to the stage of development to which he has already attained.

At first he makes little of it, since he is but very dimly conscious and very poorly fitted to apprehend facts and their varied inter-relations; but gradually his power to appreciate what he sees increases, and later the ability comes to remember such flashes at the end of previous lives, and to compare them, and so to estimate the progress which he is making along the road which he has to traverse.

#### QUESTION CCCCLX.

E. H. T.—*What is the meaning of the word "tongue" in 1 Corinth., xiv. 2: "For he that speaketh in a tongue, speaketh not unto men but unto God." Again, in xiii. 8: "Whether there be tongues, they shall fail." Are "tongues" in the latter verse the same as the "tongue" in the former?*

G. R. S. M.—E. H. T. raises the whole question of *glôssolalia* or "speaking with a tongue," on which there have been such interminable controversies. Students who are interested in the subject may be referred to Plumptre's article, "Gift of Tongues," in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and as the last contribution to the subject to the chapter on "The Gift of Tongues" in Wright's *Some New Testament Problems* (London, 1898); from these as a beginning they can follow up the subject from the references.

The chief N.T. passages are the second synoptic xvi. 17; *Acts*, ii. 1-13, x. 46, xix. 6; *1 Cor.*, xii., xiii., xiv. These, however, must be taken in the reversed order, for the Pauline document is of course by far the earliest and it alone is of any real historical value. The *Acts* accounts of this glossolaly are later than the canonical gospels (somewhere in the first quarter of the second century) and were compiled to give the sanction of a dramatic origin to one of the commonest enthusiastic phenomena of the time. The verse in the second synoptic comes in the appendix, which is unanimously rejected as being of far later date.

That the "gift of tongues" was the commonest of phenomena in the outer communities in which Paul found a hearing is indubitable; that he himself had this "gift" more than any of them is his own claim; that he thought but little of it is also clear from his exhortations; and that he had never heard of the dramatic incident of Pentecost as related in the *Acts*-document of some hundred years later, is as evident as that he knew nothing of the sayings and doings of the Jesus of the synoptics.

What then was the "speaking with a tongue" to which Paul refers? It was apparently an *undisciplined* enthusiasm whereby the speaker was thrown into a violent ecstatic state which the mind could not control, so that no one could understand the meaning of the words and cries which he uttered. The induction of this state of psychic enthusiasm was the opening of the door to an infinite series of phenomena with which all students of occultism are familiar in their experience and researches.

One of the greatest points of interest in tracing the evolution of popular Christianity is to notice how practices which could only be practised with safety under guidance and strict discipline, as was the case in the inner schools of prophetic training, were indulged in without restriction by the outer undisciplined communities which took their rise outside even the lay degrees of these regular orders. Paul himself was evidently an independent spirit outside these circles of training, and had at first himself passed through all the stages of unbalanced psychic enthusiasm, but experience had subsequently taught him the uselessness of much of it, and he had finally learnt to value one single word of wisdom above all the words of countless "tongues." As the outer churches grew, they gradually eliminated this undisciplined psychism from their ranks, and the days of the "prophets" became numbered, and prophecy was not only discouraged, but even as early as the beginning of the third century was condemned. The old practices of enthusiasm were afterwards kept up in bodies outside the area of the General Church, as for instance the great movement of Montanus, of which Tertullian was so devoted an adherent. Nevertheless Christendom was never without its prophecy and glossolaly, and it continues to our own day, but always outside the area of orthodoxy. Just as the original schools of trained mystics must have regarded with disapproval the excesses of ignorant psychism in the popular communities, so did the out-growth of those popular communities, the General Church, when it had organised itself, not only suppress this psychism, but condemn it as being of the Devil.

But no anathemas were strong enough to crush out the inevitable consequences of religious enthusiasm working on psychic natures. The phenomena are as old as the world, and such sensitives as they occur through, under the careful training of experienced teachers can be safely piloted through the manifold illusions that surround them on their first contacts with psychic life. When, however, indulged in by untrained and ignorant folk, or even by people who in other respects have a sound judgment, they lead to the most disastrous results, for the ignorant person almost invariably thinks he is filled with the "Spirit of God." The phenomenon of glossolaly in Christian circles can be studied in the early Montanist communities and in those allied to them in the subsequent centuries; in the Mendicant orders of the thirteenth century; in the prophesying of the sixteenth century in England; in the early history of the

disciples of George Fox ; among the Jansenists in France ; and in the revivals under Wesley and Whitfield. The history of the French Protestants of the eighteenth century presents us with valuable data, especially that of the Cevennois in 1686 and 1700. Finally the so-called Unknown Tongues, a term derived from an interpolation in the Revised Version, first manifested themselves in the West of Scotland and then in London, in the Caledonian Church in Regent Square, a movement which was subsequently organised by the genius of Irving and others, and is now generally known as the Irvingite Church.

The phenomena in question were all indubitably of precisely the same nature as that of the glossolally of the so-called Primitive Church. Mostly the "speaking" is entirely incomprehensible and occasionally someone in psychic rapport with the speaker "interprets," that is to say, gives some more or less sensible explanation of the outburst ; sometimes the "prophet" speaks a foreign language of which he has no knowledge in his normal consciousness, a familiar enough phenomenon in "spiritualistic" circles. But even a mere list of all the permutations, combinations and possibilities of such psychism would fill up all our space. We should not, however, omit from our list of glossolalists a mention of the Shaker communities on which an interesting answer is awaiting its appearance in these columns.

It is thus evident that the answer to the question of our enquirer E. H. T. is simply, Yes.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXI.

*B. L.—Would an arûpa Devachanee be conscious of the rûpa levels ; and could he consciously enter the thought-form of himself, made by another, and teach ?*

C. W. L.—This would entirely depend upon the level which he himself had reached. On the third sub-plane, and even in the lower part of the second, his consciousness of the sub-planes below him would still be dim, and his action in the thought-form largely instinctive and automatic. But as soon as he got well into the second sub-plane his vision would rapidly become clearer, and he would recognize the thought-forms with pleasure as vehicles through which he was able to express more of himself in certain ways than he could through his personality.

The only case in which the suggestion of the questioner is fully true, however, is that of a Master or Initiate whose causal body functions in the magnificent light and splendour of the highest arûpa level. His consciousness is instantaneously and perfectly active at any point in the lower divisions to which he wills to direct it, and he, therefore, can intentionally project additional energy into such a thought-form when he wishes to use it for the purpose of teaching.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXII.

*A. P. W.—What is the history of the reincarnating ego of the average man prior to its descent into animal man ? Was it a distinct entity partly evolved in an earlier manvantara, or is its ultimate genesis to be found in that union of the third great outpouring from the First Logos of the solar system with the evolved animal ? If the former, is the meaning of the "outpouring" from the Logos, a sending forth again into manifestation of unevolved entities absorbed into It at the close of a manvantara ?*

C. W. L.—The querent must be well aware that to such a question as this a reply based on direct investigation is not readily to be had. So far as we know the "ultimate genesis" of the reincarnating ego of man is to be found in the third great outpouring which comes from the First Logos. What is poured in is not "a distinct entity partly evolved in an earlier manvantara" at all, but as it were a portion of the mind-substance of the Logos Himself, and the individuality which reincarnates is produced by the apparent detachment of that portion from the great ocean whence it came.

Of course to speak of "detachment" and of "a portion" is materialistic and misleading, when regarded from the highest standpoint, but looking at what happens from our physical plane this method of expressing the fact is probably on the whole less misleading than any other form of words that we could select. It is obviously impossible that we in our ignorance should understand down here a problem which needs faculties far higher than any that we possess, to say nothing even of the comprehension of many dimensions which would be necessary in order to solve it.

I am inclined therefore to think that questions upon subjects so high above us as these are of comparatively little use ; still, so far as our own evolution goes, it seems safe to say that the third outpouring is not a sending forth again into manifestation of unevolved entities belonging to a previous manvantara, but is on the contrary the calling into life of fresh individualities which have never existed *as such* before, but have until then been part of the expression on a certain plane of the one great individuality of the Logos.

The subscription to THE VAHAN 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, 25, 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.

VOL. VIII.

LONDON, DECEMBER 1, 1898.

NO. 5.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

Margate Lodge.

### THE GENERAL FUND.

As may be seen from the list of donations in the present issue of THE VĀHAN, the notice in last month's issue has received a good response. I take this opportunity of thanking the members who have so generously come forward to assist the funds of the Section. I may also call attention to the fact that we still require a good deal to make up the proper average for the past few months.

HERBERT BURROWS, *Treasurer*.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### The Anniversary Meeting at Adyar.

The Executive Committee have appointed Mrs. Besant to act as representative of the European Section at the Anniversary Meeting of the Society, to be held at Adyar, on December 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to November 29th: R. S., £3 15s.; Mrs. Louis Jay, £5; B., £5; L., £3; Mrs. Hooper, £1; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; Pax, £1; Miss Hordern, 5s.; W. H. Thomas, £2 2s.; W. J. Long, £5; Z., £1; Mrs. Kennedy, £5; F. A. Higgs, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, 5s.; E. P. F., £1; C. L. Richardson, 10s.; E. M. Thomas, 5s.; Mrs. Parker, £12; F. L. J. Zossenheim, £1; Mrs. Bond, £1; Mrs. Howson, £5; O. Firth, 10s.; Mrs. Firth, 10s.; Mrs. Macduff, £1; G., £2; A Member, £1. Total, £59 7s.

This Branch has returned its Charter and wishes to be recognised in future as a Centre, until its membership increases sufficiently to justify its existence as a chartered branch. Several of its members have left the town, and so caused a reduction in its numbers. Regular meetings will, however, be again started with the New Year, and it is hoped that further interest may be aroused.

#### New Centre.

A new Centre has been formed at Leipsic, Germany. Mr. Richard Bresch is acting as the Secretary, and as several members have recently joined, there is reason to hope for a successful continuation of the new movement.

#### Section Reference Library.

The Library is open to members of the Society, from 2 to 10 p.m., except on Thursday.

The following books have been added to the Library: "*The Times*" Atlas, London, 1898; *Pausanias's Description of Greece*, trans., with commentary, J. G. Frazer, 6 vols., London, 1898; *Benedict de Spinoza, his Life, Correspondence and Ethics*, R. Willis, M.D., London, 1870; *Some Philosophy of the Hermetics*, London, 1898; *Die Devachan-Ebene*, C. W. Leadbeater, trans. German, Leipzig, 1898; *La Muerta y el Más Alla*, Annie Besant, trans., La Plata, 1898; *Ideals of the East*, Herbert Baynes, M.R.A.S., London, 1898; *Zoroastrianism in the Light of Theosophy*, compiled by N. F. Bilimoria.

A. J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

#### Theosophical Lending Library.

The following book has been added to the library: *The Book of the Master*, W. Marsham Adams.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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*.

### Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle will meet at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. Children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

### Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Dec. 11th, *The Idea of God*, T. H. Duffell; Dec. 25th, no meeting.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at "The Commercial Hotel," Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: Dec. 20th, *Karma*, Mrs. Handyside. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattanaach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Thursday 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. 4th, *Psychic Photography*, A. Osborne Eaves; Dec. 11th, *Music and Occultism*, E. J. Dunn; Dec. 18th, *Socrates*, C. N. Goode; Dec. 25th, *The Message of Christmas*. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 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.: Dec. 6th, *The Relation between the Higher and Lower Selves*; Dec. 13th, *Theosophy in Christianity*; Dec. 20th, *Divination and Magic*; Dec. 27th, *Practical Psychology: Its Advantages and Dangers*. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings on Thursdays, at No. 9 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings on Mondays 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, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: Dec. 1st, *Studies in Christian Origins, III., Some Extracts from the "Hermes" Fragments*, G. R. S. Mead; Dec. 8th, *"The Making of Religion,"* Mrs. Mallet; Dec. 15th, *The Microcosm*, A. H. Ward; Dec. 22nd and 29th, No Lecture. On Sundays at 7 p.m.: Dec. 4th, *Rudimentary Man. His Relation to the Lower Kingdoms. The Development of Mind*; Dec. 11th, *The Soul as Individual. Its Birth and Development. The Stages of its Progress*; Dec. 18th, *Exceptional Lines of Psychic Development. Initiation. Man as Creator*.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: Dec. 5th, *Percy Bysshe Shelley*, W. C. Worsdell; Dec. 19th, *Religion and Art*, Mrs. Cox.

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.; Dec. 6th, *Occultism in Poetry*, Miss Whitfield; Dec. 13th, . . . . E. S. Lang Buckland; Dec. 20th, *The Greatest of all Heresies: A Study in Christian Origins*, G. R. S. Mead; Dec. 27th, *Conversazione*. Students' class on alternate Thursdays for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*: Nov. 3rd and 17th. Meetings on Sundays, at 11 a.m.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m.: Dec. 12th, *Occultism and the Occult Arts*, Mr. and Mrs. Leo; Dec. 19th, *The Year's Work*, Alan Leo. Alternate Mondays, study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

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

LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.15 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8 p.m.: *Lost Continents*, Miss Ward; Dec. 9th, *Mediumship*, R. King; Dec. 16th, *The Druses*, J. M. Watkins; Dec. 23rd, No Meeting.

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.

**MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE.** Meetings at the Albany Temperance Hotel, Linthorpe Road, on alternate Thursdays, at 8 p.m.: Dec. 8th, *The Theosophic Life*, Mrs. MacFadzean; Dec. 22nd, *Masters of Wisdom*, E. Outhwaite. On the other Thursdays, at 20, Albert Road, 8.15 p.m., study of *The Devachanic Plane*.

**MUNICH CENTRE.** Meetings at 5, Lerchenfeld Strasse, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

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

**PARIS.** Meetings at 21, Rue Tronchet (office of *La Revue Théosophique Française*), on the first Sunday in each month, at 3 p.m.

**PARIS, ANANTA LODGE.** Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., at 58, rue de Verneuil. Lectures on the second and fourth Wednesdays in each month.

**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.

**ZÜRICH LODGE.** Meeting at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

#### North of England Federation.

The last quarterly meeting of the North of England Federation was held in Harrogate on November 12th. The General Secretary presided and lectured on "Theosophy and Religion." The meetings were very successful and were well attended.

On Sunday evening, November 13th, Mr. Cuffe lectured on "The Theosophy of Taoism," at the public meeting of the Harrogate Branch. In connection with his visit Mr. Cuffe also lectured to the Branches at Manchester, Bradford, Harrogate, and Leeds on "Our Present Work," and held a drawing-room meeting at Hornsea, at which about sixty people were present.

#### Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

Mrs. Cooper-Oakley visited the Centres at Exeter and Plymouth in November. On Wednesday, November 16th, she held an afternoon meeting at Exeter, and in the evening lectured on "Links with the Past." The attendance was satisfactory. At Plymouth on the next evening Mrs. Cooper-Oakley delivered a lecture on "The Change that Men call Death," at the Odd Fellows Hall. About seventy were present. A meeting for enquirers was also held on Friday at Plymouth.

#### Blavatsky Lodge.

The annual business meeting of this Lodge was held on Tuesday, November 15th, when there was a fair attendance of members. The report of

the year's work showed an increase of forty-eight members for the year, bringing the total up till the end of September to 239.

The Treasurer's report was equally satisfactory and it was decided to expend at once the greater part of the balance in hand. The former officers of the Lodge were all re-elected.

Mr. Leadbeater has lectured twice in the past month, his subjects being "Nature-Spirits" and "Elementals." On November 3rd Mrs. Cooper-Oakley lectured upon "Our Theosophical Ancestry," taking up especially in that connection the subject of Chivalry. In concluding her lecture, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley laid stress upon some of the ideals of chivalry, and was of opinion that our social life would be the nobler and more beautiful were many of those ideals more fully recognised to-day. Mr. Mead gave another of his most important series of Studies in Christian Origins on November 10th, and although the subject was of necessity a difficult one, the lecture hall was very full, and much interest was felt.

S. M. S.

#### Munich Centre.

Meetings have been resumed at this Centre for the winter, and are held at the rooms of the Secretary, Herr O. Huschke, on Tuesday evenings. Lectures are given by some of the members, and after the lectures the time is occupied by answering questions and by discussion on Theosophical subjects.

#### ENQUIRER.

##### QUESTION CCCCLXIII.

*S. F.—Why can some persons recently deceased succeed in materializing themselves and others not? For instance—in "The Two Brothers" (Theosophical Review, Nov., 1897), the dead Lancelot could not communicate in any way by himself with his living brother, while in "An Astral Murder" (Theosophical Review, Dec., 1897), Tom Price was seen by three persons the morning he stole the engine to kill his rival, more than a month after his death. Are hate and desire of revenge stronger than love, as it would seem from these two cases?*

*C. W. L.—Assuredly hate and revenge are not stronger than love, regarded as abstract forces; but one man's hate may very easily be stronger and more concentrated than another man's love, and this is mainly a question of the amount of force exercised—of strength of will and power of concentration, and not of the direction in which they may be turned.*

It does not always follow that those who patiently collect and study large numbers of facts are therefore invariably able to explain all they see; if they are questioned as to the facts they can answer, but the reasons lying behind those facts may often be only matters of conjecture, just as is the case in some of the investigations of

physical science. I believe both those stories to be absolutely true (I *know* that one of them is), but nevertheless there are probably all sorts of kârmic forces working at the back of each of them of which I know nothing whatever, and to give a perfect explanation of them, all those would have to be taken into account.

There is of course no difficulty in seeing why poor Lancelot was unable to communicate with his brother, for that inability is simply the normal condition of affairs; the wonder is that Cyril *was* able to materialize himself, not that Lancelot *was not*. Not only, however, was the feeling probably stronger in Cyril's case, but he also knew exactly what he wanted to do—knew that such a thing as materialization was a possibility, and had some general idea as to how it was done—while Lancelot naturally knew nothing of all this.

If either of the cases needs accounting for, it is not Lancelot's, but Tom Price's. It may be taken as certain that *he* knew nothing whatever of occult methods or possibilities, yet he contrived to gain his nefarious end by the use of them; how is it probable that this was accomplished?

It is most likely that a man of such violent passion and such terrible force for evil had drawn round him during life powerful astral entities of the most objectionable type who would gleefully aid him in such a work of destruction; but quite possibly his concentrated and venomous malignity may have been strong enough to burst through the barriers for itself, just as Cyril's intense pity did in the other case.

Inexplicable as it may seem, there is no doubt whatever of the existence in nature of this stupendous power of will over matter of all planes, so that if only the power be great enough, practically *any* result may be produced by its direct action, without any knowledge or even thought on the part of the man exercising that will as to *how* it is to do its work. We have had plenty of evidence that this power holds good in the case of materialization, although ordinarily it is an art which must be learnt just like any other. Assuredly an average man on the astral plane could no more materialize himself without having previously learnt how to do it than the average man on this plane could play the violin without having previously learnt it; but there are exceptional cases, and if Tom Price had no assistance he must have been one of them.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXIV.

A. P. W.—*Is anything known with regard to the law of sex—whether there is an alternation of sex incarnation after incarnation or whether there is a continuous series of incarnations in the same sex?*

C. W. L.—We were told long ago that as a general rule an ego took not less than three, and not more than seven successive incarnations in one sex before changing to the other. Such investigations as have been made since then into the subject of reincarnation confirm this teaching,

though one or two exceptions to the rule have come under our notice. These latter, however, have so far been observed only in the cases of egos already developed beyond the average, and can therefore hardly be considered as violations of what appears to be the rule for ordinary men.

Though the laws governing reincarnation probably work as it were mechanically upon the vast majority of undeveloped egos, it seems certain from the instances observed that as soon as any one ego makes a little progress of any sort, and so becomes hopeful from the evolutionary point of view, considerable elasticity is introduced into the arrangements, and within certain definite limits he would be likely to be born into the sex and race which were best suited to give him an opportunity of strengthening the weak points in his character.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXV.

A. L.—*Is there anything occult or mystical in the religion of the sect generally known as Shakers?*

A. M. G.—A religious sect could hardly be religious without having something mystical in its teachings. Many a sect has however been formed for reasons which to the profane appeared almost frivolous, but this accusation cannot be brought against the Shakers. They at least have an idea at the back of them and, divested of some absurdities which appear more in the past than in the present, there is a good deal of sound and sensible religion in their creed and practice. "Shakers" is of course a term of ridicule, the proper title being "The United Society of Believers," that is, believers in the second coming of Christ in a woman's form. The term of "Shaker" has, however, been adopted by themselves, as they saw nothing ridiculous in it and were not ashamed to have it known that when "moved by the Spirit" they shook in body.

Like many another sect, it has its origin in a Divine revelation, a special manifestation of God in these latter days. They are the beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth and attempt practically to found that kingdom by forming themselves into "families" in which the members live according to the instructions of their new revelation. Although now the sect is practically an American one, it arose in England, its founder, "Mother" Ann Lee, leaving England for America in 1774, with seven converts. They first formed a community in 1787, and have very slowly but steadily grown, until now there are, as I see stated in one of their pamphlets, some fifteen societies. The Shakers arose within a small religious community of French origin, somewhat similar to the Quakers, the members of whom were inspired in their meetings by what they regarded as a Divine power which shook their bodies. They prophesied, had visions and "spiritual gifts," and confessed their sins one to another. They are regarded by the present Shakers as the forerunners of Ann Lee, in whom Christ appeared for the second time.



Both in this first and second appearing, Christ is regarded as different from the person in whom He appeared. His was a spiritual and not a physical appearance. Jesus received the Christ spirit at his baptism, and in a similar sense Ann Lee received Him when she reached purification. Only at the second coming was the redemption of woman achieved, and the work thus completed.

All who join the Shaker community must lead a life of celibacy and perfect purity, for in the Kingdom of Heaven there is to be no marriage. When all people have arrived at such a condition, the time for the present world to cease will have come. In the meantime, of course, only those few who have adopted the new life will cease to bring forth offspring, so that there is no immediate likelihood of a lack of fresh egos on the earth. Those who do not receive the new Gospel now, must work out their salvation in the next world or Hades, for the Gospel is also preached there. There are two creations recognised, the old creation with marriage and generation as its law, and the new, or spiritual, with purity and regeneration as its characteristics. Besides a life of celibacy, one of the most essential features is the open confession of sin. Only after free confession before others can the spirit come upon a man or woman.

In the communities all work, and men and women are regarded as equal in every way, having equal responsibilities in the governing of the family, which is of course organised, and with chosen heads.

One of the most singular incidents in the earlier history of the sect was the alleged reappearance of Ann Lee many years after her death, for the further instruction of the believers. She is said to have continued to communicate for some sixty years after her death with some to whom she had promised spiritual vision. There was also a special effort, continuing for several years, to stimulate the various societies, Ann Lee and some of her co-workers who had passed into the spiritual world returning to minister to them. Another curious period in their history was about the year 1843, which had been previously regarded by prophecy interpreters as a date of peculiar importance. In a Shaker pamphlet before me the writer says: "This date was remarkable for a wonderful influx of spirits from Hades, into the bodies of believers in Christ's second appearing. They were of various nationalities, and of all classes and conditions when in earth life, except the wilfully vile and criminal. . . . Done by permission of those in authority and conducted with a degree of order, both for our learning and for the benefit of the invisibles who were awaking to the judgment, and returned for a brief visit to the rudimental sphere to increase knowledge and to gain instruction in the gospel of eternal life. Teachers I have known, preached in our meetings to multitudes in the world of spirits, whom our Seers told us had come, and that some had been sent to us for that purpose. Moreover, entranced mediums, attended with guides, preached to

spirits assembled to receive instruction in places they visited in the spirit world." This "influx from Hades" occurred, it may be noticed, a few years before modern Spiritualism arose.

Into the actual doctrines, beyond what is indicated in the account given above, there is no need to go here, as for the most part they do not bear upon this question. But I have quoted enough, I think, to show that the occult and mystical side of nature is recognised by this curious community. A life of perfect purity for those who seek the higher state, the continuous inspiration from Divine sources, communion with dwellers in another world, and the helping of "spirits in prison" are all familiar ideas to us and show that the Shakers may be ranked with many another mystical body of the past and the present which has claimed acquaintance with things beyond the earth.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXVI.

N. A. K.—*In The Secret Doctrine, Vol. iii., p. 590, a statement is made: "In Virginia there is an apple tree of a special kind, which does not blossom, but bears fruit from a kind of berry without any seeds." Is this a real physical fact that can be verified, or is it a statement with a hidden meaning? I have been requested by a student who is also a scientist to ask this.*

C. W. L.—Obviously, this is either a statement of plain physical fact or a mistake; it is quite impossible to suppose it to be an occult statement with a hidden meaning. It is brought in as an illustration of a method of reproduction which, it is stated, is likely in the future to become more general; and assuredly when that prophecy comes true for the human race half the trouble and crime of the world will disappear.

There is nothing whatever to show whence Madame Blavatsky derived this piece of information; it may have been from some book of travels in the course of her voluminous reading, it may have been a mere newspaper paragraph, or it may have been a fact of which she obtained knowledge in the course of occult studies of which we know nothing.

As to whether it can be verified, that is quite another matter; perhaps some member residing in Virginia can discover for the questioner whether anything is known by either the botanists or the farmers there of such a curiosity of the vegetable world. But surely the enquiry is hardly worth the trouble!

The tree, as I have said, is merely brought in as an illustration, and no argument is made to depend upon it in any way; the question of its existence is one of purely botanical interest, and has no kind of connection with our study of the great truths of Theosophy.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXVII.

G. L.—*How is a selfish man punished in his next life? Is he drawn by affinity into the society of selfish people?*

C. W. L.—We are not in a position to furnish

information about the working out of karma with the wealth of detail to be found in some Oriental books, which specify exactly what sin a man must commit in order to insure his being born next time blind of the right eye or crippled in the left leg.

I do not even think myself that the arrangements work in that inelastic way at all, and should rather suppose that though the same sin committed under the same circumstances by two exactly similar people would probably result in the same *amount* of suffering, yet the *kind* of suffering might be almost infinitely varied. I feel also that we shall do better to avoid the idea or even the very name of punishment, and invariably substitute for it the thought of effect following inevitably from cause by the working of natural laws.

With regard to the probable effect of selfishness, one might perhaps speculate somewhat in this way. Selfishness is primarily a mental attitude or condition, so its immediate result must be looked for on the mental plane. It is undoubtedly an intensification of the lower personality at the expense of the individuality, and one of its results would therefore certainly be the accentuation of that lower personality, so that selfishness would tend to reproduce itself in aggravated form, and to grow steadily stronger.

Thus more and more of the higher would be lost in each life through entanglement with the lower, and persistence in this sin would be a fatal bar to progress. For we must remember that nature's severest penalty is always deprivation of the opportunity for progress, just as her highest reward is the offering of such an opportunity.

So that here we have already a glimpse of the way in which selfishness might itself bring about its own worst result in so hardening the man as to make him insensible to all good influences and to render his further progress impossible until he had conquered it. Of course there would also be the karma on the physical plane of all the unjust or unkind *acts* which the man's selfishness might lead him to commit; but the worst penalty that those could bring upon him would be trivial and evanescent beside the effect upon his own mental condition.

It is possible that one result might sometimes be, as suggested, that he would be drawn by affinity into the society of selfish people, and so, through suffering from this vice in others, learn how heinous it was in himself; but it seems probable that the resources of the law are endless, and that we should be quite mistaken in imagining it as cramped down to the line of action on which we in our ignorance think it ought to be administered.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXVIII.

*S. B.—Is a Theosophist, as such, justified in advocating celibacy? If so, when questioned as to where waiting egos are to reincarnate, what must be the answer?*

*S. M. S.—The answer to this question must be a decided negative. To pursue such a course*

would be most unwise, and might lead to great mischief.

Our first duty as members of the Theosophical Society should be to make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the broad principles of Theosophy, and to distinguish these from the various details regarding the regulation of daily life which must be matters of personal choice and individual fitness. Our work should be, first of all, to train ourselves as best we may; and when we feel sure that we are fitted for it, to put before others such ideas as we think may be helpful to them. But do not let us mix up with the broad conceptions of Theosophy, or make Theosophy responsible for, the advocacy of narrow views of life and conduct which do not belong to it and which have already done much injury. There is no doubt that when our knowledge of Theosophy shall have become clearer, we shall no longer need to ask such questions as the above.

As to the second part of the query, surely our own common sense will tell us at once that the problem is not a pressing one, nor likely to be so for many ages to come.

For our own comfort, however, we may assume that the Guardians of the race, who slumber not nor sleep, will see to it that "waiting egos" do not wait in vain for an earthly tabernacle. For evolution is the Law, and there is most assuredly no power either in earth or in heaven or in the waters that are under the earth which is able to stay its progress.

A. A. W.—No one is justified in advocating celibacy, or monogamy, or polygamy, as a Theosophical doctrine. A Catholic priest is bound to celibacy; a Protestant missionary is bound to be married (at least it was so in my time), but either may be a Theosophist. I do not think that even those most anxious to bring us down to the level of a sect have ventured to put forth celibacy as a matter of "Theosophical orthodoxy." Considering that a very large percentage of Theosophists belong to a religion which enjoins that a man *shall* marry and have a son before he is permitted to enter upon the Higher Life, I don't quite see how it is possible.

If we descend from general rules to particular cases, I think it is generally admitted in Society that unless a man has at least £300 a year he cannot marry, whatever becomes of the waiting egos. There may be another case—one I have myself met with—in which a person may, after careful study of his nature, come to the conclusion that it is better for the world that *his* species should *not* be reproduced; and of this also the waiting egos cannot complain. Again, there is much work to be done in the world which can only be done by an unmarried man, nor is this Theosophical work only, or chiefly. I have spoken of the Catholic priest: *he* is liable at any moment of the day or night to be summoned to the bedside of a patient in the most malignant fever or small-pox, and instead of keeping his distance, as the doctor can, is forced by his duty to come into the

closest physical contact in hearing the confession. You would not have him come home to a wife and children after it, even for the sake of the waiting egos, would you?

But put all these cases together, and add the very few which our teachings really do contribute—the one here and there of the “few specially organised and peculiar natures” (in the words of Subba Row) who are found capable of entering the path of study in which celibacy is needful—does S. B. seriously think that the supply of tabernacles for the waiting egos is in any danger of falling short of the demand; or that if all the members of the Theosophical Society were suddenly to go crazy and make a general vow of celibacy, the risk would be seriously augmented? Our friend forgets, not only that the natural desires of human nature have abundantly provided against such an event, but—a matter of much more importance—that the exalted Beings who preside over reincarnation have full *power* to arrange this circumstance of rebirth, as all other ones. When an ego is to be reborn the parents are deliberately chosen and brought together; there is no more fear of their frustrating the intention of the Lords of Life than there is of that other ancient bugbear, which even now turns up here and there in Theosophical circles, of “interfering with the Law of Karma”! It may be objected that those who are sufficiently advanced to have a will of their own may refuse, like Daksha’s sons in the old Indian legend; but this hardly comes in this Kali Yuga till they are so far on as to understand what is required of them and to give willing obedience. And the case is, anyway, so rare that we need not take it into account.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXIX.

N. A. K.—*In some of our Theosophical literature the kārāṇa sharīra and the auric egg have each been called the real ego. Surely this is a mistake; is not the causal body simply a vehicle for the ego?*

C. W. L.—The querent must please remember that in earlier Theosophical literature, and even in Madame Blavatsky’s own works, many of the terms were used much more loosely than they have been just lately. We are even now only gradually acquiring any approach to a definite terminology, and some even of what we have will probably need alteration as our knowledge increases. But if once a student grasps the broad facts of the case, as far as they are yet known to us, it will not be difficult for him to arrive at an author’s meaning even through the fog which is sometimes caused by the confusion of terms.

An answer which I wrote in THE VĀHAN of July, 1897, gives what little information we possess as to the genesis of the causal body, and it is repeated in substance in my little book on *The Christian Creed*. I must refer the enquirer to one or other of these publications, as our space is too limited to admit of the reproduction of the whole statement. Briefly, it shows the causal body to have been itself the ensouling principle of the kingdoms

below humanity, but to be now only the vehicle on a certain plane of the true human ego.

It is wiser on the whole to avoid altogether the use of the Sanskrit term *kārāṇa sharīra*, for while it means nothing more than our English term “causal body,” and so has no sort of advantage over it, it has been used in Hindu philosophy with a connotation so entirely different from ours that much confusion is liable to arise.

As to the auric egg, that is another term which has decidedly been used in various senses. Sometimes it has been employed to signify the entire aura of man, including apparently all his vehicles up to the causal; sometimes it has been restricted to the causal body, and sometimes I think it has been intended to bear a signification higher still.

Once more I say, learn the facts of the case. Get clearly into your mind a list of the principles which really do exist in man, and learn what the function of each of them is; call them by whatever names you please, so long as you understand them, and you will have little difficulty in sorting out and arranging the apparently contradictory statements of various Theosophical writers. When you come across a remark about a certain principle, locate it in your mental scheme according to the qualities predicated of it, *not* according to the name with which it happens to be labelled, and you will find that difficulties vanish, and order comes out of chaos.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXX.

B. S. C.—*How is it that the astral body of an unevolved man, which is cloudy and shapeless during physical life, should be able immediately after death to mould itself into the exact likeness of the physical body? Yet if it does not do so how is it recognizable?*

C. W. L.—The questioner does not quite understand the structure of the astral body, and is consequently (very naturally) confusing statements in our literature which were intended to apply to different parts of it.

We have often been told how, to the clairvoyant eye, the physical body of man appears surrounded by what we call the aura—a luminous coloured mist, roughly ovoid in shape, and extending to a distance of some eighteen inches from the body in all directions. All students are aware that this aura is exceedingly complex, and contains matter of all the different planes on which man is at present provided with vehicles; but for the moment let us think of it as it would appear to one who possessed no higher power of vision than the astral.

For such a spectator the aura would of course contain only astral matter, and would therefore be a simpler object of study. He would see, however, that this astral matter not only surrounded the physical body, but interpenetrated it, and that within the periphery of that body it was much more densely aggregated than in that part of the aura which lay outside it. Possibly this may be due to the attraction of the large amount of dense

astral matter which is gathered together there as the counterpart of the cells of the physical body ; but however that may be, the fact is undoubted that the matter of the astral body which lies within the limits of the physical is many times denser than that outside it.

When during sleep the astral body is withdrawn from the physical this arrangement still persists, and anyone looking at such an astral body with clairvoyant vision would still see, just as before, a form resembling the physical body surrounded by an aura. That form would now be composed only of astral matter, but still the difference in density between it and its surrounding mist would be quite sufficient to make it clearly distinguishable, even though it is itself only a form of denser mist.

Now as to the difference in appearance between the evolved and the unevolved man. Even in the case of the latter the features and shape of the inner form would be recognizable always, though blurred and indistinct, but the surrounding egg would scarcely deserve the name, for it would be in fact a mere shapeless wreath of mist, having neither regularity nor permanence of outline.

In the more developed man the change would be very marked, both in the aura and the form within it. This latter would be far more distinct and definite—a closer reproduction of the man's physical appearance ; while instead of the floating mist-wreath we should see a sharply-defined ovoid form, preserving its shape unaffected amidst all the varied currents which are always swirling around it on the astral plane.

Now though the arrangement of the astral body is largely changed after death by the action of the kâmic elemental, such alteration affects principally the outer portion of the egg, and the form within always remains fairly recognizable, though it would certainly tend on the whole to grow fainter as time passed on. Practically, therefore, the difficulty raised in the question does not exist at any time, either during life or after death, even in the case of the most undeveloped man.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXI.

*K. T.—We know that by the Law of Karma we suffer for our sins, in order that our characters may be gradually perfected thereby. Is the case of an adept who has already attained perfection, and who may endure suffering for the sake of humanity, an exception to this Law? For instance, Christ, who was at least a Master, and some consider an Incarnation, endured agony for the race, such that even He prayed to be spared it, yet He could not in any sense have deserved it. In what way is this vicarious suffering consistent with the Law?*

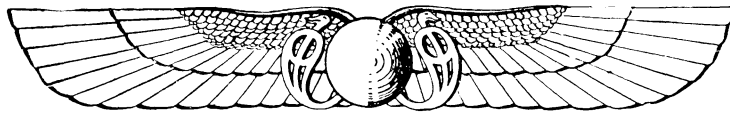
*A. A. W.—I think, as I have said here before, that K. T. would see things more clearly if he would avoid not only the word, but the thought of sin in discussing questions of karma. In simple fact, we know nothing of the kind. There is no power which makes us suffer for our sins, in order*

to perfect our characters. It cannot be sufficiently insisted on that the Law of Karma is no "Divine Providence" to take charge of our characters and save us the trouble of attending to them, for this point is the key to our whole ethical system.

In the course of the gradual development of our mental powers we come, one by one, upon certain Laws of Nature, as we call them. We soon find that however often and with whatever motive we touch fire it will burn us. In the querist's words, to touch fire is a sin against it, and the penalty inevitably follows. As we grow up we find out more and higher cases in which transgression is followed, accurately and invariably, by certain uniform results, on which we may always safely calculate. These laws, as we call them, are in one sense, our limitations ; but in another and more important one, our means of action—of advance. We say there is a law that water tends to find its level ; and just *because* it does so, we can dam it up and make it rise into our houses and turn our mills and carry our ships. It will do all that for us, simply because it cannot run up hill. Now the Law of Karma is only the information that this uniformity of result of action runs into every detail of the universe, physical, mental and spiritual ; that the world is moving forwards, and that *every* action which sets itself against that movement must, by iron necessity, bring us pain. The developing of our character is, and must be, our own work. We do something and suffer for it ; we draw back, and do it no more. This is the first step in the formation of character ; and from this we move forwards, learning to subordinate first the physical comfort to the mental advance, and next that to our spiritual life. The share in our progress which our faith in karma claims is simply that we are finding out on ever new and higher planes that "God is not mocked," that "whatsoever a man soweth, *that* he shall reap"—a consolation in times of trouble, that no faintest effort for good but shall have its full reward, or rather (to speak more correctly) its due effect of help in our struggle ; but also a stern warning, that if we live idly, and sow no good seed, there is no man or God who can bring for us a harvest out of our wasted life.

But there is no necessity that our perfection of character should be gained by suffering. There is no virtue in suffering. On the lower planes of life it is necessary, because sensation is so clumsy and blunt that nothing less can be felt ; but *we* should be beyond that by this time. The great ones who have suffered for humanity have done so in their lower nature only—all the while remaining in their true selves in the bliss of the Godhead. This is the Christian doctrine concerning the death of Christ, and a truth beyond all question. But as to this it is not seemly to "darken sanctities with"—commonplace, where Mrs. Besant has recently spoken so fully and so beautifully in her late lectures on Esoteric Christianity. In these K. T. will find, I think, the satisfaction he desires upon the latter part of his query.

# 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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Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### LETTER FROM THE INDIAN SECTION.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, INDIAN SECTION,  
GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,  
BENARES,  
November 10th, 1898.

To THE GENERAL SECRETARY, EUROPEAN  
SECTION T.S.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,

I am instructed by a Resolution of the Convention of this Section held on October 25th and following days, to tender to you on its behalf our most cordial thanks for your kind and fraternal message of good will and greeting, as well as for the cablegram which you so fraternally sent to us.

I beg also to enclose a copy of the address which was presented to the President-Founder at the close of our proceedings.

With hearty thanks and the best of good wishes, believe me,

Very sincerely and fraternally yours,  
BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY,  
*General Secretary*.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to December 20th: Lady Butt, £2; J. Littler, 5s.; M. L., 5s.; E. L., 5s.; Mrs. Butler, 4s.; K. and H. D., 5s.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; R. C. Minton, 5s.; The Hampstead Lodge, £5; H. A. V., £10; "L." £1; Mrs. Atkinson, 5s.; Mrs. Heymanson, £1; Dr. A. A. Wells, £5. Total, £26 14s.

#### Section Reference Library.

The Library is open to members of the Society, from 2 to 10 p.m., except on Thursday.

A. J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

### The Theosophical Lending Library.

The Librarian would be glad to receive, by purchase or otherwise, the following numbers of the "Transactions of the London Lodge," in order to complete a set: Nos. 7, 17, 19, 24 and 29.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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*.

### Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle will meet at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. Children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

### Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at "The Commercial Hotel," Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: Jan. 24th, *Reincarnation*, W. E. McFarlane. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Thursday 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 Fridays, at 7.30 p.m.: Jan. 6th, *What is Theosophy?* E. Corbett; Jan. 13th, *Reincarnation*, Miss Shaw; Jan. 20th, *What think ye of Christ?* Mrs. Bell; Jan. 27th, *Theosophy and the Churches*, A. Hodgson Smith.

Lodge meetings on Sundays, at 7 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. 10 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, 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, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Meetings at the Battersea Free Library, Lavender Hill, every Sunday at 7.30 p.m. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S. E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: Jan. 5th, *Fire Rites Among Peasantry and Savages*, Mrs. Hooper; Jan. 12th, *Atomic Sub-planes*, C. W. Leadbeater; Jan. 19th, *Mystical Mohammedanism, II.*, Hon. Otway Cuffe; Jan. 26th, *The Trismegistic Literature*, G. R. S. Mead.

On Sundays at 7 p.m.: Jan. 8th, *The Moment of Death*; Jan. 15th, *Astral After-death Conditions*; Jan. 22nd, *The Astral Sub-planes*; Jan. 29th, *Appearances of the Dead to the Living*.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: Jan. 2nd, *What Theosophy does for us*, C. W. Leadbeater; Jan. 16th, *Proportion*, A. J. Faulding; Jan. 30th, *The World's Religions*, A. A. Harris.

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on

Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Students' class on alternate Thursdays for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Meetings on Sundays, at 11 a.m.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m. Alternate Mondays, study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

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

LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.15 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 CENTRE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at the Albany Temperance Hotel, Linthorpe Road, on alternate Thursdays, at 8 p.m. On the other Thursdays, at 20, Albert Road, 8.15 p.m., study of *The Devachanic Plane*.

MUNICH CENTRE. Meetings at 5, Lerchenfeld Strasse, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

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

PARIS. Meetings at 21, Rue Tronchet (office of *La Revue Théosophique Française*), on the first Sunday in each month, at 3 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., at 58, rue de Verneuil. Lectures on the second and fourth Wednesdays in each month.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "Oddfellows' Hall," Morley Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.: Jan. 6th and 20th, *The Ancient Wisdom*; Jan. 13th, *Some Results of Evolution*; Jan. 27th, *Atlantis*, Rev. John Barron.

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.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meeting at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

### Blavatsky Lodge.

The series of Sunday evening lectures which Mr. Leadbeater has been giving was brought to a close on Dec. 18th. The hall has been always very full, as was to be expected, and the thanks of all are due to Mr. Leadbeater for having devoted so much time and work to this series of lectures. A new series for January, February,

and March has been arranged, and particulars for January appear in the Lecture List.

The lectures on the Thursday evenings have also been very well attended, and the Lodge welcomes a new speaker in the person of Mr. Ward, who on Dec. 15th lectured on "The Microcosm." The subject proved to be far more interesting than the title might lead some to suppose, and Mr. Ward showed a most carefully-drawn diagram, making the various planes and sub-planes of consciousness and their "over-lapping" much clearer for many. On Dec. 8th Mrs. Mallet based her lecture upon Mr. Andrew Lang's book, *The Making of Religion*, devoting the time chiefly to showing what really comparatively exalted ideas of a Supreme Being the various so-called savage tribes have. The two other lecturers of the month have been Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, who continued her subject, "Our Theosophical Ancestry," and Mr. Mead, who in his translation of *The Key* further revealed the profound depth and beauty of the Hermetic treatises.

S. M. S.

### Exeter Centre.

The winter work of this Centre has been started in a very encouraging manner by Mrs. Cooper-Oakley's visit on November 16th.

An "At Home" was held in the afternoon, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley kindly consenting to answer questions, and the time passed only too quickly for all who listened. The evening lecture on "The History of Theosophy and its Teachings" was also much appreciated.

The attendance both in the afternoon and evening was far more satisfactory than on any previous occasion, and although the number attending the regular meetings has not yet increased, we have reason to hope that the interest in Theosophy is steadily growing, as books are more than ever in demand.

LOUISE WHEATON, *Hon. Sec.*

### ENQUIRER.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXII.

A. R. E.—*In the case of those saints whose physical bodies have been preserved more or less from destruction for hundreds of years (e.g., St. Antonino in Florence, since mid-fifteenth century until now) would such condition of the physical body affect the preservation of the astral body? Would the man be forced to remain longer upon the astral plane himself in consequence? I ask in the interest of cremation versus burial or embalming.*

C. W. L.—Nothing that is likely to be done in ordinary life to his physical corpse need make any difference whatever to the man living on the astral plane. I am obliged to make these two reservations, because, in the first place, outside of ordinary life there are certain horrible magical rites which would affect the condition of the man upon the other plane very seriously, and in the

second, although the state of the physical corpse need not make any difference to the real man, it nevertheless sometimes does, by reason of his ignorance or foolishness. Let me endeavour to explain.

The length of a man's astral life after he has put off his physical body depends mainly upon two factors—the nature of his past physical life, and his attitude of mind after what we call death. During his earth-life he is constantly influencing the building of matter into his astral body. He affects it directly by the passions, emotions, and desires which he allows to hold sway over him; he affects it indirectly by the action upon it of his thoughts from above, and of the details of his physical life—his continence or his debauchery, his cleanliness or his uncleanness, his food and his drink—from below. If by persistence in perversity along any of these lines he is so stupid as to build for himself a coarse and gross astral vehicle, habituated to responding only to the lower vibrations of the plane, he will find himself after death bound to that plane during the long and slow process of that body's disintegration. On the other hand if by decent and careful living he gives himself a vehicle mainly composed of finer material, he will have very much less *post-mortem* trouble and discomfort, and his evolution will proceed much more rapidly and easily.

This much is generally understood, but the second great factor—his attitude of mind after death—seems often to be forgotten. The desirable thing is for him to realize his position on this particular little arc of his evolution—to learn that he is at this stage withdrawing steadily inward towards the plane of the true ego, and that consequently it is his business to disengage his thought as far as may be from things physical, and fix his attention more and more upon those spiritual matters which will occupy him during his life upon devachanic levels. By doing this he will greatly facilitate the natural astral disintegration, and will avoid the sadly common mistake of unnecessarily delaying himself upon the lower levels of what should be so temporary a residence.

Very many people, however, simply will not turn their thoughts upwards, but spend their time in struggling with all their might to keep in full touch with the physical plane which they have left, thus causing great trouble to anyone who may be trying to help them. Earthly matters are the only ones in which they have ever had any living interest, and they cling to them with desperate tenacity even after death. Naturally as time passes on they find it increasingly difficult to keep hold of things down here, but instead of welcoming and encouraging this process of gradual refinement and spiritualization they resist it vigorously by every means in their power. Of course the mighty force of evolution is eventually too strong for them, and they are swept on in its beneficent current, yet they fight every step of the way, thereby not only causing themselves a vast amount of entirely unnecessary pain and

sorrow, but also very seriously delaying their upward progress.

Now in this ignorant and disastrous opposition to the cosmic will a man is very much assisted by the possession of his physical corpse as a kind of fulcrum on this plane. He is naturally in very close *rapport* with it, and if he is so misguided as to wish to do so he can use it as an anchor to hold him down firmly to the mud until its decomposition is very far advanced indeed. Cremation saves the man from himself in this matter, for when the physical body has been thus properly disposed of, his boats are literally burnt behind him, and his power of holding back is happily greatly diminished.

We see, therefore, that while neither the burial nor the embalming of a corpse can in any way *force* the ego to whom it once belonged to prolong his stay upon the astral plane against his will, either of those causes is a distinct temptation to him to delay, and it immensely facilitates his doing so if he should unfortunately wish it. It is, however, exceedingly unlikely that a person having any sort of pretensions to be called a saint would allow himself to be detained upon the astral plane even by a proceeding so foolish as the embalming of his corpse. Whether his physical vehicle was burnt, or allowed to decay slowly in the usual loathsome manner, or indefinitely preserved as an Egyptian mummy, his astral body would pursue its own line of quiet disintegration entirely unaffected.

Among the many advantages gained by cremation the principal are that it entirely prevents any attempt at a partial and unnatural temporary reunion of the principles, or any endeavour to make use of the corpse for the purposes of the lower magic—to say nothing of the many dangers to the living which are avoided by its adoption.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXIII.

*E. A. S.*—Having attended a recent address delivered by a prominent Theosophist, four friends found, on comparing notes afterwards, that they had all observed a distinct luminosity all round the head of the lecturer, from the shoulders upwards. This was of course some part of the aura; but why should it be visible only then? Would it be because the lecturer was then putting out more force, or would it be only that the listeners were in a state of greater tension than usual?

*C. W. L.*—No doubt both hypotheses are true. The auditors had probably put themselves into an eminently receptive condition, and were straining every capacity in order to understand and to receive as much spiritual help and influence as they could. They would thus come very closely into *rapport* with the lecturer, and if that person's faculties were more developed than their own, they would find themselves for the time greatly stimulated by the vibrations pouring forth so vigorously upon them, and would quite probably

be able just then to see much more clearly than they would under ordinary conditions.

It will be remembered that in the human aura the higher intellectual powers are denoted by a brilliant yellow colour which shows itself chiefly round the head. When in the effort of delivering a lecture those powers are roused to their maximum activity, that yellow matter would vibrate more vehemently, and would consequently glow much more brightly; so that under such conditions it might very well become visible to sight that could not discern it in its normal state of comparative quietude.

There are many people now, especially among students of occultism, who are drawing very near to the development of psychic faculty, and though it may not yet be strong enough to manifest under quite ordinary conditions, it does not need much to bring it from potentiality into temporary actuality. When therefore such a coincidence occurs as is above described—when a strong stimulation of the faintly dawning faculty happens to synchronize with the presence of some unusually vivid and brilliant object—partial vision is attained, and the student experiences a very slight foretaste of what will presently be his normal condition of consciousness.

It was probably an occasional glimpse of an exactly similar phenomenon that led mediæval painters to represent the saints invariably with a nimbus or glory around their heads—not that it is in the least likely that all the artists saw astrally, but that a tradition of the appearance was handed down from some person or persons who *had* seen. It will further be remembered that such a nimbus is almost always shown in the pictures as yellow or golden, simply because that is the easiest of all the auric colours to see, and because when present in an aura its place is always chiefly round the head.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXIV.

*A. H.*—I should be glad if you could give me an interpretation of the passage in Isaiah which reads: "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." The difficulty I have is with the words implying the direct creation of evil by God.

*G. R. S. M.*—The passage is from *Isaiah* xlv. 6-7. It is one of the outbursts of what is called the "Second Isaiah" or "Deutero-Isaiah," and was addressed to Cyrus, King of Persia, to whom the Jews were looking for restoration to Jerusalem. Cyrus was to be their Messiah or Anointed. The whole passage runs as follows in Cheyne's translation (pp. 77, 78, in Haupt's Polychrome Bible): "Thus says JHVH to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped,

That the nations may be terror-stricken before him, and that I may ungird the loins of kings.

To open doors before him, and that gates may not be closed;



I myself will go before thee; ways will I make level,

Doors of bronze will I break in pieces, and bars of iron cut in sunder;

And I will give thee the treasures of darkness and the hoards of secret places;

For it is I, JHVH, who call thee by thy name, I, the God of Israel.

For the sake of Jacob, my Servant, and Israel, my Chosen,

I called thee by thy name; I took delight in thee, though thou knewest me not.

I am JHVH, and there is none else; beside me there is no God;

That men may acknowledge, both in the east and in the west.

That there is none beside me—I am JHVH, and there is none else—

Who forms light and creates darkness, who makes welfare and creates calamity,

I, JHVH, the true God, am the author of all this."

With this passage compare the outbursts by the same writer xli. 21 *sqq.* (*loc. cit.*, p. 69), where he claims that the God of the Jews was the only true prophet, all the other gods were false prophets. Yahveh is made to claim that he has called Cyrus to overthrow the empire of Babylon. "Already," says Cheyne in a note (p. 177), outlining the conception of the writer of the outburst, "there are some highly favoured non-Israelites whom the one true God leads to a knowledge of Himself. Chief among them is Cyrus, whom the Second Isaiah no doubt regards as a worshipper of the Persian god of light, Ahura-Mazda, of whose similarity to the JHVH of the Hebrew prophets some reports may possibly have reached him. To have announced the successful career of this noble-minded king and warrior is offered as a proof of JHVH's sole divinity. Which of the false gods has told in oracles the rise of Cyrus?"

The Babylonian empire fell unregretted by the Babylonians in 528 B.C. Suffering under the weight of intolerable burdens to defray the enormous expenses of the architectural extravagance of the last king, Nabû-nâ'id, the people welcomed Cyrus as a saviour. All classes shared in this joy, and among them the Jewish communities, who took advantage of the occasion to find favour with the conqueror on the strength of a statement that they had been on his side all along. Doubtless Cyrus saw through it all, but considered it politic to have the influence of the priests and prophets of all persuasions in his composite empire on his side.

The claim that JHVH was the only God, and that he (Cyrus) was his Anointed, was gratifying to his vanity, for it proved that the Jews were giving him of their best. The ignorance of the writer of this prophetic epistle (if it were ever sent to the king) must have amused Cyrus, for the writer assumes that Cyrus did not know that the God over all was one, that he did not know the fundamental tenet of his own faith that Ahura-Mazda

and Ahriman were twin powers of one Deity. (See Geiger's *Zarathustra in the Gâthâs*, Leipzig: 1897.)

"The prophet," writes Cheyne, "has contradicted Oriental dualism; light and darkness, he says, were alike ordained by JHVH" (note p. 184). But there was no dualism in the vulgar sense to contradict. Oriental dualism is precisely the same as Jewish and Christian dualism. All three, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity, have it, and it is difficult to imagine how any theory of the beginnings can avoid dualism: as its second stage, or refuse to posit unity as its first. Every religion, philosophy and science must do so.

A. H. is puzzled at the somewhat crude statement that Yahveh creates evil. But if Yahveh is made identical with the God over all, then all must inevitably come from him. Evil, however, we love to think, does not exist in the universe; it is a wrong word to use in connection with things cosmic. We love to think, and rightly think, that the great universe is beautiful and good; evil is a term employed only concerning the little universe, man. But all this is a war of words. For instance, some of the wisest have refused the term good to the universe. God alone is good; the universe is beautiful, but not good, whereas man is neither beautiful nor good, but he may become so; thus teaches the Thrice-greatest, and so taught Plato. This simply means that we know that the good is above us, and that we ever strive after it; what is below us we foolishly regard as evil, whereas it is not evil, but for others in lower stages of development it is good. But for God there is no below or above; for Him Yesterday and To-day are the same; Light and Darkness; Good and Evil. The ultimate identification of Good and Evil *towards* the Good is wisdom; the identification of them *towards* the Evil is retrogression and loss of consciousness, and the antipodes of wisdom, the ignorance that we should all strive to avoid.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXV.

E. A. S.—When a trained clairvoyant sees the thoughts of others, does he see them in colour, according to the nature of the thought, and in form definite or vague, something like the coloured sketches in Lucifer?

C. W. L.—Certainly he sees them in colour and form, exactly as the querent suggests, but it must not be supposed that the man whose devachanic faculties are fully developed is dependent upon that sight for his reading of the thought, though of course he could read it in that way also if he wished. The moment that he turns his attention to any person, the vibrations of that person's mental body are instantaneously reproduced in his own, by sympathy as it were, so that his mind reflects the other man's thought as it is formed, and he does not need to go through any process of translating the colour and form taken by the elemental essence which that thought proceeds to ensoul.

If however his sight was confined strictly to the astral plane, the quickest method of direct thought-reading would probably be the examination of the thought-form, though only either selfish thoughts or those in some way connected with a desire would image themselves on the plane which he could see.

But it is almost certain that though he could not directly see on the devachanic plane, he would yet by that time be able to sense the thought of another there with very fair accuracy, so that it would be only for a short time quite early in his training that he would really need the slower method. But of course he would always continue to see the form-and-colour expression of thought in addition.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXVI.

*E. A. S.—Supposing a person to have a definite picture in his mind of a friend or enemy whom he might wish to benefit or injure, would a trained clairvoyant see this mental picture?*

*C. W. L.—*He would see the entire thought exactly as it was, and therefore of course the mental image also. If the latter were clearly and definitely formed, he would be able to recognize the friend or enemy quite readily by its means; but many people's thought is so vague and inaccurate that the image made would be a mere dummy, and of very little use as a clue to the person whom it was intended to represent. But the uncertainty would lie wholly in the formation of the picture, not in the trained clairvoyant's vision of it.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXVII.

*G. H. W.—Is there any forgiveness of sins? One man forgives an injury done him by a fellow creature, and surely what is recognised as virtuous and noble in an individual may be looked for as a law in the universe. It seems reasonable or right that a man should suffer present pain for past injuries inflicted on others, but after he has learned the lesson of harmlessness surely there is no need for further suffering. May not any balance of evil karma which stands against him be regarded in such a case as "forgiven"?*

*S. M. S.—*The difficulty that is sometimes felt regarding the possibility of the forgiveness of sins is partly due, I think, to the idea which those who use the word often have in their minds. It is connected usually with the conception of punishment or retaliation in some form, inflicted either by the person who has been injured or by one in the position of monitor or teacher. In the case of a child, if it transgresses it is threatened with punishment of some definite kind; if it is "forgiven," it means that it is let off the threatened punishment. In the case of a grown person, however, the punishment takes the form of injured or aggrieved feeling, with, perhaps, a definite wish for revenge in some degree, on the part of the

person directly or indirectly affected by the transgression. If he be "forgiven," it will mean that, nominally at least, the offence is no longer felt, that the injured person is no longer aggrieved. This, put very crudely, is, I think, the idea that most people have when they talk of forgiveness.

In this sense the power to forgive is certainly a noble quality in man; but the Law which guides the universe is infinitely nobler than man, and knows not forgiveness because it knows not that which alone makes forgiveness possible. "It knows not wrath nor pardon;" if it were capable of either it would no longer be absolutely just, absolutely invariable, and therefore in every circumstance absolutely to be trusted. If we injure a person, or transgress in any way, we oppose ourselves to the Law; we break it. In the pain that follows, either quickly, or it may be long-delayed, lies our only hope; for it is only by repeated blows and buffets—the natural results of our mistakes—that in the course of long ages we gain a knowledge of the existence of the law and, later, a knowledge of its workings. There is no other road to wisdom, no other means by which progress can be made; and progress which ends in wisdom is the object of evolution.

But as soon as a man has gained some faint idea of the existence of the Law as something stronger than himself, a great step has been made; and when, after a long time and much experience, he learns that it is better he should not oppose it, but should work with it rather than against it, his attitude towards any suffering that may hereafter come to him will be of a very different nature from his former one. While in earlier lives he met it with rebellion—adding thereby much to its bitterness—calmness, endurance and patience will now seem to him to be ideals worth striving after. As he goes on, he will look with more and more indifference upon the circumstances and events of his outer life as they affect his own happiness, and will turn his attention more and more earnestly towards the training and perfecting of his own character. Then he will presently realise, very dimly at first, that there is that in him which is one with the Law; and at this stage suffering, as we know it, will no longer exist for him.

The whole idea of punishment for sin is man-made and, carried to its extreme point, leads to the most terrible blasphemy. The process of human evolution is the gaining of wisdom, and we might just as well say that a child who is learning to walk is punished by his many falls, as say that a man is being punished when he reaps the result of his ignorance and his mistakes. If he could be shielded from these results, it is not possible that he should grow strong, and after all strength is what, in our best moments at least, we each of us desire to gain.

Can we imagine, then, that a man who is approaching the goal of human evolution, supposing that he still have any bad karma to work out—can we imagine that he should wish that karma "forgiven" him? He will rather desire to pay

every debt to the uttermost farthing, caring only that at whatever cost he be moulded into a more and more perfect instrument of the Divine.

But even before this point suffering, of which there are so many phases, becomes incomprehensible to us; suffice it to remember that pain of every kind, and at whatever stage we may meet it, may be made a means of purification, becoming infinitely more so as we use it consciously as such. Furthermore, we suffer only because we are unable to see that which lies on the other side. For if, having conquered all the earlier stages of growth, it were possible to live, as it were, always in the light, it would not be true as we some of us believe it to be, that the "kingdom of heaven" must be taken by violence.

A. A. W.—Let me first congratulate our querist that it has occurred to him to raise the question, Is there any forgiveness of sins? This alone is a great advance; if he will proceed to ask himself the next—"Are there any sins to forgive?" he will be on the right track to find an answer to both. The conception of "sin" belongs to the degraded idea of God which we find widely spread in what 19th century science calls early society. This looks upon the deity as a limited being raised above men by superior power, but in all respects "of like passions" with the men he rules. He is limited in the extent of his rule; to take the most familiar example of the "tribal god," as such a being is often designated, he is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob *only*, a "jealous God"—"visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children," and the like. "Sins" against such a god are transgressions of his arbitrary commands; and as these may be imposed without reason, so "sins" against them may be "forgiven," for the immutable laws of the universe are in no way concerned. For such a god to forgive would be, as our querist rightly judges, as virtuous and noble as for a man to do so; though the admission makes "root and branch" work with all modern theologies.

But when you come to speak of karma, the case is otherwise. We do not expect the "laws of nature" to forgive. A man falls into the fire or under the wheels of a wagon. He has "learnt his lesson," as G. H. W. puts it, in half a second, and this completely. No further suffering could make him understand more fully his transgression, but neither prayer nor repentance will prevent his scorched body or shattered limbs from reminding him of it, possibly to the last day of his life. Knowing this, we do not habitually speak of "sins" against these laws, and we Theosophists would avoid much confusion if we would altogether drop the word, along with those other much misleading expressions "good" and "evil karma." The essence of our doctrine of karma is that all which happens to us, good and evil alike, is the unavoidable result of the causes we have set in motion. If suffering comes to us as one of these results, we must bear it. It is not a punishment for our sin, to be forgiven by a God who ordered it, nor is it even, as the query suggests, an arrangement of some divine providence

to teach us the lesson of harmlessness. But, on the other hand, it is not any blind, unintelligible, iron fate, such as the Greeks imagined it. It is in truth part of that regularity of nature on which we depend for our lives and all we enjoy. Summer and winter, seedtime and harvest come duly in their order to maintain our physical life—the summer is not "good," nor the winter "evil," but both needful in their time. And so on that higher plane of nature where karma rules. If we sow evil seed, and fear its harvest, our salvation is not to ask forgiveness, but to do better hereafter, assured that, in the Lord Buddha's words,

"If we should labour rightly, rooting these  
And planting wholesome seedlings where they grew,  
Fruitful and fair and clean the ground shall be,  
And rich the harvest due."

There is yet another view of the law of karma which shows even more clearly the impossibility, and still more the undesirableness, of the "forgiveness of sin." If we consider it as the readjustment of the harmony of the universe, broken by the selfish action we call sin—the method, sole and sufficient, whereby it is provided that the "Law of Love shall rule all in all before the Kalpas end," we shall see that to require "forgiveness" is to ask that the harmony may not be restored, because the process hurts us. It is itself a sin, possibly worse than the original. This readjustment is not made, in actual life, by such crude methods as we sometimes fancy. In a story told in one of Lafcadio Hearne's books an old woman whose house is entered by burglars and her cash taken, consoles herself that in some previous life she must have robbed the burglar of the same sum. A truer conception is that those who have sinned and suffered in one life will be brought together in another in such relationship as shall draw forth the love which shall truly and really compensate for the evil passions the sin provoked. For as "hatred ceases not by hatred," even so it ceases not by mere suffering. The reasonable thing is not, as our querist says, "that a man should suffer present pain for past injuries inflicted on others," but that he shall learn, by means of suffering, if nothing else will teach him, to make compensation to them by love. This, and no other, is the teaching the law of karma provides for him—repeated over and over again till he does learn it. And so for the modern idea of the "forgiveness of sins" we substitute the original and true words of the Creed (*vid.* "The Christian Creed," *Theosophical Review*, xxi. 495) "I believe in the emancipation from sins, and the life of the coming age."

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXVIII.

O. G. M.—*Mrs. Besant in the Ancient Wisdom speaks of the first act of the Logos as an act of self-sacrifice. Since we can only think of the Logos as absolute, without limitations or conditions, the All in All, would she explain why and for whom He sacrificed Himself? Surely there is nothing other than Himself. He must therefore sacrifice Him-*

*self for Himself, for His own improvement. Does not this imply relation, limitation, condition? That the Absolute, who is All in All, can benefit by experience when to Him there can nothing result from experience, which is not already a part of Himself, to me seems to be unthinkable. Can this paradox be explained? And have we as much warrant for assuming a knowledge of the attributes of the Universal Spirit as we have of the doctrines of karma, re-incarnation, etc.? Should we not admit that Agnosticism has the best of the argument in regard to the Ultimate of Ultimates?*

G. R. S. M.—O. G. M. has made a very fundamental error in assuming that the Logos is the Absolute. It is one of the most elementary propositions of all Theosophical doctrine throughout the ages that the Logos is that ray of the Absolute which is manifested in any particular universe or system. That is to say, the Logos is to the Absolute as the “personality” in man to the “individuality.” Moreover we are told that the Logos is a Being, the grandest Being or Person conceivable to the most evolved intelligence in our system, if you will, but still a Being. For there are countless Words on the “Tongue of the Ineffable.” Any doctrine concerning Him, our universal Father, must at best be tentative, for no human mind can sense His real greatness, much less know the reason and manner of His being, for He is the Reason of all reasons, and the Being of all existences *for us*. It is useless to speculate on the “Absolute;” the Logos must be for many an age the *Summum Bonum* for us little men. For not until we finally become one with the Logos, our Father, can we hope to hear the other Great Words of the Absolute Wisdom who are the direct utterances of the God over all, the Brethren of our Lord.

And so, as all the wise have taught, the “Absolute” is unspeakable, unutterable; no name can be given for That which transcends all being. To call That “absolute” even is a gross error. But the Logos is utterable; not that He has been uttered in all His majesty. It requires the whole universe to do that. But He is utterable in part, according to the extent that we little men have realised Him. To describe His Goodness and His Love, His Power and His Greatness, then, we use the highest conceptions and ideals with which we are acquainted.

But in fact and reality all these are but very poor and miserable rags in which to deck His Loveliness, but it is all we have, and even the “widow’s mite” we are told is not rejected. Now one of the highest conceptions of humanity is self-sacrifice. It is an ideal, a necessary ideal for progress. Why then not use it to shadow forth, however dimly, the eternal outpouring of life and mind that comes from our Divine Father? If our questioner can use a better term, we should be glad to hear of it.

No, we cannot admit that Agnosticism has the better of the Lovers of the Gnosis; the positions the former is so proud of were taught in the infant classes of the Gnosis.

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#### QUESTION CCCCLXXIX.

E. A. S.—*Are very musical people on that account more sensitive?*

C. W. L.—No definite observations have been made on this especial subject, so that we have not before us the facts requisite for a decisive answer. Other things being equal, a person who is artistic along any line would undoubtedly be more sensitive to psychic influence than the average Philistine, so that we may broadly reply in the affirmative. The power really to appreciate and understand high-class music certainly argues impressibility in other directions also, because its action is on the higher principles; but there is a sensuous type of music the action of which is entirely upon the etheric and lower astral vehicles, and the person most attracted by that would not necessarily be psychic at all, or if he were, it would probably be in a very undesirable manner.

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#### QUESTION CCCCLXXX.

A. W. G.—*Are there any alternate states in Devachan corresponding to our sleeping and waking?*

C. W. L.—No; the only waking in Devachan is the slow dawning of its wonderful bliss upon the mind-sense as the man enters upon his life on that plane, and the only sleeping is the equally gradual sinking into happy unconsciousness when the long term of that life at last comes to an end. Devachan was once described to us in the beginning as a sort of prolongation of all the happiest hours of a man’s life magnified a hundred-fold in bliss; and although that definition leaves much to be desired (as indeed all physical-plane definitions must) it still comes far nearer to the truth than the questioner’s idea of day and night. There is indeed what seems an infinity of variety in the happiness of Devachan; but the changes of sleeping and waking form no part of its plan.

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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, 25, Charing Cross, S.W. No back numbers can be supplied.

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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

## 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.

VOL. VIII.

LONDON, FEBRUARY 1, 1899.

NO. 7.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to Jan. 20th: W. Scott-Elliot, £1; A. Dencks, 10s.; T. Jackson (monthly), 3s.; Hon. Mrs. Fox Powys, £5; Miss Mallet, £1; Miss Claxton, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Larmuth, £2; Miss Bowring (monthly) £1; C. R., 5s.; Paul Tourniel, 5s.; Mrs. Evans, 10s.; Miss Tisdale, 15s.; E. S., 5s.; M. L., 5s.; C. Corbett, £1; Mrs. Corbett, £1; Anon., £2 2s.; Miss B. M. Young, 5s.; Mrs. Terrell, £1; Baroness von Blome, £5; Mrs. Wilkinson, £3; H. S. Winter, 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, 3s. Total: £27 os. 6d.

#### The Section Reference Library.

The Library is open to members of the Society, from 2 to 10 p.m., except on Thursday.

The following books have been added to the Library and are acknowledged with thanks: *Theosophische Handboekjes*, No. 3. *De Dood — en Daarna?* Annie Besant, trs. Johan van Manen, Amsterdam, 1898; *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Band IV., 3, *Theophili libri tres ad Autolyicum*, II., III., Recens. Ed. Schwartz; Band VII., 2, *Ueber das gnostische Buch Pistis-Sophia* and *Brod-und-Wasser: die eucharistischen Elemente bei Justin*, Untersuchungen von A. Harnack, 1890; Band VIII., 1 and 2, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache aus dem Codex Brucianus herausgegeben*, übersetzt und bearbeitet von C. Schmidt; N. F. Band, II., 3 a, *Die Apokalypse des Elias*. *Koptische Texte Übersetzung*, Glottar, von Georg Steindorff, 1899; N. F. Band, III., 1 and 6, *Christusbilder Untersuchungen zur Christlichen Legende*, von Ernst v. Dobschütz, 1899; *The Sacred Books of the East Series*, Vol. XLVI., *Vedic Hymns*, trs. Hermann Oldenburg,

Pt. II., *Hymns to Agni*, Mandalas I.-V., Oxford, 1897; *The Parallel Bible*, published by C. J. Clay & Son and Henry Froude, London, 1885; *Marvels of Ant Life*, W. F. Kirby, F.L.S., London, 1898.

A. J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

#### The Theosophical Lending Library.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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*.

#### Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle will meet at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. Children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

#### Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at "The Commercial Hotel," Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: Feb. 21st, *Evolution of Individuality*, E. J. Cuthbertson. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Thursday 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. 5th, *Our Need of Theosophy*, Hodgson Smith; Feb. 12th, *Theosophy in the Middle Ages*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley; Feb. 19th, *The Light of the World*, Mrs. Bell; Feb. 26th, *Objects of the Theosophical Society*. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 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.: Feb. 7th, *Short Papers*; Feb. 14th, *Studies in Hypnotism*; Feb. 21st, *Utilitarianism*; Feb. 28th, *Rise and Fall of Religions*. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at 8 p.m., at 21, Briggate, for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE. Meetings held every Monday, at 8 p.m., at the Brotherhood Church, Victoria Road, Holbeck, for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Enquiries may be addressed to Mrs. Lees, 3, Roseville Road, Leeds.

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

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Meetings at the Battersea Free Library, Lavender Hill, every Sunday at 7.30 p.m. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: Feb. 2nd, *The Soul of a People*, C. W. Leadbeater; Feb. 9th, *Creation: or the Transformation of Energy*, M. U. Moore; Feb. 16th, *Hermes the Thrice-Greatest*, G. R. S. Mead; Feb. 23rd, *The Light that filleth not*, Herbert Burrows. Meetings on Sundays at 7 p.m.: Feb. 5th, *Astral Shells, their Nature and Course of Life. Their Action upon Living People. Their Appearance at Spiritualistic Séances*; Feb. 12th, *Abnormal Life of Astral Entities. Vampires. Results of Evil Magical Practices upon After-death States*; Feb. 19th, *Exceptional Cases in After-death Conditions. Infants. Earlier Races. Immediate Reincarnations of Pupils, etc.*; Feb. 26th, *The Second Death.*

*Transfer of Consciousness to Devachanic Condition. The Astral Remains. The First Awakening in Devachan.*

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: Feb. 13th, *Fire-Rites among Peasantry and Savages*, Mrs. Hooper; Feb. 27th, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, W. C. Ward.

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Feb. 7th, *Fire-Rites among Peasantry and Savages*, Mrs. Hooper; Feb. 14th, *The Circle of the Life-Wave*, Miss Ward; Feb. 21st, *Marcus Aurelius*, Philip Tovey; Feb. 28th, *The Karmic Records*, Mrs. Leo. Students' class on alternate Thursdays for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Meetings on Sundays, at 11 a.m.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m.: Feb. 6th, *Our Younger Brethren*, Mrs. Mallet; Feb. 13th, *The Lunar Pitris*, Mrs. Hooper; Feb. 20th, *The Circle of the Life Wave*, Miss Ward; Feb. 27th, *Mediumship*, R. King. Class for study, Sunday, Feb. 5th, at 3.30 p.m.

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

LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.15 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8 p.m.: Feb. 3rd, *Two Sixteenth Century Mystics*, Miss Mallet; Feb. 10th, *Spiritual Law*, P. Tovey; Feb. 17th, *Dante*, Rev. Charles Piggott; Feb. 24th, *The Riddle of Pythagoras*, Miss 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 CENTRE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at the Albany Temperance Hotel, Linthorpe Road, on alternate Thursdays, at 8 p.m. On the other Thursdays, at 20, Albert Road, 8.15 p.m., study of *The Devachanic Plane*.

MUNICH CENTRE. Meetings at 5, Lerchenfeld Strasse, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

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

PARIS. Meetings at 21, rue Tronchet (office of *La Revue Théosophique Française*), on the first Sunday in each month, at 3 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., at 58, rue de Verneuil. Lectures on the second and fourth Wednesdays in each month.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "Oddfellows' Hall," Morley Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.: Feb. 3rd, *The Ancient Wisdom*; Feb. 10th, *Theosophy and Education*; Feb. 17th, *The Ancient Wisdom*.

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

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 34, 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.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meeting at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

#### North of England Federation.

The next meeting will be held at Harrogate (Branch Room, 67, Station Parade), on Saturday, February 11th, 1899, at 3 p.m. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley will preside. All members of the Society are cordially invited to attend.

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

#### Blavatsky Lodge.

There were no lectures on the last two Thursdays in the old year, but the new year opened well with a most interesting account, given by Mrs. Hooper, of some among the many beliefs and ceremonies connected with fire and corn which are to be found among uncivilised tribes to-day, and which have in former times been largely practised by the Irish, Scotch and Breton peasantry. Fragments of the ideas which lay at the back of these ceremonies are still found in some of the games played by children, and in the quaint customs of the people of these countries.

One would say, almost without hesitation, that many of these "superstitions," as they would now be very generally called, must have had an ennobling and refining effect upon those who came under their sway, and without doubt owed their origin to the most profound truths, all but the faintest reflection of which had long ages before been forgotten. People believed in those old days that all nature around them was full of life, and the different fire rites performed at stated intervals, at least encouraged them to lift their hearts to the great Giver of life and light.

On January 19th, Mr. Cuffe continued the subject of "Mystical Mohammedanism," upon which he had on a previous occasion given most interesting information. The more that we can hear of the life and ideals and legends of various peoples, the better shall we be able to view things with a broad mind.

Mr. Leadbeater lectured on January 12th, on "Atomic Sub-Planes," and with the help of diagrams giving an idea of the form and structure of the atom, succeeded in making a most difficult subject as clear, probably, as it can be made to those who are not able to see beyond this physical plane. But this is saying a great deal.

Mr. Leadbeater has also begun a new series of

Sunday evening lectures, dealing this time chiefly with the conditions of life after death. It is needless to say that they will be appreciated, and that the hall has, so far, been crowded to its fullest extent.

S. M. S.

#### Paris.

The lectures and meetings in Paris have been for some time highly successful, both the meetings at the office of the *Revue Théosophique Française* and the lectures at the Ananta Branch being well attended by interested audiences. Mons. Courmes, who is slowly recovering from a long illness, has nevertheless been able to conduct the recent meetings at the office of the Review, 21, rue Tronchet, and at the last one about sixty were present. Mons. Courmes informs us of the death of Baron Spedalieri, an old member of the Society, whose name may be known to those interested in the writings of Éliphas Lévi.

#### The North London Branch.

This Branch held its sixth annual meeting on January 4th, at which its officers were re-elected and fresh Committee members chosen. The record for the year as contained in the Secretary's report was a very satisfactory one. Eleven members were added to the Branch during the past year, a number considerably exceeding that of any previous year, while three members had lapsed in the same time. The total number of members now on the list is thirty-four, some however having moved from London for a time. Ninety-two meetings were held during the year, all of them being for study, the public meetings having been abandoned for some time. It is interesting to note that since the public lectures have been given up the Branch has increased in numbers much more rapidly.

A. M. G.

#### Bristol Branch.

The Bristol Branch has obtained quarters at the Queen's Hotel, Clifton, which it is expected will be permanent, and the meetings of the Branch will be held there in future. The offices of President and Secretary are temporarily unoccupied, but Mr. Bligh Bond, of Alliance Chambers, 51, Corn Street, is acting as Secretary *pro tem.*

#### Rome Branch.

The Rome Branch, the address of which is now 34, Via Lombardia, is increasing its membership rapidly. Its numbers are now thirty-five, and show a steady increase from the beginning. The attendance at the lectures are excellent, and new

enquirers appear at every meeting, so that it may be found necessary very shortly to obtain a larger room for the lectures.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

In the December number of THE VĀHAN, Question 466 quotes from page 590, *Secret Doctrine*, Vol. iii., a statement affirming the existence in Virginia of a "special apple tree," etc., etc.

The statement is absolutely without foundation in fact. No such apple tree exists there, or was ever heard of.

This is on the authority of a native Virginian, who as a young man enlisted in the Confederate service and fought all over the State in the late civil war. He is now the active man and practical manager of one of the largest fruit auction houses in the country, if not in the world, and hence in a position to know. He is regarded as an expert pomologist, and his opinion is entitled to credence.

T. B. CLATWORTHY.

NEW YORK.

## ENQUIRER.

### QUESTION CCCCLXXXI.

A. W. G.—*We are told that much useful work is done by certain students of Theosophy upon the astral plane during sleep; can any information be given as to the nature of such work, or the qualifications needed by one who is anxious to fit himself to join in it?*

C. W. L.—The first part of the question, as to the nature of the work, was fully answered in some articles which I wrote two years ago under the title of *Invisible Helpers*. They are just being issued in book form, revised and greatly enlarged, and can be had from the Theosophical Publishing Society.

As to the second part of the query, there is no mystery as to the qualifications which are needed by one who aspires to be a helper; the difficulty is not in learning what they are, but in developing them in oneself. To some extent they have been already incidentally implied in the articles mentioned, but if set forth categorically, they would appear somewhat as follows.

1. *Single-mindedness*. The first requisite is that we shall have recognized the great work which the Masters would have us do, and that it shall be for us the one great interest of our lives. We must learn to distinguish not only between useful and useless work, but between the different kinds of useful work, so that we may each devote ourselves to the very highest of which we are capable, and not fritter away our time in labouring at something which, however good it may be for the man who cannot yet do anything better, is un-

worthy of the knowledge and capacity which should be ours as Theosophists. A man who wishes to be considered eligible for employment on higher planes must begin by doing the utmost that lies in his power as definite work for Theosophy down here.

Of course I do not for a moment mean that we are to neglect the ordinary duties of life. We should certainly do well to undertake no new worldly duties of any sort, but those which we have already bound upon our shoulders have become a kârmic obligation which we have no right to neglect. Unless we have done to the full the duties which karma has laid upon us we are not free for the higher work. But this higher work must nevertheless be to us the one thing really worth living for—the constant background of a life which is consecrated to the service of the Masters of Compassion.

2. *Perfect Self-control*. Before we can be safely trusted with the wider powers of the astral life, we must have ourselves perfectly in hand. Our temper, for example, must be thoroughly under control, so that nothing that we may see or hear can cause irritation in us, for the consequences of such irritation would be far more serious on that plane than on this. The force of thought is always an enormous power, but down here it is reduced and deadened by the heavy physical brain-particles which it has to set in motion. In the astral world it is far freer and more potent, and for a man with fully-awakened faculty to feel anger against a person there, would be to do him serious and perhaps even fatal injury.

Not only do we need control of temper, but control of nerve, so that none of the fantastic or terrible sights that we may encounter may be able to shake our dauntless courage. It must be remembered that the pupil who awakens a man upon the astral plane incurs thereby a certain amount of responsibility for his actions and for his safety, so that unless his neophyte had courage to stand alone the whole of the older worker's time would be wasted in hovering round to protect him, which it would be manifestly unreasonable to expect.

It is to make sure of this control of nerve, and to fit them for the work that has to be done, that candidates are made to pass what are called the tests of earth, water, air and fire, which I described in *The Christian Creed*. In point of fact, they have to learn with that absolute certainty which comes not by theory but by practical experience, that in their astral bodies none of these elements can by any possibility be hurtful to them—that none can oppose any obstacle in the way of the work which they have to do.

Further, we need control of mind and of desire; of mind, because without the power of concentration it would be impossible to do good work amid all the distracting currents of the astral plane; of desire, because in that strange world to desire is very often to have, and unless this part of our nature were well controlled we might perchance



find ourselves face to face with creations of our own of which we should be heartily ashamed.

3. *Calmness.* This is another most important point—the absence of all worry and depression. Much of the work consists in soothing those who are disturbed, and cheering those who are in sorrow; and how can a helper do that work if his own aura is vibrating with constant fuss and worry, or grey with the deadly gloom that comes from perpetual depression? Nothing is more hopelessly fatal to occult progress or usefulness than our nineteenth-century habit of ceaseless worrying over trifles—of eternally making mountains out of molehills. Many of us simply spend our lives in magnifying the most absurd trivialities—in solemnly and elaborately going to work to make ourselves miserable about nothing.

Surely we who are Theosophists ought, at any rate, to have got beyond this stage of irrational worry and causeless depression; surely we, who are trying to acquire some definite knowledge of the cosmic order, ought by this time to have realized that the optimistic view of everything is always nearest to the divine view, and therefore to the truth, because only that in any person which is good and beautiful can by any possibility be permanent, while the evil must, by its very nature, be temporary. In fact “the evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound,” while above and beyond it all, “the soul of things is sweet, the heart of being is celestial rest.” So They who know maintain unruffled calm, and with Their perfect sympathy combine the joyous serenity which comes from the certainty that all will at last be well; and those who wish to help must learn to follow Their example.

4. *Knowledge.* To be of use the man must at least have some knowledge of the nature of the plane on which he has to work, and the more knowledge he has in any and every direction, the more useful he will be. He must fit himself for this task by carefully studying everything that has been written on the subject in Theosophical literature; for he cannot expect those whose time is already so fully occupied to waste some of it in explaining to him what he might have learnt down here by taking the trouble to read the books. No one who is not already as earnest a student as his capacities and opportunities permit need begin to think of himself as a candidate for astral work.

5. *Love.* This, the last and greatest of the qualifications, is also the most misunderstood. Most emphatically it is *not* the cheap, namby-pamby, backboneless sentimentalism which is always overflowing into vague platitudes and gushing generalities, yet fears to stand firm for the right lest it should be branded by the ignorant as “unbrotherly.” What is wanted is the love which is strong enough *not* to boast itself, but to act without talking about it—the intense desire for service which is ever on the watch for an opportunity to render it, even though it prefers to do so anonymously—the feeling which springs up

in the heart of him who has realized the great work of the Logos, and, having once seen it, knows that for him there can be in the three worlds no other course but to identify himself with it to the utmost limit of his power—to become, in however humble a way and at however great a distance, a tiny channel of that wondrous love of God which, like the peace of God, passeth man’s understanding.

These are the qualities towards the possession of which the helper must ceaselessly strive, and of which some considerable measure at least must be his before he can hope that the Great Ones who stand behind will deem him fit for full awakening. The ideal is in truth a high one, yet none need therefore turn away disheartened, nor think that while he is still but struggling towards it he must necessarily remain entirely useless on the astral plane, for short of the responsibilities and dangers of that full awakening there is much that may safely and usefully be done.

Indeed, none need sadden himself with the thought that he can have no part nor lot in this glorious work. There is hardly one among us who is not capable of performing at least one definite act of mercy and goodwill each night while we are away from our bodies. Our condition when asleep is usually one of absorption in thought, be it remembered—a carrying on of the thoughts which have principally occupied us during the day, and especially of the last thought in the mind when sinking into sleep. Now, if we make that last thought a strong intention to go and give help to some one whom we know to be in need of it, the soul, when freed from the body, will undoubtedly carry out that intention, and thus the help will be given. There are several cases on record in which, when this attempt has been made, the person thought of has been fully conscious of the effort of the would-be helper, and has even seen his astral body in the act of carrying out the instructions impressed upon it.

Nor need our helpful action be confined to our hours of sleep. Whenever during our manifold daily occupations we have time to send a loving thought or an earnest good wish to a friend, we are assuredly acting as very real, though invisible helpers, for such thoughts and wishes are living and strong, and when we so send them they do actually go and work our will in proportion to the strength which we have put into them. Thoughts are things—intensely real things, visible clearly enough to those whose eyes have been opened to see; and by their means the poorest man may bear his part in the good work of the world as fully as the richest, for everyone who can think can help.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXXII.

H. W.—In what does the “Wisdom-Religion” differ from the Vedānta Philosophy? Do the Theosophists disagree with any of the teachings of the Vedānta Philosophy, or is it only that the “Wisdom-Religion” teaches more?

G. R. S. M.—First of all what are the teachings of the Vedânta Philosophy? Does our enquirer refer to the later systematised Vedânta of the commentators; and if so, to which of its varieties? Or does H. W. refer to the various expressions of the Vedânta found in the earlier Upanishads? Or does he refer to the inner realities lying behind these expressions? Can he on the one hand produce a body of dogmas subscribed to by all Vedântists, and on the other a body of dogmas accepted by all Theosophists? Then, again, is it the part of a Theosophist to “differ” and “disagree”?

But let us go further into the matter. Our enquirer tacitly assumes that there is a body of persons called Theosophists, and that this body of persons is in possession of the Wisdom-Religion! This question should be a warning to all members of the Theosophical Society. We are before the world taking on the complexion of a sect. Do we desire to do so; can we prevent it? This depends entirely on the general body of our members. If our own members persist in phrasing their statements in our own periodicals in this fashion, then we well deserve to be regarded as sectarians and have no one to blame but ourselves. It is time we seriously bestirred ourselves to prevent so calamitous a result; and, with a little care, we can prevent it.

What then is the Wisdom-Religion? Can we call the members of our Society Theosophists in the sense of their subscribing to a definite body of dogmas? Do we belong to some particular school of philosophy, or constitute a distinct body of religionists, or subscribe to some peculiar form of faith? Surely the very essence of our ideal is that its lovers do none of these things?

It is true that we have chosen the word Theosophy as a means of expressing the striving after our ideal, the search for truth, without distinction of creed—as a means of denoting our aspiration towards that reality behind all appearances, the truth which is incapable of expression in any system or body of dogmas.

It is true that many of us are convinced that behind the very best expression of that which is greatest in the manifold phases of religion, philosophy and science in the world, there is a living and all-satisfying reality, an all-enlightening sun of truth. And if the true lovers of this hidden way teach that the very best expression of that truth possible for mortal man is but a faint shadow of the infinite possibilities of that stupendous reality, shall we be so inattentive to the voice of their knowledge as to mistake the fleeting expression in our own day of some small shadow of the immemorial Wisdom, for an authoritative exposition of the whole?

Nay, rather let us be ever on our guard against this ancient ingrained error of humanity. Let us if we can do no more, at least be able to say: We are striving to avoid this abyss which has engulfed every previous effort. Let us ever revive the question among us: Is our Theosophical body

to become crystallised round some set form of dogma and become rigid and lifeless; or is it continually to receive the formless seed which may be ever-living in the hearts of its members and so vitalise the whole body? And if we decide for life, then, to live, each of us (the many as well as the few), must strive to open his eyes to the light and express it, *when necessary*, each in his own way: we must not be mere mimics of each other, parrotting empty words.

The only question, therefore, that can be put with any profit is: What is the opinion of A or B (who are presumed among members of the Theosophical Society to have some knowledge of the inner life) concerning the Vedânta Philosophy? To answer the question, A or B must have made a special study of that Philosophy, be familiar with its history and developments and imbued with the spirit of what is best in it. They must distinguish between the later phases based on the commentaries of the schools, such as those known by the generic name of Shaṅkarâchârya, and the Shruti or “revelation” (acknowledged by all those schools), the highest expression of which is found in the oldest Upanishads. They must know the various dates of these documents, and they must distinguish between the apologetic position of the commentators who assert that there are no real contradictions in the Shruti and strive to explain away all discrepancies, and the patent fact of criticism that the Upanishads are human documents of schools of thinkers not in entire agreement with themselves on various points, and at times in distinct contradiction with each other. Between these two extreme positions they would have to take an intermediate view and show by the aid of their practical knowledge of the soul and its nature that the discrepancies and contradictions are far less than are apparent at first sight and when judged solely by the intellect prejudiced by the preconceptions of an exclusively physical view of things; while on the other hand they would avoid the absurdity of ascribing inerrancy to the seers of the Upanishads. In any case, they would show that these most beautiful treatises are vibrant with spiritual life and that they are one of the most precious inheritances of every Theosophist.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXXIII.

M. P.—*As a worker in the cause of vegetarianism I am constantly confronted with the statement that the Buddha ate meat, and even died through eating it; what is the real interpretation of the passage which is supposed to convey this extraordinary idea?*

C. W. L.—There can, of course, be no kind of doubt that the statement is an untrue one, if we are to take it literally. Various suggestions as to its interpretation have been made, but without special and careful investigation into the subject we should hardly be in a position to decide between

them. Mr. Sinnett has given his opinion on the matter very clearly in No. xii. of the *Transactions of the London Lodge*. He says:

"The sacred books of Eastern religions are written for the most part in a style which is rather a disguise than an expression of the meaning they are intended to convey. Figurative phraseology and intricate symbols are, at all events, so little in harmony with Western habits of thought, that such vehicles of philosophic teaching may easily be mistaken for the wild conceptions of a crude superstition by readers accustomed to a more lucid treatment of religious doctrine.

"The same habits of speech which veil cosmological theories with narratives of divine incarnations in animal forms, lead Oriental writers to describe even such events as the Buddha's death and cremation in the circuitous language of symbols, rather than in plain matter-of-fact prose. Thus in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, for the English version of which we are indebted to the admirable scholarship of Dr. Rhys Davids, we are told how the Blessed One died from an illness which supervened upon a meal of dried boar's flesh served to him by a certain Kunda, a worker in metals.

"A prosaic interpretation of this narrative has passed into all epitomes of Buddhism current in European literature. Mr. Alabaster, for instance, in his *Wheel of the Law*, calmly quotes a missionary authority for the statement that the Buddha died 'of dysentery caused by eating roast pork;' and even Dr. Rhys Davids himself gives further currency to this ludicrous misconception in his well-known treatise on Buddhism.

"One might have supposed that students of the subject, even without a clue to the meaning of the 'dried boar's flesh' in the legend, would have been startled at the notion of finding the simple diet of so confirmed a vegetarian as we must suppose any Indian religious teacher to have been, invaded by so gross an article of food as roast pork. But one after another European writers on Buddhism are content to echo this absurdly materialistic version of the figurative Eastern story. If they had sought to check their interpretation of it by reference to living exponents of the Buddhist faith, they would have fallen easily on the track of the right explanation.

"The boar is an Oriental symbol for esoteric knowledge, derived from the boar avatar of Vishnu—that in which the incarnate god lifted up the earth out of the waters in which it was immersed. In other words, according to Wilson's translation of the *Vishnu Purāṇa*, the avatar in question 'allegorically represents the extrication of the world from a deluge of iniquity by the rites of religion.' In the *Rāmāyana* we may find another version of the same allegory, Brahma in this case assuming the form of a boar to hoist up the earth out of primal chaos.

"Boar's flesh thus comes to symbolize the secret doctrine of the esoteric initiates, those who possessed the inner science of Brahma, and dried boar's flesh would be such esoteric wisdom pre-

pared for food—reduced, that is to say, to a form in which it could be taught to the multitude. It was through the too daring use of such dried boar's flesh—through his attempt to bring the multitude to a greater degree than they were prepared for it, within the area of esoteric teaching—that the Buddha died; that is to say, that his great enterprise came to an end.

"That is the meaning of the story so painfully debased by European writers; and that meaning, once assigned to its central idea, will be followed through many variations in the details of the Pāli narrative, even as translated by Dr. Rhys Davids, apparently without any suspicion on his part of its true intention.

"The Buddha, for instance, before the feast, directs that he only should be served with the dried boar's flesh, while the brethren, his disciples, are to be served with cakes and rice; also that whatever dried boar's flesh may be left over after he has done, shall be buried, for none but himself, he says, can digest such food—a strange remark for him to have made according to the materialistic interpretation of the story, which represents him as *not* able to digest such food. The meaning of the injunction plainly is that after him none of the Brethren shall attempt the task of giving out esoteric secrets to the world."

Whatever may be the exact signification of this symbolic expression, it is difficult to see how the kreophagist can get much satisfaction out of the story even when he takes it in the most absurdly materialistic sense, unless he is also prepared to contend that he is himself at the level of the Buddha to whom it was permitted, and not in the position of one of the disciples of the Good Law, to whom it was so strictly forbidden.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXXIV.

A. C. —Is ascetic life necessary at any stage of a man's upward progress?

A. A. W. —The question can hardly be answered without preliminary definition. There are various kinds of asceticism, according as you come to it. If God be mainly regarded as a Law-giver, whose Law we have broken, tempted by the flesh, our repentance may take the shape of punishing the body for its fault. This is the root of a good deal of the Christian asceticism, and more than one of the saints, coming in later life to see that their sins were *not* the fault of the unlucky body, have asked its pardon for the causeless suffering they have inflicted upon it. Or we may starve it and ill-use it simply to weaken its power of temptation, as many others have done. Or lastly, we may do it as the ascetics amongst whom Buddha spent some years, under the idea that the mere suffering is something in itself meritorious or pleasing to God—that future reward is bought by it, the more pain here the more joy hereafter.

In all these cases we hold that there is either

actual crime, or else—at best—that “blunder which is worse than a crime”; but for all that the Christian Saint or the Haṭha Yogin is not without his reward. The suffering is wasted, with the body which has suffered; but when the ego comes into a new body, with (as we may fairly hope) better knowledge how to use it, it is hard to say to what heights an ego which has learnt with such stern resolution to hold the body from all pleasure, may not lift its new vehicle. Though it has ridden its old body to death, at least it has learned to ride, and there is not much fear that the new one will give it trouble. I think this is the meaning of a saying we find in some Indian books, that a Rāja Yogin must have been a Haṭha Yogin, if not in his present life, in some previous one. For it is beyond question that for entrance on the Path (in the strict sense of the words) such iron control of the lower nature is absolutely necessary, however obtained. We are assured by those who know, that there are better ways of obtaining it than mere physical endurance, and that many have attained the heights without the “rending of flesh and shrinking of sinew” endured so firmly by so many Haṭha Yogins; but without pretending to any knowledge of what these higher methods are, we may be very sure of one thing—that they will require not less but more complete sovereignty of the higher nature over the lower; and the gaining this is asceticism. How much actual self-inflicted suffering may be needful is, I suppose, a question for each to settle for himself, with what good advice he can get. I am willing to contribute my mite of experience. A good many years back I became a member of a religious order in which certain ascetic exercises still survive. I dare say many would speak contemptuously of them—even amongst ourselves; I can only say, for my part, that the day on which I first took “a discipline” in my hand and proceeded deliberately to hurt my body for the good of my soul was a deliverance, such as I have never before or since known. It is, in my recollection, as distinct an introduction to the upward path as any formal initiation could ever be; from that time forwards the old ways and habits of thought became simply impossible to me; the condescensions to the world, so unavoidable before, the seeking for personal comfort, showed as simple absurdities in the new state of things; “the snare was broken and I was delivered” in the Scripture phrase—no other words could express it. And though time after time I have failed and fallen back since then, I have never lost what I then gained; and if there be anything good in me now it is from that time I date it. The continuance of it—the making (in the words of the question) a life of it is another matter altogether. As to that, I suppose, to follow the Lord Buddha’s example is the right thing; to practise it faithfully as long as we gain by it, and when its virtue is exhausted for us, to leave it without any anxiety as to what others may think of us. But I think (though I have no right to set up as a teacher—being so young a

learner) that as in Dante’s vision, there is no escape from the Purgatory to the Paradise without first at least passing through the fire.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXXV.

D. A. C.—*What difference, if any, exists between the Logos issuing from the Absolute at the beginning of the Manvantara, and the Logos of a System, such as the Solar System?*

C. W. L.—Is it possible that our questioner really supposes that any mere human being can give him this information? and if by some miracle such a person were found, does he really suppose that he himself, as a mere human being, could understand the answer? To comprehend the Logos one must be fully conscious upon *all* the planes of the Logos, whereas the upper part of even the very lowest of them is far above out of the sight of man, and will be so for many a life to come.

That there is some difference between these Great Ones is clear from the fact that in the vast descent into matter whole hierarchies stand at different levels between them, as is explained in my little book on *The Christian Creed*; but it is equally clear that it is quite impossible for the intellect of man to understand that difference, for there is another point of view from which the one seems but a reflection or aspect of the other on a far lower plane—lower in comparison, but even then high beyond human conception.

“Canst thou by searching find out God?” Yes, verily; but only in that far-distant future when we become gods ourselves. Till then it seems to me more practical to confine our enquiries to subjects a little more within our reach.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXXVI.

J. S.—*Does a human thought create an artificial elemental every time the said thought is emitted, or must there also—in order to create an artificial elemental—be added to it a distinct entity belonging to the plane to which the thought-form belongs?*

C. W. L.—There is no distinct entity in the matter until the thought has called it into existence. Before that we have simply the vast sea of elemental essence out of which the thought draws to itself a temporary vesture each time it is emitted. In the case, however, of a thought which is constantly recurring, each new emission may simply go to strengthen the form already existing, instead of creating a new form every time. This subject has been dealt with before in these pages; and in any case it is explained carefully and in detail in Mrs. Besant’s article on “Thought Forms,” and in Manuals V. and VI., to which the questioner is referred for fuller information.

# 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.—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.

VOL. VIII.

LONDON, MARCH 1, 1899.

NO. 8.

### ENQUIRER.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### SECTIONAL NOTICE.

I hereby notify the members of the Section that an Executive notice has been received by me, bearing the signature of the President-Founder of the Society, and dated January 17th, 1899, the purport of which is to record the fact that the President in the exercise of his powers has caused the name of John George Norman to be removed from the Roll of Membership and his certificate to be cancelled.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary*.

February 22nd, 1899.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to Feb. 20th: O. Huschke, 10s.; W. J. Long, £5; F. E. B. 5s.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; T. Jackson (monthly), 3s.; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Pole, £2 2s.; Mrs. Hamilton, £1; Miss Hyde, £1; L. Kapferer, 13s. 2d.; Mrs. Marshall, £25; J. McNish, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Leo, £2 2s.; Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, 5s. Total: £39 2s. 8d.

#### The Section Reference Library.

The Library is open to members of the Society, from 2 to 10 p.m., except on Thursdays.

The following books have been added to the Library and are acknowledged with thanks: *The Christian Creed, its Origin and Signification*, C. W. Leadbeater, London, T.P.S., 1899; *Dreams: What they are and how they are caused*, revised and

enlarged, C. W. Leadbeater, London, T.P.S., 1899; *La Doctrina Secreta*, H. P. Blavatsky, Traducción de varios miembros de la Rama de la S. T. en Madrid, Madrid, 1895, 2 vols.; *Cuatro Grandes Religiones*, Annie Besant, Tra. del Ingles por un miembro de la Rama de Madrid; *L'Homme, et ses Corps*, Annie Besant, traduit de l'Anglais par F. B., Bruxelles, 1899; *La Philosophie Ésotérique de l'Inde*, J. C. Chatterji, Bruxelles, 1898; *Modern Astrology*, vol. v., London, 1899.

A. J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

#### The Theosophical Lending Library.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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*.

#### Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle will meet at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. Children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

#### New Centre.

A Centre has been formed at Liege, Belgium, by a few members who have recently joined. The President is Mons. J. W. Delsaux, and the Secretary, Mons. M. Lepersonne, of 23, Rue Louvrex, Liege.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary*.

## Lecture List.

**BIRMINGHAM LODGE.** Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on alternate Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.

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

**BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE.** Lodge meetings at "The Commercial Hotel," Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: March 21st, *Involution of Individuality*, A. P. Cattnach. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

**EXETER CENTRE.** Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Thursday 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 5th, *Modern Christian Theology*, C. Corbett; March 12th, *Why I am a Theosophist*, W. H. Thomas; March 19th, *The Soul of a People*, Miss Woodhead; March 26th, *Applied Theosophy*, W. Bell. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 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.: March 7th, *Karma*; March 14th, *The World Periods*. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

**LEEDS LODGE.** Meetings on Mondays, at the Brotherhood Church, Victoria Road, Holbeck, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Enquiries may be addressed to Mrs. Lees, 3, Roseville Road, Leeds.

**LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE.** Meetings held every Monday, at 8 p.m., at 133, Spencer Place, 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, BATTERSEA CENTRE.** Meetings at the Battersea Free Library, Lavender Hill, every Sunday at 7.30 p.m. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

**LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE.** Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: March 2nd, *Theosophy and Darwinism*, C. W. Leadbeater; March 9th, *Ideals and Types of Mystic Chivalry*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley; March 16th, *Proclus on the Planetary Chain*, G. R. S. Mead; March 23rd, *Scientific Speculations on Life*, A. M. Glass; March 30th, *The Mystic Quest*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley. On Sundays, at 7 p.m.: March 5th, *The First Devachanic Experience of an Ego. Its Nature and how obtained. The Growth of Devachanic Experiences. Their Influence on the Development of the Ego*; March 12th, *The Mental Plane as a Whole. Its Extent and Qualities. Its Sub-planes. Rûpa and Arûpa Levels*; March 19th, *Devachanic Life on various Levels of Mental Plane. Illustrations of the various Devachanic Conditions*; March 26th, *The Ending of Devachan. The Glimpse of the Coming Life. Difference in Nature of Ego before and after Devachanic Life. Descent into Reincarnation. How Performed. Pre-Natal Life*.

**LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE.** Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: March 13th, *Psychic Experiences*, R. King; March 27th, *Mystical Mohammedanism*, Hon. Otway Cuffe.

**LONDON, CROYDON LODGE.** Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: March 7th, *Magic*, F. Stanley Jast; March 14th, *Short Papers*; March 21st, *St. Francis of Assisi*, E. S. Lang Buckland; March 28th, *The Power of an Endless Life*, Fred Horne. Students' class on alternate Thursdays for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Meetings on Sundays, at 11 a.m.

**LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE.** Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m.: March 6th, *Spiritual Laws*, P. G. Tovey; March 13th, *The Pairs of Opposites*, Alan Leo; March 20th, *There is no Death*, Mrs. Sharpe; March 27th, *The Path of Holiness*, Mrs. Leo. Class for study, Sunday, Feb. 5th, at 3.30 p.m.

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

**LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE.** Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.15 p.m.

**LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE.** Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8 p.m.: March 3rd, *Philosophy of Plotinus*, W. C. Ward; March 10th, *Topics in Reincarnation*, W. H. Whyte; March 17th, *Karma in the Animal Kingdom*, H. de C. Matthews; March 24th, *Mystical Mohammedanism*, Hon. Otway Cuffe.

**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 CENTRE.** Meetings at 39, High Street, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

**MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE.** Meetings at 20, Albert Road, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m. On alternate Thursdays, study of *The Devachanic Plane*.

MUNICH CENTRE. Meetings at 5, Lerchenfeld Strasse, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

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

PARIS. Meetings at 21, rue Tronchet (office of *La Revue Théosophique Française*), on the first Sunday in each month, at 3 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., at 58, rue de Verneuil. Lectures on the second and fourth Wednesdays in each month.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "Oddfellows' Hall," Morley Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.: March 3rd, Discussion; March 10th, "*The Ancient Wisdom*"; March 17th, *Reincarnation*; March 24th, "*The Ancient Wisdom*."

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.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meeting at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

#### North of England Federation.

The North of England Federation held a meeting at Harrogate, on February 11th, but we regret to say that no report has been received up to the time of writing. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley presided, and also visited a number of Branches in the northern towns during the week preceding the meeting of the Federation.

#### Blavatsky Lodge.

The Lodge has listened to two lectures from Mr. Mead within the last month, both dealing in a most instructive way with the Hermetic literature. The title of the first lecture was "The Trismegistic Literature," while that of the second was "Hermes the Thrice-Greatest." On Feb. 2nd, Mr. Leadbeater lectured upon "The Soul of a People," a recently published book upon Burmah and the Burmese. It is hoped that this lecture will urge many to read the book who perhaps otherwise might not have done so, as it is written from the standpoint of one who has great sympathy with and understanding of the people of whom he writes; and this is a most rare gift. In his lecture on February 9th, on "Creation, or the Transformation of Energy," Mr. Moore treated a difficult subject in an interesting and original way.

Mr. Leadbeater has been continuing his Sunday evening lectures, in which the interest of his always large audiences increases rather than abates.

S. M. S.

#### Bristol Branch.

On Tuesday, February 7th, a paper was read by Ernest Sibree, M.A., entitled "Some Aspects of Adoptionism." There was a good attendance and an interesting discussion followed.

The next paper was on February 21st, by Miss G. Parsons, on "The Fourth Dimension."

Alternate Tuesdays are devoted to a class for the reading of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

F. BLIGH BOND, Hon. Sec.

#### Chiswick Branch.

The Annual Meeting of this Branch was held on January 23rd, 1899, at which the following officers were re-elected: A. A. Harris, President; W. C. Worsdell, Hon. Secretary.

W. C. WORSDELL, Hon. Sec.

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXXVII.

J. B.—If, as Theosophy teaches, man is an emanation from the divine, how comes it to pass that he has to evolve upwards from a quite low form of life—why is he not at once made like his creator, on the principle that like begets like? It seems a somewhat clumsy method of creation, apart from the above objection, that man should have to go through so much suffering and distress in order to achieve what an all-powerful and all-good Logos might have done at once with one stroke of his will-power. I should like this question answered (if it can be answered) and please do not cover it up with "words, words, words."

C. W. L.—I do not know that we are in a position to criticise the method of creation and decide whether it is clumsy or otherwise, or whether it could not have been done in some other and much easier way. We are concerned only with the facts of evolution, and why the Logos who has charge of it chose to act in this way or in that is certainly not our business.

Yet there seems little difficulty in at least indicating the lines along which the answer to this question may be found. It is quite true that man is an emanation from the substance of the divine, but it must be remembered that the substance when it issues forth is undifferentiated, and from our point of view unconscious; that is to say, it has within it rather the potentiality of consciousness than anything to which we are in the habit of applying that term.

In its descent into matter it is simply gathering round it the matter of the different planes through which it passes, and it is not until, having reached the lowest point of its evolution in the mineral kingdom, it turns upwards and begins its return to the level whence it came, that it commences to develop what we call consciousness at all. It is for that reason that man begins first of all to develop his consciousness on the physical plane, and it is only after fully attaining that that he begins to be conscious upon the astral and mental planes in turn.

No doubt God might have made man perfect and obedient to the law by one act of his will, but is it not obvious that such a man would have been a mere automaton, that the will working in him would have been God's will, not his own? What the Logos desired was to call into existence from His own substance those who should be like unto Him in power and glory, absolutely free to choose and yet absolutely certain also to choose the right and not the wrong, because in addition to perfect power they would have perfect knowledge and perfect love.

It is not easy to imagine any other way in which this result could be achieved but that which has been adopted—the plan of leaving man free, and therefore capable of making mistakes. From those mistakes he learns and gains experience, and although in such a scheme as this it is inevitable that there should be evil, and therefore sorrow and suffering, yet when the part these play as factors in man's evolution is properly understood, I think we shall attain a truer view of them than is expressed in the question under consideration. Most emphatically it is true that, however dark the clouds may look from below, those clouds are by their very nature transient, and above and behind them all the mighty Sun, which will at last dissipate them, is always shining, so that the old saying is justified, that *all* things, even the most unlikely looking, are in reality working together for good.

This much at least all who have made any real progress in Theosophical study *know* for themselves as an absolute certainty, and while they cannot hope to prove it to those who have not as yet had their experience, at least they can bear testimony to it with no uncertain voice, and that testimony is surely not without its value for souls who are still struggling towards the light.

A. A. W.—Our friend is mistaken if he imagines that anything we Theosophists can say on the matter *can* be more than mere words to him, unless he himself can altogether change the point of view from which he looks. Simply to give the Almighty, All-wise Creator postulated in modern Christian theology a new *name*, and call him, as J. B. does, an “all-powerful and all-good Logos,” brings him not a hair's breadth nearer to us. It is just the assumption that this world, as it actually exists around us, was made by such a Creator, entirely free to arrange all things according to his fancy, which forms the logical difficulty which J. B. (with all other thoughtful persons) feels—the riddle for which we *must* have an answer, and the answer to which *that* Christianity cannot furnish us. The querist is right—we ought to be ashamed that we have so long permitted ourselves to be hindered by kaleidoscopic rearrangements, one after another, of such *words* as the “inscrutable counsels of the Almighty,” and the like—from recognising the actual, evident, undeniable facts of the case.

When our doctrine lays down as its fundamental, primary principle that the universe as we

now see it is *not* the work of a Creator possessed of all power and responsible to no one for his use of it—*not* the mere fancy of a dreaming God; but that, on the contrary, its Builders, vast as may be the wisdom and power of some of them as compared with our own, are yet limited by a Law which stands in *its* turn above them, by conditions which may be clear to them but which cannot be fully understood by us until we rise to their level—then the *pressure* of the difficulty is already lifted away. Science can have nothing to say against this view, and theology *would* not have, had it not needlessly hampered itself with pure assumptions—had it not wilfully closed its eyes to the one book of nature in which we *may* find some explanation of our life, and of the nature of which we ourselves form, so far, the larger and most important portion.

Thus our first step is that it is quite possible that the Logos of our system simply *could not* make gods of us (in the querist's words) “with one stroke of His will power.” Next we ask “Is this *probable*?” Let us see what nature suggests. I have already spoken of an indefinite number of Builders, instead of the one Creator; and this thought needs expansion.

When the Logos of our system (only one, be it remembered, out of countless multitudes ever evolving from the Causeless Cause by Its law of nature), first came forth from the Unknowable, all that was to come lay folded in His Mind. The very laws of nature (as we call them) and the nature which obeys these laws are but expressions of what, for want of other language, we must call His Will; though we may be quite certain that even there we should find nothing like *arbitrary* power. The higher we ascend, the more freedom—but *also* the more clearly and inevitably the Eternal Law beyond. Now our doctrine is that, to carry out this divine idea into the actual world around us, a whole hierarchy of beings came into existence; from the Seven Spirits before the Throne down to the smallest nature-spirit whose tiny share in the great work is to form and tint the rose petal or scollop the oak-leaf. And why?

The answer is given in the old Indian books, thus:—He resolved “I will multiply.” This, and no less, is the meaning of the universe. It does not exist merely that men and women like you and I should strut their little hour of sixty or seventy years on this poor stage and be happy or miserable. Mineral, vegetable, animal, man, angel, deva, or whatever names you may invent for the countless steps above us—*all* are in the divine Mind but the degrees whereby may at last result Gods like Himself, to be in their turn Logoi of new universes in the day when “He shall return to Him that sent Him, bringing His sheaves with Him.”

Do you say you don't like this slow progress—that you think it hard you are not made a God at a stroke, without pain or trouble? Surely, every one must see how childish such impatience would be. Whatever may be the case in other universes,



science is entirely one with us that slow—almost inconveniently slow—progress *is* the law—the higher law—of ours. No one, now, would venture to reproduce the crude theory of a hundred years ago, that God created the earth, with all its unmistakable traces of past millenniums, fossils and all, “at once, with one stroke of His will power”; nor to set a positive limit, even counted in millions of years, to the time taken for the preparation of the world for human habitation. And yet *this* is one of the shortest and least important periods with which the history of the universe is concerned. True, science has not yet extended its conception to the formation of man himself, and “scientific” men will still speak as if, after the long ages which have gone to the making of man’s body and brain, the man himself were but a sudden chance-formed result of the juxtaposition of the atoms therein; but this cannot last. It is but a fresh shape of the old theological folly, a survival which should have been cast off long before this. It ages have gone to the making of man’s *body*, how many must have gone to make *him*?

Another suggestion from science may perhaps help to reconcile our querist to the fact that he is still “a little lower than the angels.” I have said that the Logos resolved to multiply; now one thing science shows is that the more complicated the organism, the slower and more painful the process of its multiplication. The microbe multiplies as you watch it on the field of the microscope—each new division at once perfect and complete. But when human beings take the same resolution, there are long, tedious and painful processes to be endured; growth, education, and the like, mean long years and continual risks; and at best, nigh half the life of the new creature is past, before he stands the complete and perfect reproduction of his parent. Is there, then, anything unreasonable if we suggest that to make a Master there *must* surely go a long series of lives and harder labour, greater risks of failure still; and that to make a Logos, nothing less than the whole long pilgrimage of the manvantara with all its trials and troubles, its failures and successes from life to life can possibly avail? Or are *these*, to our querist, still words—words only?

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXXVIII.

L. W.—*What was the reason of the fear and confusion into which the powers were thrown by gazing at the vesture of light with which Jesus was clothed, as described in the Pistis Sophia?*

G. R. S. M.—It is always difficult to venture on an interpretation of documents which treat of the mysteries of initiation, and it is especially so in the case of the *Pistis Sophia* document, which has preserved for us part of the inner teachings of a school which beyond all others delighted in the most abstruse speculations on the nature of God, the world and man.

The Greek Gnostic documents preserved for us

in Coptic translation in the Askew and Bruce codices contain details of so complicated and enigmatical a nature that no one has at present been able to throw any light on the subject. Nevertheless here and there in these writings passages of transcendent beauty and of illuminating intensity reveal themselves unaided, and to one of these our questioner refers.

A theosophical student of Gnostic bent, who is really in love with the soul of things, and who knows that all the seeming complexity and unintelligibility of these great systems is but the working out of a simple type of spiritual life of infinite possibilities of self-permutation and self-combination, should, however, not be dismayed when he does not understand, but rather be the more determined to fit himself by the necessary study to realise that the mighty mazes of his “ancestors,” as the pupils of Hermes would have phrased it, are not without a plan.

The *Pistis Sophia* and the allied treatises are, therefore, regarded by the present writer as a challenge to the industry of theosophical students in our own day—not of course a challenge to all students, or even to the majority of them, but to those few who yearn to understand the nature of the creative energy and the eternal type of the worlds and man. But to fit oneself for the task requires long preliminary training and a thorough acquaintance with the ancestry and environment of the Gnostic thinkers.

When the present writer put forward the *Pistis Sophia* treatise in English dress, he promised a commentary on its contents. In order to fulfil this promise, however, it has been found necessary to make a thorough study of the mystics especially of the two first centuries (B.C. 100—A.D. 100) and the Gnostic schools of the first two centuries of our era. This study will take years, but the ultimate object in view is, if possible, to throw some light on the direct Gnostic writings, which have so far entirely baffled the penetration of the keenest intellects, and to show their proper relation to Christianity, and how they reflect a ray of the light of the great Master.

At present, however, the writer hesitates to put forward an interpretation in any but a most tentative fashion, for he has learnt by experience that to hazard interpretations dependent on so-called “intuition” alone, unchecked by the necessary discipline of historical research, is but the piling of the Ossa of confusion on the Pelion of enigma.

He would, therefore, ask his readers to give him time to complete his present studies, before fulfilling his promise.

Meanwhile, with regard to the present question he ventures on a few remarks, though with every hesitation; for though no historical considerations need distract our attention from the enjoyment of the beautiful description of the light-robe of the Glorified One, yet seeing that we are being permitted a glance through the open doors of the sanctuary of holy things, no profane pen can presume to explain, or even intelligently describe, the glorious light that dazzles our unaccustomed senses.

The Master, "Jesus the Living One," is revealed to His disciples in His real form; the effulgency of light radiated from the sun of His being blinds their earthly eyes and His form as man fades from their gaze. It is owing to this glorious robe of light that He can come and go at will; He can pass through all the spheres, all firmaments, all regions. This vesture of power annihilates all space; and this space is everywhere living and intelligent to the eye of the seer. For space is the living soul of things—powers, dominions, principalities, with their countless servants and ministers, from the greatest soul to the tiniest in this system, each existing in the other in unending fashion, and all being the myriad-fold "appearances" of the Over-soul. But He, the Master, is king of space, He is of the nature of the Mind. His robe is woven by the ordering power of His spiritual intelligence into a perfect copy of the eternal Cosmos, the Divine Order. But the Soul of things is not yet in order, it is partly chaotic. And that which is chaotic fears the Divine Order, for at its approach it must bow down and worship and so give up its transient nature in submission to that-which-is-eternally. Hence the powers of every plane are said to be in fear and confusion on the approach of the Master, for His passage through them reminds them of the law.

But this is only one tiny scintillation of an idea concerning this stupendous subject, for the reality of one single ray of a divine truth is so transcendent that it can be manifested in an infinity of modes. The writer of this part of our treatise has done his best to pourtray the graphic and dramatic form of one of these modes; but no "tongue of flesh" can describe the reality, seeing that the infinite possibilities of man's divine nature are beyond the comprehension of his physical being. And even so much as our writer describes was originally intended only for those who had submitted to the discipline of the holy life. Outside this circle it would only be misunderstood; on the one hand it would lend itself to superstition or vain pretensions, and on the other it would meet with denial and ridicule. It was this lack of comprehension which hounded the Gnosis out of Christendom in the early centuries; will it meet with the same fate to-day?

#### QUESTION CCCCLXXXIX.

W. B.—In a recent work on Ceylon I see a reference made to "a Buddhist religious ceremony called Pirit"; is there any truth in such a statement, as I always understood that the Southern Buddhist church had no religious ceremonies? and if it be true, of what nature is this rite?

C. W. L.—It is quite true that there is such a ceremony; I have frequently seen it myself when in Ceylon, and it is of a very interesting nature. In essence it is, as the name implies, simply a recitation of blessings and invocations for the purpose of warding off evil influences—the chanting of those verses from the sacred books of the

Buddhists in which the Buddha declares that blessing follows upon certain actions, and also of certain hymns from the same books invoking the benevolent attention of the sun-god and of the Arhats and Buddhas. The principal of these is the beautiful hymn of the peacock-king from the Jātaka stories. These *Pirit* verses are chanted by the Buddhist monks on various occasions, alike of sorrow and of rejoicing. We may divide the occasions roughly into two classes—public and private.

The most common example of the latter is that in case of serious sickness or the approach of death one or two monks from the nearest temple are often invited to come and chant these verses of benediction by the bedside of the sufferer, keeping in mind all the time an earnest wish for his recovery—or, if that is considered hopeless, for his welfare in the condition after death. The monks do not *pray* for the sick man in our sense of the word, for that is no part of their faith; they simply chant their verses with the will to help and to avert any evil influence ever strongly present in their minds.

Of course no remuneration is offered to the monks, for their rules forbid them to touch money under any circumstances; a meal may perhaps be given to them, if the ceremony be performed in the morning, but later than noon they cannot accept even that, as they eat nothing after the middle of the day.

The public ceremony is a more imposing affair, and lasts much longer. It takes place usually on some festival, such as the celebration of the dedication of a temple. On such an occasion the simple festivities and processions will sometimes last for a week or even a fortnight; and during the whole of this time the recitation of *Pirit* is going on. Just as in connection with some churches and convents there is a "Confraternity of Perpetual Adoration," whose members relieve one another in regular watches in order to keep up night and day continuous worship before the altar, so from the beginning to the end of this Buddhist festival the monotonous chant of the recitations from the sacred books never ceases.

Attached to most of the temples is a *Dharma-salāwa* or preaching-hall, and it is in this that the *Pirit* is chanted. This preaching-hall is so entirely different from any building used for similar purposes in the West, that perhaps a description of it may not be uninteresting to European readers.

Its size varies with the means at the disposal of the builder, but its shape is invariably square. The lofty roof is supported simply by pillars, and it has no walls of any sort—nor does it contain any seats, the people disposing themselves on mats on the earthen floor.

In the centre is a large raised square platform, having pillars at its corners and a low railing round it; and round the edge of this, inside the railing, runs a low seat—often scarcely more than a step—on which (facing inwards) the members of the *sangha* or monastic order sit, while one of their number addresses the people, who are thus, it

will be seen, not grouped in front of the speaker only, as is usual in the West, but surround him on all sides. On the platform, in the centre of the hollow square thus formed by the monks, is usually a small table with flowers upon it, or sometimes a relic, if the temple happens to possess one.

Where no permanent building of this sort exists a temporary one (but always on exactly the same plan) is put up for the festival; and a stranger is surprised to see how substantial these temporary erections of bamboo, palm-leaves and coloured paper can be made to appear under the skilful hands of native workmen.

It is in this preaching-hall then, whether permanent or temporary, that the constant recitation of the *Pirit* goes on; and there also three times in each day the whole available band of monks assembles to chant the more imposing *Mahā Pirit*—an interesting mesmeric ceremony which merits special description. It should be premised that before the festival commences a huge pot of water carefully covered has been placed in the centre of the platform, and numerous threads or strings have been arranged to run from pillar to pillar above the heads of the monks as they sit—this system of threads being connected by several converging lines with the pot of water in the centre.

At the time of the *Mahā Pirit*, when all the monks are seated in a hollow square as above described, a piece of rope, about the thickness of an ordinary clothes-line, is produced and laid on the knees of the monks, each of whom holds it in his hands all through the ceremony, thus establishing a connection with his fellows not unlike that of the circle at a spiritualistic séance. Care is taken that after the circle is completed one of the ends of the rope shall be carried up and connected with the threads and strings above, so that the whole arrangement in reality converges on the pot of water.

This being done the *Mahā Pirit* commences, and the whole body of monks, with the united will to bless, recite for some forty minutes a series of benedictions from the sacred books. As this ceremony is performed three times daily for seven days, and the influence kept up in the interval by the ceaseless chanting of the ordinary *Pirit*, the student of mesmerism will have no difficulty in believing that by the end of that time the cord, the connected threads and the pot of water in the centre of the circle are all pretty thoroughly magnetized.

On the last day comes the crowning glory of the festival—the distribution of the mesmerized water. First of all the principal men and honoured guests go up to the steps of the platform and the chief monk, uttering a form of benediction, pours three times a few drops of the water into their outstretched palms, they bending reverently the while. At the conclusion of the benediction the recipient drinks a little of the water and applies the rest to his forehead, the whole ceremony to a Western mind strangely suggesting a combination of two well-known Christian rites.

The rest of the water is then poured into smaller vessels and distributed by the assistants among the crowd, each person receiving it in the same manner. The mesmerized thread is cut into pieces and distributed amongst the people, who wear it round the arm or neck as a talisman.

It is not uncommon to attach special threads to the circle, and allow them to hang down outside the platform, so that any who are suffering from fever, rheumatism or other ailments, may hold the ends in their hands during the chanting of the *Mahā Pirit*, and the patient frequently seems to derive advantage from thus “tapping” the mesmeric battery.

This much of ceremony, at any rate, the Southern Church of Buddhism possesses; but I think we must all agree that it is a harmless and interesting one.

#### QUESTION CCCCXC.

*C. E. B.*—In what light do Theosophists look upon “conversion” as generally understood by Christians, and what is its value in relation to treading the “Path,” or becoming an adept?

*S. M. S.*—I do not think it can be said that “conversion,” as generally understood, has any value in treading the “Path,” or in becoming an adept. Those who would be likely to use the word at all would mean by it the turning either from one form of faith to another, or from a bad to a more or less changed life.

Now we are taught that before a man is fit to enter upon the “Path” he will have got rid entirely of the need of clinging to any religious forms. It is not that he is asked to give up anything that is a help to him, but only that a time comes when he outgrows all forms, recognising that they can no longer help him; and this because even at that stage he has realised within himself a spiritual life which overflows all boundaries of form and dogma and creed.

And yet if we look at “conversion,” as it is well to do, in an altogether broader way, a truth may be found hidden in that crude and, from its association, somewhat revolting idea. Every stage of our pilgrimage is marked for each of us by an awakening, a further glimpse of the Ideal, which makes all the past appear wholly inadequate and unworthy, and which, however we may fail and falter on the way, gives us no rest till we have reached it. Then comes as it were a pause, followed by renewed struggle towards a farther goal; for it is the Divine that is within us that urges us on, and “it is only for an interval that Nature can be still.”

When a man first realises the possibility of a higher life a change, sometimes a very great change, comes over him. The effect is sudden and apparently without reason, but it is not really so. Man’s spiritual growth is ordered and steady and gradual, and although neither he himself nor those around him may have known it, the preparation for the change has all the while been

going on, the life within has all the while been growing stronger, till at last, like the conquering waves of an ever-encroaching sea, it sweeps away its barriers, and the character of the man seems almost to be transformed. In him an awakening has taken place, and never again he can be quite as he was before.

We have, thus, in every case of "conversion"—if for the moment we must use the word—these two factors, the triumph of the evolving life, and the weakening of its barriers. And perhaps, in order to obtain some clear idea of what "conversion" as generally understood really means, we may say that it takes place when a man for the first time in his present life recognises the possibility of lending a hand at helping to strike away his own barriers. Hitherto the work has been done by circumstances and by the outer events of his life; now he tries to aid that work, with more or less of purpose, by his own efforts. The will and determination that he puts into those efforts will of course entirely depend upon the stage of development at which he has arrived; in other words, they will depend upon the strength of the ego itself. And so we may find one man at a comparatively very early stage of his development, who under the influence of some exceedingly crude presentation of religion, with its promises of punishment and reward, may be waked up earnestly to try to conquer a particular vice of which he is the victim; and we may find another who, once he has seen the possibility of the higher life, goes towards it with definite and concentrated purpose.

The life of such a man would be marvellously changed within a short space of time, although previously he might have been going violently astray. There have been records of such changes from time to time, and the world has wondered, and later has disbelieved. People do not understand that all force is in its essence divine and, if turned in the right instead of in the wrong direction, is all-conquering and all-compelling.

All great and sudden changes in life and character may, I think, be explained in the way that I have attempted; and if we could really grasp their nature, there would be an end to that pharisaism which besets many of us who would fain leave such weaknesses behind.

#### QUESTION CCCCXCI.

H. D.—What are we to understand by the references made to "mindless gods or devas"? It seems impossible to conceive of a mindless God.

C. W. L.—Of course it is. This reference to gods or devas who are mindless is certainly a misleading one, and the phrase is not happily chosen. In reality it merely means that the essence which is pouring down from the Logos passes on its outward path through the level on which the devas function, and its differentiations are therefore spoken of as mindless devas, because they have not yet developed mānasic consciousness at all.

If the questioner will refer to the description which I have tried to give in my little book on

*The Christian Creed*, pp. 26-36, of the three outpourings from the Logos, he will see that although matter of the mental plane is collected by the essence on its way *down* into matter, it is not until it has reached the corresponding level on its *upward* path that it can be said to possess mind in the proper sense of the word at all. Consequently, on however high a level the *descending* essence may be, it can still be spoken of as mindless. But it must be admitted that to describe it as a deva or a god at this stage of its development is exceedingly confusing and misleading to the student.

#### QUESTION CCCCXCII.

K. C.—What according to esoteric teaching was the death of Jesus of Nazareth?

G. R. S. M.—Jesus of Nazareth, according to the occult tradition, was stoned to death; this tradition has been preserved also by the Jews, but the Jewish legends on the life of Jesus are unfortunately so evidently prejudiced by sectarian bitterness that even the deposit of truth in them will receive no serious attention for many a year to come. I hope some day to take up the subject of these legends as found in the *Sepher Toledoth Jesu* and other sources, but so far I have little hope of being able to prove anything from the present material.

#### QUESTION CCCCXCIII.

J. C.—With regard to the explanation of *μονογενής* as "created alone," there is no doubt that the word is sometimes used in the New Testament, to mean actually "the only son," as in Luke vii. 12, and Hebrews xi. 17. Is not this an objection to the new interpretation?

C. W. L.—It was never intended to deny that the word *μονογενής* was used in ecclesiastical circles in the sense of "only-begotten." I have no doubt that it was so used in the passages mentioned, but our contention is that this was only a later and popular use of the word by those who had not comprehended the meaning originally given to it by the Gnostic philosophers. What this original meaning was we can see clearly, I think, if we examine other similar words, such as *αὐτογενής*. This is always taken as signifying "self-produced," or "produced from the self," and by analogy therefore *μονογενής* must mean "produced from the one," which is quite a different meaning from that conveyed by the phrase "only begotten."

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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

## 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. 9.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### CONVENTION OF THE NEW ZEALAND SECTION.

The General Secretary of the New Zealand Section has written to say that the members of the New Zealand Section in Convention assembled passed a resolution conveying to the European Section their hearty greetings and good wishes.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary.*

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to March 20th: T. Jackson (monthly), 3s.; J. W. Frings, 1s. 6d.; A. Slee, 5s.; Mrs. Wilkinson, £3; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; Anon., £5; Miss Lowthime, 10s.; Mrs. Lauder, 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, 2s. Total: £10 11s. 6d.

#### The Section Reference Library.

*The Library will be closed for the annual cleaning on May 1st, 2nd, 3rd.* With the exception of these days and Thursdays, the Library is open to members from 2 to 10 p.m., daily.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary.*

#### The Theosophical Lending Library.

The following books have been added to the Library: *The Soul of a People*, H. Fielding; *The Christian Creed*, C. W. Leadbeater; *Dreams*, C. W. Leadbeater; *Gipsy Sorcery*, Leland; *The Theosophical Review*, Vol. XII.; *Conjugal Love*, E. Swedenborg. *Transactions of the London Lodge*,

Nos. 17 and 24, from the Headquarters' Library at Adyar, are acknowledged with thanks.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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.*

#### Lotus Circle.

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

C. W. LEADBEATER.

#### Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on alternate Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: April 16th, *The Cross*, J. B. Old; April 30th, *Patanjali's Aphorisms*, J. H. Duffell.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at "The Commercial Hotel," Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: April 25th, *Super-Physical Planes*, Mrs. Cuthbertson. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattanaach, 67, Brunswick Street.

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

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

HANOVER LODGE. Meetings at the "Zukunft," Herschelstrasse, 29, on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: April 2nd, *The Christ Triumphant*, Miss Shaw; April 9th, *Magic*, Baker Hudson; April 16th, *Self Realisation and Self Surrender*, Hodgson-Smith; April 23rd, *The Metaphysics of Theosophy*, A. R. Orage; April 30th, *The Antiquity of Man*, C. N. Goode. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 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.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at the Brotherhood Church, Victoria Road, Holbeck, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Enquiries may be addressed to Mrs. Lees, 3, Roseville Road, Leeds.

LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE. Meetings held every Monday, at 8 p.m., at 133, Spencer Place, 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, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Meetings at the Battersea Free Library, Lavender Hill, every Sunday at 7.30 p.m. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: April 6th, no lecture; April 13th, *Prayer*, C. W. Leadbeater; April 20th, *Traces of Secret Teachings among Early and Primitive Peoples*, Mrs. Hooper; April 27th, *The Isiac Mysteries and the Doctrines of Hermes the Thrice-Greatest*, G. R. S. Mead.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: April 10th, *The Influence of the Beautiful upon Spiritual Life*, Miss Weeks; April 24th, *Astrology and Karma*, Alan Leo.

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Students' class on alternate Thursdays for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Meetings on Sundays, at 11 a.m.

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, Upper Street, N., on Mondays and Wednesdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.15 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, 8 p.m. April 7th, *Chemical and Theosophical Correspondences*, G. Dyne; April 14th, *Druidic Secret Teachings*, Mrs. Hooper; April 21st, *Karma*, C. W. Leadbeater; April 28th, *Music and its Message*, Miss Ethel Mallet.

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 CENTRE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m. On alternate Thursdays, study of *The Devachanic Plane*.

MUNICH CENTRE. Meetings at 5, Lerchenfeld Strasse, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 10, Upper King Street, every Monday at 8 p.m.

PARIS. Meetings at 21, rue Tronchet (office of *La Revue Théosophique Française*), on the first Sunday in each month, at 3 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., at 58, rue de Verneuil. Lectures on the second and fourth Wednesdays in each month.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "Oddfellows' Hall," Morley Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.: April 7th and 21st, *"The Ancient Wisdom"*; April 14th, *Progress in Growth and in Reality*; April 28th, *Theosophy*.

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.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meeting at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

### Blavatsky Lodge.

During the past month the Lodge has listened to lectures from Mr. Leadbeater, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley and Mr. Mead.

On March 2nd Mr. Leadbeater was the lecturer; he took for his subject "Theosophy and Darwinism." The lecture was a singularly lucid analysis of the points whereat the two systems were at variance and of those at which they converged. The whole argument tended to elucidate the fact that Theosophy does not controvert the Darwinian theories where these are proved to have a basis of fact; at the same time there are factors in the evolution of man which Darwinism must, owing

to the restricted field of its investigations, leave out of account.

On March 9th Mrs. Cooper-Oakley gave a most interesting lecture on "Ideals and Types of Mystic Chivalry," showing that the Troubadours were an organisation of mystics, and also demonstrating how greatly European culture is indebted to Arab sources for high standards of life and conduct.

On March 16th Mr. Mead lectured on "Proclus on the Planetary Chain," a subject of intense interest to modern students of Theosophy. Mr. Mead proved very conclusively that both Iamblichus and Proclus taught a doctrine with regard to the constitution of the solar system similar to that set forth, in a different form, in our theosophic literature of to-day.

On February 23rd Mr. Burrows was able to deliver his long-expected and necessarily postponed lecture, "The Light that Faileth Not." There was a good attendance and the lecture was much appreciated.

Mr. Leadbeater's Sunday evening lectures attract good audiences.

I. H.

### ENQUIRER.

#### QUESTION CCCCXC.

(Continued.)

C. E. B.—*In what light do Theosophists look upon "conversion" as generally understood by Christians, and what is its value in relation to treading the "path" or becoming an adept?*

A. A. W.—I suspect the querist really means "conversion" as generally understood by a comparatively small section—or rather number of small sections—of Protestants; which is not quite the same thing. Amongst certain sects of evangelical dissenters (within and without the Established Church), the word has obtained a technical sense, quite apart from its use as "generally understood by Christians"; and I fancy that this is really what is in C. E. B.'s mind. Of "conversion" in this sense—the conviction that we are sinners and that for this reason God hates us and will continue to hate us to all eternity unless we believe that we are "saved" by a mysterious "atonement" of Christ, faith in which God accepts in lieu of (nay, in exclusion of) all improvement in ourselves—it seems hardly needful to say that it has no value in relation to treading the path. We may go still farther, and say that of all the hindrances which avidyâ—blindness to the true Light on the Path—sets in the way upwards, this is (here and now) the most complete and fatal. If the querist will refer to any one of the various statements of the "Steps of the Path" given in our Theosophical books, he will find that one of the indispensable preparations for entering the Path is named as the acquirement of what Mrs. Besant calls toleration, Mr. Sinnett freedom from bigotry—under whatever name, the knowledge that all religions, without exception, are the

various worship of the same Higher Powers, all to be purified of the last stain of materialism by their enlightened followers, and all to be left behind as we come, by slow degrees, to the knowledge of what lies behind and above their various conceptions. And this must come before we are ready so much as to knock at the gate—the first step towards Adeptship.

But there are other and better Christians than these of whom I have spoken. To a large and increasing number the "love of Jesus" is precious as being *their* natural way upwards to this height of "toleration" to which I have referred. It is not to them merely a foundation for the self-conceit which thanks God that it is not as other men are; their "conversion" is the turning away the soul once for all from those purely selfish ideals for which they feel that "the time past" has more than "fully sufficed them." No longer may they live for selfish pleasure (virtuous or vicious), whilst others suffer in this world; nor may they dream of eternal happiness in any succeeding one from which their fellows are for ever shut into the outer darkness. Conversion—from the darkness of isolation to the true "light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world"—from the folly which would make of their Jesus a private Saviour limited to themselves, their fellow believers, their own race or colour (unless they themselves "carry the gospel to the heathen")—to the full comprehension that "in every nation he that loveth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him," and the certainty that the Powers that rule the evolution of the world will bring out good "at last—to all"; such a conversion, completely carried out into full liberty—with no last hesitation at leaving all limits, all boundaries, behind—is not only a step, but *all* the steps in one which lead to the golden gate.

#### QUESTION CCCCXCIV.

J. C.—*Is there any difference in kind between the life of the Second and Third Logoi, such as the Greeks tried to represent by ζωή and βίος?*

C. W. L.—There is certainly what appears to us as a difference in kind between the outpouring of the Third and the Second Logoi. Of course it must fundamentally be one and the same, since both are merely aspects of the One, yet to us and on these lower planes there seems very decidedly a difference. I do not, however, think that it corresponds to that between ζωή and βίος. As far as my information goes this latter word was used in quite a restricted sense—meaning merely the life of a man on earth—as one might speak of the lives of the philosophers. I believe it was said that the soul chooses its βίος. Ζωή, on the other hand, seems to be always a Cosmic principle, and is, as a rule, not individualized. I fancy that it corresponds closely to what we mean in Theosophical literature by the life of the Logos, or the second outpouring. It will be noticed that it is a word which is never used in the plural.

## QUESTION CCCCXCV.

C.—*Is it at the end of the seventh race of our present round, or of the seventh round, that the summit of human progress must be achieved?*

C. W. L.—The latter, certainly. It is not quite clear what is meant by “the seventh race of our present round,” because, of course, our present round (like all others) has *seven* seventh races—one on each of its planets. But the predestined summit of human evolution is adeptship of what is called the *asekha* level, and the scheme is arranged so that that may be attained by very large numbers at the end of the seventh round. Of course, it is always open to any man to attain it long before by taking the short cut; also, of course, those who do *not* succeed in attaining it in this chain of worlds will simply have to try again in the next chain, and labour on until they do reach the goal.

I speak of this as the summit of human evolution, not meaning in the least that there is no further progress possible, for “the soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit”; but when this level shall have been reached man will have become something more than man, and his passage onward after that can hardly be spoken of as merely human evolution.

## QUESTION CCCCXCVI.

M. J. T.—*Theosophy teaches us that “the Christ” is a principle, not alone the Lord Jesus of Nazareth, who is the type of the evolved man as Adam is of the material man, and that the prophecies in the Old Testament do not refer to the man, but to the future of the human race. If this is so, how is it that the prophecies about the Jews are being and have been fulfilled literally, which fulfilment Christians say proves without doubt that all the other prophecies of “the Christ” are true literally of the man Jesus. The Jews are presumably being punished for their rejection of Him, and if we take their history literally, why not His? In speaking of the teaching of Theosophy, nearly every Christian turns round and holds up the Jews as proof positive that the Bible is actually true, all its prophecies culminating in Jesus. If not punished for their rejection of Him as God, for what are they punished exactly as foretold, and if He were mere man, mere human teacher, however highly evolved, why should not those who rejected the teaching of the Lord Buddha and that of other great Masters be equally punished? I hope I make my meaning clear, but that seems the point on which all Christians stumble, and I want to have it explained to me, and be able to explain it to others.*

G. R. S. M.—Whenever we read a question beginning “Theosophy teaches,” we must confess to feeling a slight shudder of alarm in anticipation of what is coming. The following is the result of our own investigations, and we do not make Theosophy responsible for it.

The earliest form of Christian doctrine taught that all those who steadfastly followed the holy life and devoted themselves to God, should in their turn become “Christs,” that is to say “Anointed”—anointed with the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God was the Life and Light of God’s Presence. Jesus was one anointed with the Spirit of God, one of the Justified.

This statement is not a pious supposition, but based upon the evidence of the early documents and a study of the origins. The persistent doctrine of the most primitive form of Christianity was the firm hope of the faithful of becoming “Christs,” should they continue to the end.

The infant form of Christianity, into which the great Master breathed the breath of life, was moulded from a seething crucible in which innumerable elements of tradition were being transmuted. *One* of these elements was the Messiah idea of the Jews. It would take too long to show how this idea in the course of long years was metamorphosed from the longing for a warrior-leader who would restore the Jews to freedom and set them over the surrounding nations (originally tribes), into the spiritual looking for the manifestation of the Israel of God, gathered out of all nations, consisting of the Righteous of the earth, the servants of God.

This transmutation was brought about purely on Jewish ground, but the last stages of the process had so transformed the original form of the doctrine that the Conservative party (the orthodox Rabbis) regarded them as dangerously heretical. At this point the Messiah-doctrine was cast into the crucible of the origins and further transmuted into a Christian dogma.

Modern historical research has dealt at very great length with all of these points, and the famous so-called “Messianic prophecies” have at length been restored to their proper proportions and historic setting. On the other hand, the method of the “in order that it might be fulfilled” school of gospel compilation is now familiar to all students, and that method has been sufficiently explained in my papers on the “Sibyllists and Sibyllines” in *The Theosophical Review*.

What prophecies, then, have been fulfilled literally, we ask, when all the evidence goes to show that either the “prophecies” have been written after the event to suit the history, or the “history” written up to suit the prophecies?

The idea that the Jews are being punished for their rejection of Jesus (in other words, for their rejection of Christian claims) is horribly revolting to a Theosophical student. That the God of Love should scourge his children, of Jewish or any other extraction, into a compulsory affection, is unthinkable. Such a conception is un-Christian; it is entirely Jewish, and that, too, of the narrow and bigoted type of Yahwehism; it has no shadow of connection with the idea of the All-merciful Father preached by the Christ, but belongs to the crude and undeveloped misconception of a jealous tribal god. God is



no task-master, least of all an executioner. The calm Wisdom which regards the unbelief of men and the bitter sectarian strife of unreasoning fanaticism simply as forces which can be eventually used for the advancement of the whole of humanity, has no need of punishment. 'Tis we who punish each other, not God. Fanatical Jew and fanatical Christian both think they are doing God service, and in so far as they are sincere the forces that both liberate are all made use of to raise poor, ignorant humanity a step higher.

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QUESTION CCCCXCVII.

C.—*Why have we not the least information about the last round, while we have some about all the races that existed before ours?*

C. W. L.—I should have thought that a good deal of information had been given about the last round. Has the questioner read *The Secret Doctrine*, or the *Transactions of the London Lodge*? If less has been said about the third round than about the earlier races of this world-period, there is surely some reason for that fact, in that these latter are so much nearer to us, so much more easily comprehended, and of so much greater interest and importance to us; but to say that there is no information available is inaccurate.

It occurs to me as just possible that by the expression "the last round" the querent may mean not the third, but the seventh. If that be so, then it is true that not much has been said, for the very good reason that not much is known. To look up the records of the past is one thing; to forecast the future is quite another, and a much less certain affair. A broad outline has been given by those who know, but it is hardly possible that much detail can be filled in. If our questioner, instead of vaguely asking "Why?" would tell us on what particular points he wishes for information about either the third round or the seventh, we could then see how far it was possible to satisfy him.

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QUESTION CCCCXCVIII.

H. D.—*I find it very difficult to reconcile the statements in the earlier and later Theosophical books with regard to devas and elementals. It is said that some devas have never been human, and yet have evolved above our level; how is this possible?*

C. W. L.—It is mainly the old question of our unsatisfactory terminology. The querent must remember that all these words are used in very different senses in different places in our literature. In the later books we have used the word deva only in reference to the kingdom next above humanity, but in Indian literature it seems to mean practically any entity which is not upon the physical plane. In writing *The Astral Plane* I restricted the word elemental exclusively to those creatures which are temporarily formed out of the

essence on the descending arc by the thoughts of men and other entities; but in the older books, as in alchemical writings, the term included all varieties of nature-spirits, and I think frequently even some of the lower devas.

With regard to the second part of the question, what is the difficulty? There are in the deva kingdom those who have passed through human evolution, just as we are doing now, but we must remember that it is also possible to attain that level along quite another line, in which there are no human births at all. That does not, however, imply that the qualities required are in any way different. Whether the deva has passed through humanity or not he must have developed an intelligence higher than that of humanity, or he could not be a deva at all.

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QUESTION CCCCXCIX.

M. C.—*Is mischief done on any plane when a man not yet attained to any degree of holiness uses his mind-power for staying pain in an animal or human being?*

A. A. W.—I should very much like to put our friend under cross-examination, to find out what may be his idea of "a man not yet attained to any degree of holiness." The phrase is suggestive of a way of looking at the matter not uncommon amongst good people, who think of "holiness" as a kind of suit of livery, which may be put on and off at pleasure; so that one man may be complete to the last gaiter-button of holiness, whilst another may have only the indispensable shirt and more or less entire breeches of holiness, and yet another be going about in so indecent a state of nudity that we cannot even take a benefit at his hands, but must in charity look another way until he manages to get at least some degree of holiness together. But this is a mistake. Holiness, as Mr. Ruskin has long ago reminded us, means nothing at all but *helpfulness*; and one who has got so far on as to desire to use any mind-power he may possess unselfishly for the good of animal or human being is, *ipso facto*, "holy" enough to be allowed to do his best.

But if M. C. has in his mind the sort of "holiness" which is attained at "Holiness Meetings" in Revivals and Salvation Army barracks, we must, however reluctantly, inform him that in our mind that has nothing to do with the matter at all. It is a question, not of sanctity but of knowledge. It is always right to use any powers we may have for the relief of suffering, but whether this is in reality a benefit to the sufferer is more than the majority of us can tell; and it is just because of our want of this knowledge that we are permitted to use our powers so freely. In itself, pain is for most of us the absolutely necessary condition of progress—the spur which very few of us are so energetic as not to need. When it is, as it mostly is, part of the kârmic necessity we have brought upon ourselves, to be relieved of it does not, it is true, "interfere with the Law," but—we have to undergo it in another way, perhaps

much more disagreeable to us. No one can help us to escape it. Our consciousness is yet so limited to the physical plane, that physical pain seems to us the thing to be relieved at all hazards, but the pains of desire—our appointed purgatory after death—are worse; and (to one capable of feeling them) those of the mental plane—the fetters and handcuffs put upon us by an incomplete or ill-fitting mental organisation—are worse than all, fully as our previous conduct may have justified the infliction. So that we do not find those who, along with the power, possess the higher wisdom which sees beyond the physical need, spending their energies on the physical plane. They do not refuse help; as with Jesus of Nazareth, the virtue flows from them on all who come, but they do not seek the occasions; and even Jesus who “went about doing good,” has to remind His followers that it was with Him as with the prophets of old, when “there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Naaman the Syrian, but unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to him.” One ray of light, one encouraging word, to help a man upon the upward road which is trodden by the spirit only, is of far more value than the gifts of all the “healers,” past, present and to come—all honour to their labours, notwithstanding.

#### QUESTION D.

*H. M. S.—What is the form of the mental body on its own plane?*

*C. W. L.—*Not long ago I answered a similar question as to the astral body, and much of what I then said will apply in this case also. In the mind body, as in the astral body, there is a reproduction of the physical form within the outer ovoid whose shape is determined by that of the causal body, so that it has somewhat the appearance of a form of denser mist surrounded by a lighter mist. It must be remembered that all through the devachanic period the personality of the last physical life is distinctly preserved, and that it is only when the consciousness is finally withdrawn into the causal body that this feeling of personality is merged in the individuality, and the man for the first time since this descent into incarnation realizes himself as the true and comparatively permanent ego.

#### QUESTION DI.

*W. W.—Theosophical teachers state that the carnivorous animals arose from the artificial breeding by man of animals on the Atlantean Continent. How is this reconcilable with the fact that fossil Carnivora have been found in the Lower Eocene of North America—a period which must have antedated that of the civilization of Atlantis?*

*C. W. L.—*There are two points here to which exception may be taken. First, “Theosophical teachers” have not, so far as I am aware, made the statement above attributed to them; and,

secondly, what is called the Eocene period probably did *not* antedate that of the great civilization of Atlantis. The dates assigned by geologists to their periods vary within very wide limits, so that it is scarcely possible for us to correlate them to the great facts of the world’s history; but if the questioner will look at the table of approximate times given at the end of the London Lodge Transaction on *The Lunar Pityris* he will see that the assumption which he makes is scarcely justified.

With regard to his other statement, it may be sufficient to quote from *The Ancient Wisdom*, p. 370, where Mrs. Besant writes: “Man, in the part he has played in helping to evolve animals. . . has strengthened instead of diminishing the predatory instincts of carnivorous animals; still, he did not implant those instincts, . . . and innumerable varieties of animals, with the evolution of which man has had directly nothing to do, prey upon each other.”

There were carnivorous creatures among the gigantic reptilia of the Lemurian period, and man was in no way directly engaged in their evolution; but it was in part his work to assist in the development from those reptile forms of the mammalia which play so prominent a part in the world now. Here was his opportunity to improve the breeds, and to curb the undesirable qualities of the creatures that came under his hands; and it is because he failed to do all that he might have done in this direction that he is to some extent responsible for much that has since gone wrong in the world. If he had done all his duty it is quite conceivable that we might have had no carnivorous mammals, but for earlier and lower forms he is not directly responsible. Reference has been made to these facts on several occasions by various Theosophical writers, but their statements have necessarily been less sweeping than that attributed to them in the question.

#### QUESTION DII.

*W. J. E.—If Oriental nations are spiritually so far in advance of the Western nations, why is it necessary for strenuous efforts to be made in India by the most advanced European workers; ought there not rather to be an overflowing of spiritual fulness in Eastern missionary enterprise directed to European countries?*

*G. R. S. M.—*Answering questions in THE VÂHAN is frequently like having a rough-and-tumble with a blanket spook. A blanket elemental is a pleasing sort of entity who flops about like a spread-out sheet or blanket and wraps himself round the object of his affection. Once he gets hold it is mighty difficult to unwrap him decently, for he seems to have no ends about him. And generally if you can’t *find* an end of him you have to *make* one. In the case of a question, this generally means the w.p.b.

Here, however, we have a question with “ends” to it—several of them. Let us take hold of them and unwrap part of the incubus.

It is implied that "Theosophy teaches" that "all Oriental nations are spiritually in advance of the Western nations"—one "end." This is manifestly false, and hence easily unwrapped, even if we were to agree on some precise meaning for the vague term "spiritually"—another "end." Briefly the questioner means India, and Brâhmanical India at that; as distinguished from the India of 299 other nationalities. Again, it is implicitly asserted that "missionary enterprise" is being attempted in India—yet another "end"—whereas the work that is being done is the helping people to understand their own religion from their own standpoint. Yet again, it is implicitly assumed that "missionary enterprise" is good—one more "end"—whereas the very opposite is held by many students. The real way to help is from within movements, and best of all from within men. Now we are told that many families of Âryan Indians enjoy a heredity (physical and psychic) saturated for thousands of years with the atmosphere of religious discipline and soul-culture, and that it is great advantage to have so easily tamed a vehicle. This is not only entirely credible but even demonstrable. But what of the individuals who get possession of these bodies? Is there any reason to suppose that there are necessarily greater souls in Indian than in Western bodies? Now, though everyone gets a body in accordance with his past, nevertheless there may be some amount of choice, at least for the more advanced souls. I mean that a soul can attempt additional difficulties if it think it have a chance of success. And if this be so, it would seem to me that as there must be pioneers, those who undertake the more difficult task of taming Western bodies are no less *spiritual* than those who have presumably an easier task assigned them. But, thank God, the ways to Him are infinite; thank God, the Great Ones are no respectors of persons; thank God, the soul is sexless and without a nation; thank God, with Him is neither old nor new.

#### QUESTION DIII.

B. H.—(a) *What value have the visions of Mrs. Anna Kingsford and her book, The Perfect Way?*

(b) *Who is her instructing spirit "Hermes," who seems to come from a higher plane than the astral? Is he indeed a planetary spirit, as pretended?*

(c) *Is it possible for spirits of that order to communicate with men in this way?*

C. W. L.—(a) The value of the visions or the writings of any person must always be very largely a matter of opinion, for again and again we find that one man is unable to see anything whatever in a book which to another will be most useful and helpful. If I individually am asked for my opinion upon *The Perfect Way*, I will say that it appears to me to be a very remarkable book, bearing undoubted traces of considerable esoteric knowledge. It was published before Mr. Sinnett's epoch-marking *Esoteric Buddhism*, yet it contains much of the broad outline of Theosophical

truth—veiled in Christian garb indeed, and often rather clouded than clarified by the fanciful symbolism employed—but still unmistakably the same truth, though coming through entirely independent channels.

Mrs. Kingsford appears to have acquired her knowledge largely by simple memory—that is to say, she was able to remember a good deal of what she had been taught in a previous incarnation, though it was sometimes so confused as to be almost unrecognizable. Her presentment of occult doctrine was disfigured by certain idiosyncrasies—certain prepossessions of the lower personality which constantly obtrude themselves in all her works. For example, though she had fairly grasped the idea of reincarnation, she had never been able to master the great problem of sex. She could not understand that the ego is sexless, and that it needs experience in bodies of both sexes for its full development; on the contrary, she seems to have held that woman was a kind of additional kingdom, raised above man almost as man is raised above the animals, and this curious obsessing idea vitiated much of what she wrote. Still, even when allowance has been made for all these peculiarities, her work remains a most remarkable one.

Turning to the question of the accuracy of her visions, there seems here also to have been a certain inequality, probably due to the same causes as the occasional lack of comprehension above referred to. The majority of them appear to have been symbolical, and upon them no comment can be offered, save that in many cases the symbolism was very beautiful, even if sometimes a little fantastic. In various cases she saw historical facts with remarkable clearness—that is to say, she was often able to read the records accurately. Her vision of the circumstances under which what are called the gospels were really written, for example, reproduces the true scene with considerable fidelity. On the other hand, there seems to have been unreliability whenever the personal element came in, since she appears to have identified herself with most of the prominent female characters in history, from Mary Magdalene to Mary Queen of Scots.

The questioner would do well to read also Mr. Mead's remarks in the "Watch-tower" of *Lucifer* for March, 1896.

(b) It is impossible for us to say who "Hermes" may have been, nor have we, so far as I can see, any particular right to enquire. If by a planetary spirit the questioner means one of the very exalted Beings whom Madame Blavatsky calls Dhyân Chohans—the great kingdom standing next above that of the devas—one can only say that such a suggestion is in the highest degree improbable, and absolutely uncalled for. There is nothing in any communication from "Hermes" inconsistent with the idea that he was a human being—a pupil, perhaps, in some occult school, either now inhabiting a physical body, or on the astral plane awaiting reincarnation. On the other

hand he might equally well have belonged to some of the lower orders of the vast deva kingdom.

On that latter supposition one might imagine a meaning to the term "planetary spirit" which would make it not wholly inaccurate. Though we know but little of the economy of the deva kingdom, we have at least been told that its vast hosts are divided into hierarchies, and one classification of these hierarchies makes a correspondence between them and the great spheres of influence to which the names of the visible planets have been somewhat misleadingly attached. All that is intended by the term planetary may therefore easily be "belonging to one of those hierarchies which have been identified with the planets." We could hardly expect Mrs. Kingsford to foresee the exact signification which Theosophy would subsequently attach to the name.

(c) The study of occultism soon leads one to be very chary of pronouncing the word "impossible." There is no reason that we know of to prevent one of the very exalted Beings referred to from communicating with man if he should wish to do so; all we can say is that such a contingency appears exceedingly unlikely, and that we know of no record that any such communication as is suggested has ever taken place. All that is ever needed can be done so very much more readily, and with so much less expenditure of force, in the ordinary and natural way; why should we go out of our way to suppose such improbable interventions?

#### QUESTION DIV.

C. R.—*Remembering the rules laid down for the aspirant in First Steps in Occultism, as those conditions under which alone the study of Divine Wisdom can be pursued, how can the hopeful teaching given in our western Theosophical books be reconciled with these rules?*

C. W. L.—No difference will be found between the moral and spiritual qualifications described in the book above mentioned as necessary for the man who wishes to enter upon the path of occult development, and those given in fuller detail in some of our later literature. It is not easy to see exactly what is meant by "hopeful teaching." All teaching is hopeful which explains the course of man's evolution, and shows him how he may raise himself out of darkness into the light of life; yet no teaching can give him a royal road to the heights of adeptship, or enable him to dispense with the sustained and earnest effort necessary for self-culture.

The rules to which the questioner refers as requiring to be "reconciled," may perhaps be those for the conventual life of a band of disciples who have the good fortune to be able to reside and work together under the direction of a Master.

No doubt such a life may be a great aid to rapid evolution, but for most people in the west it is absolutely out of reach—often because of kârmic ties which they themselves have formed before they became acquainted with the possibilities of the higher life. It is not of course expected that the student still living in the world amid ordinary family surroundings should keep such regulations in their entirety, though he must endeavour to approximate as closely as he can to the state of feeling towards his fellow-students which they indicate. When the time comes that the path is smoothed for him to leave the ordinary worldly life, he will undertake new obligations in various ways, and enter into closer relations with the great realities which underlie evolution.

#### QUESTION DV.

P. T.—*It is stated that astral bodies can interpenetrate one another (as indeed they must do when two persons stand or sit close together); why is not astral matter an obstacle to other matter of the same order, just as would be the case on the physical plane?*

C. W. L.—The reason appears to be that the molecules of astral matter are not only exceedingly minute, but are much further apart in proportion to their size than are physical molecules as ordinarily known to the chemist, so that there is no difficulty in the way of the interpenetration of two or three astral bodies, or even a larger number.

They do, however, affect one another considerably in such a case, and if their vibrations are not harmonious a very unpleasant sensation is produced, and serious inconvenience and even great harm may result from such undesirable propinquity when one of the astral bodies is gross and impure. For that among other reasons it is well to avoid crowded places or crowded vehicles as much as possible.

#### EDITORIAL NOTICE.

*It seems once again necessary to repeat that NO NOTICE WHATEVER will be taken of anonymous communications. Every question MUST be accompanied by the full name and address of the sender. Several questions, the answers to which might have been of general interest, have recently had to be rejected because their writers disobeyed this invariable rule.*

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.

VOL. VIII.

LONDON, MAY 1, 1899.

NO. 10.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN SECTION.

Members are reminded that the financial year of the Section ended on April 30th, and that subscriptions for the year 1899-1900 are now due.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary*.

### THE CONVENTION.

By resolution of the Executive Committee the next Annual Convention of the European Section will be held in London, on Saturday and Sunday, July 8th and 9th.

The secretaries of branches are requested to forward corrected lists of members, and brief reports of the work done during the past year. These lists and reports should be received not later than June 30th.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary*.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to April 20th: T. Jackson (monthly), 3s.; New Zealand Section, £1 15s.; Mrs. Sharpe, £2; J. W. H. Mackenzie, 16s.; H. B. Hammond, 5s.; Countess Ellen Bille Brake, 15s.; A Member, 5s.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; W. J. Long, £10; G. Tubbs, £1 10s.; Mrs. Chapman, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, 3s.; M. S. Johnson, 5s.; The Hon. O. Cuffe, £1; Mr. and Mrs. Dowall, £1; Miss Goring, 10s.; A Friend, £1. Total: £22 12s.

### "White Lotus Day."

The usual meeting of the Blavatsky Lodge, to commemorate the work of H. P. Blavatsky, will be held on Monday evening, May 8th, at 8 o'clock.

All members of the Society will be welcome, and it is hoped that all who care to come will do so.

S. MAUD SHARPE, *Hon. Sec.*

### The Section Reference Library.

The library is open to members of the Society from 2 to 10 p.m., except on Thursdays. *It is closed for the annual cleaning on May 1st, 2nd, 3rd.*

The following books have been presented to the Library and are acknowledged with thanks: *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Arthur Schopenhauer's *Sämmtliche Werke*, in sechs Bänden. Zweite Auflage. Neue Ausgabe. Erster und Zweite Bänden. Leipzig, F. A. Brockhaus, 1891; *Occult Philosophy or Magic*, Henry Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, ed. by Willis F. Whitehead, Chicago, 1898, Book I., *Natural Magic*; *Spiritualism*, J. W. Edmonds and G. T. Dexter, M.D., 2 vols. Australian ed., Melbourne, 1898.

A. J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

### The Theosophical Lending Library.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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*.

### Lotus Circle.

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

C. W. LEADBEATER.

### The Countess Wachtmeister.

The Countess Wachtmeister has been spending some time in the South of France, since her return from India, and has delivered a number of lectures to branches and to the public, and she has also had many interviews with members and enquirers.

Her visit to Nice is noticed separately in the report of the Nice Branch. Toulon was also visited and lectures delivered. At Marseilles the Countess' work will probably result in the formation of a branch and the admission of several new members into the Society. The Countess has since proceeded to Lyons, and will visit several other towns on her way to Paris.

The progress of the movement in France is steadily increasing in rapidity, and the visit of Countess Wachtmeister will do much to extend it.

### The General Secretary.

The General Secretary, from April 3rd to 6th, visited Bath, Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth, and lectured to members and visitors in each place. The lectures were well attended.

### Blavatsky Lodge.

On March 23rd the Lodge listened to a most interesting lecture from Mr. Glass, who took for his subject "Scientific Speculations on Life." The lecturer showed that the tendency of science was to push the field of its investigations from without, within. The study of the human structure as a whole was followed by the closer examination of the living substance of the body. In conclusion the lecturer referred to the geometrical aspect of some of the phenomena of life. On April 30th, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley was announced to speak upon "The Mystic Quest"; her place was taken by Mr. A. H. Ward, who gave a lecture, containing much interesting thought, upon "The Uses of Discrimination." Mr. Ward raised a point provocative of some discussion and opposition: *viz.*, the question of flesh-eating *v.* vegetarianism. On April 6th there was no lecture. On the 13th the Lodge was crowded to overflowing to hear Mr. Leadbeater on "Prayer." It is not necessary to say that the lecture was singularly clear, and of great value to the auditors. Mr. Leadbeater pointed out certain erroneous conceptions with regard to the nature of prayer, and explained the rationale of the methods whereby suppliants receive direct answers to their petitions. He drew a distinction between prayer

and the higher form of devotion known as meditation or contemplation, and showed very plainly the uses and values of all the rungs of that ladder of devotion whereby the soul may climb to its final goal.

The Sunday evening lectures by Mr. Leadbeater have ceased for the present.

I. H.

### The Nice Branch.

On her return from India to Paris, Countess Wachtmeister passed through Nice, where she spent a few days. During her stay she attended the Lodge meetings, to which she added much interest by giving answers to the questions put by the members. She also gave a public lecture on the subject of "Life after Death," addressed to the English residents in Nice, a fact which did not prevent many French Theosophists and enquirers from being present. The Countess dwelt on the different phases of life on earth and on other planes, and was followed throughout her discourse by the keen attention of her audience. It is needless to say to those who know her that the lecture was marked by her accustomed earnestness and ability. Two meetings were held after the lecture, both well-attended, the Countess then speaking in French.

### Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on alternate Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: May 14th, *Palmistry*, Miss Powell; May 28th, *Karma*, A. W. Greener.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Lodge meetings at "The Commercial Hotel," Westgate, on alternate Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: May 23rd, *Occultism and Ethics*, J. Handyside. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

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

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

HANOVER LODGE. Meetings at the "Zukunft," Herschelstrasse, 29, on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: May 7th, *Guardian Angels*, Miss Shaw; May 14th, *Theosophy and Asceticism*, C. N. Goode; May 21st, *Theosophic Life*, Hodgson Smith; May 28th, *Prayer*, C. W. Leadbeater. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 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 on Thursdays at 8 p.m., in No. 10 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street.

LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE. Meetings held every Monday, at 8 p.m., at 133, Spencer Place, 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, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Meetings at the Battersea Free Library, Lavender Hill, every Sunday at 7.30 p.m.: May 7th, *More Lives than One*, F. Stanley Jast; May 14th, *Aid from Unseen Sources*, F. Horne; May 21st, *Christianity and Theosophy*, Mrs. Leo; May 28th, *Theosophy and its Purpose*, Hon. Otway Cuffe. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: May 4th, *The Planetary Chain*, C. W. Leadbeater; May 11th, *The Riddle of Pythagoras*, Miss Pope; May 18th, *Manetho and Hermes the Thrice-Greatest*, G. R. S. Mead; May 25th, *The Mystic Quest*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: May 8th, *The Problem of Diet*, W. C. Worsdell; May 22nd, no meeting.

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Students' class on alternate Thursdays for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Meetings on Sundays, at 11 a.m.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m.: May 1st, *There is no Death*, Mrs. Sharpe; May 15th, *Maya*, F. Horne; May 29th, *Light on the Path*, Mrs. Leo.

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

LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.15 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8 p.m.: May 5th, *Dante as a Witness to the Secret*

*Schools*, Mrs. Marshall; May 12th, *Marcus Aurelius*, P. Tovey; May 19th *Astronomy—Physical and Occult* (with diagrams), A. P. Sinnett; May 26th, *Desire and Will*, Mrs. Sharpe.

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 CENTRE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m. On alternate Thursdays, study of *The Devachanic Plane*.

MUNICH CENTRE. Meetings at 5, Lerchenfeld Strasse, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 10, Upper King Street, every Monday evening at 8 p.m.

PARIS. Meetings at 21, rue Tronchet (office of *La Revue Théosophique Française*), on the first Sunday in each month, at 3 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., at 58, rue de Verneuil. Lectures on the second and fourth Wednesdays in each month.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "Oddfellows' Hall," Morley 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.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meeting at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

The answers to Question CCCCLXXXVII. in THE VĀHAN for March, do not seem quite to explain the problem, which is, I believe, a difficulty to several students. It has been a difficulty to me, and as I have spent many hours in trying to work it out, I have thought that it is just possible that the ideas that have come to me on the matter may be acceptable to J. B. Those who have gone very far ahead may not be able so readily to see the difficulties in such a subject as those still stumbling on away back; they know and see too well, they are sure.

In the first answer it is said, "We are concerned only with the facts of evolution, and why the Logos who has charge of it chose to act in this way or in that, is certainly not our business."

But since the aim of evolution is union with the Logos, the merging of our wills in His, it is necessary first of all to realise Him as truly all-wise, all-good, omnipotent. Unless we can realise the Logos as perfect wisdom, love and beauty, we cannot have that overwhelming desire for union which will swamp all other desires and lead to the goal. Therefore I would suggest we are not "con-

cerned *only* with the facts of evolution," and it is our business to try to know "why the Logos, who has charge of it, chose to act in this way or in that."

Some minds may be able perhaps to receive the statement "God is good" as axiomatic, and conclude that our evolution is conducted in the best possible way because it is arranged by God, and are not troubled at all by such a question as the one propounded by J. B. Others, more spiritually developed perhaps, have so firm an inner conviction or knowledge of the absolute rightness of this evolution and of the perfectness of the Logos, that they cannot see the difficulty of those not so far advanced.

I venture to give the following ideas, which came to me while reflecting on the subject.

If our human evolution could have been perfected without such suffering, if it had been possible for creatures to have been made perfect at once by one stroke of the will-power of the Logos, then our evolution must be regarded as a failure in respect to its working, though not in its fulfilment—a failure in wisdom and love, since love and wisdom could ordain no unnecessary suffering or delay; then God is not the perfect being represented, union with Him is not so desirable and the only reasons for striving to work in with the laws of nature—His will—would be: expediency, our own well-being, the service of our fellows, who with us are the victims of a badly arranged scheme, or to help the Logos to retrieve His failure!

But the Logos is Himself the life of His creatures; the consciousness in all things is contained in His consciousness; the suffering and pain do not go on apart from Him but in Him. Could He then ordain unnecessary pain or delay?

We can conceive the idea that such a Being as: perfectly wise, beneficent, powerful Deity exists. Can the creature conceive anything greater than is his creator, in whose aura he lives, of whose essence he is built, in whose life he lives?

There may be many orders of beings besides the human order, each taking its place in the great scheme, and the methods of evolution, for these may be varied according to their functions.

The human order has its place and function, for which probably it can only be fitted by the slow and painful process of evolution to which it is subjected. By its means we attain perfection—divinity according to our own efforts. Could this be ours in any other way, if bestowed by one stroke of the will-power of the Logos? Would not the latter method produce only puppets?

It is conceivable that there may be other systems whose law of evolution and whose law of good may be very different from ours; still, whatever they may be, if such is the will of the Logoi of these systems, they must be the supreme good of the creatures evolved.

Whatever be the will of the Logos of our system, we, the creatures evolved by His out-breathed essence, can have no greater good. There is nothing else for us, it is our life, our being, ourselves.

But what we need is the inner conviction gained by spiritual growth.

M. L.

## ENQUIRER.

### QUESTION DVI.

*F. P. K.—There is an idea continually repeated in Theosophic teachings—that when suffering mental anguish or physical pain we may take comfort from knowing that all evil is somehow or other deserved. To me it has ever seemed the reverse of comforting to suppose my sufferings deserved. The infliction of suffering seems a light thing compared with the infliction of a capacity for such sin or wickedness as might deserve such reprisal. Surely to be an innocent victim must be preferable beyond expression to being a guilty one? There is one great teacher who has been called "a man of sorrows"—had he also a past of evil lives, the remembrance of which was a comfort to him?*

*C. W. L.—Whether it is comforting or the reverse to know that one's sufferings are deserved may be a matter of opinion, but that in no way alters the undoubted fact that, unless they had been so deserved, they could not possibly come to us. It is lamentable that students should adopt the unphilosophical and indeed childish attitude which leads them to assume that any idea which does not fall in with their particular sectarian preconceptions cannot possibly be true. Unintelligent people constantly say, "the Theosophical teaching about karma does not seem to me so comfortable as the Christian idea of forgiveness of sins," or, "the Theosophical devachan does not seem so real and beautiful as the Christian heaven, and so I will not believe in it." They evidently think, poor creatures, that their likes and dislikes are powerful enough to alter the laws of the universe, and that nothing of which they do not approve can possibly be, on any plane. We, however, are engaged in studying the facts of existence, which after all are not modified because Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So would rather believe them to be otherwise than they are.*

Yet it does seem strange that our querent cannot see that if it were *possible* for him (or her) to be "an innocent victim," there would be no certainty of the operation of the great law of cause and effect anywhere in the universe, which would be a far more terrible thing for us than having to work out the results of any amount of sin committed in former lives. Again, in the interests of correct thinking we must protest against the use of a term so misleading as "reprisal." It can never be too strongly emphasized that the law of karma is not the vindictive vengeance of some angry deity, but simply an effect naturally and inevitably following upon its cause in obedience to the action of universal law.

Once more, what extraordinary looseness of thought is implied in the suggestion that the remembrance of a past of evil lives could be a comfort to anybody! Obviously one could never



look back upon evil deeds except with regret; yet a man might well find it easier to bear pain or sorrow when he realized that he had (as we all must have) a certain debt outstanding for evil done, which would inevitably have to be paid some day, and that by his present suffering he was clearing this off, so that a freer and happier life might be his in the future.

With regard to the last paragraph of the question, if, as seems probable, the teacher referred to is the Christ, is it possible that F. P. K. is still ignorant that biblical criticism has long ago conclusively shown that the title "a man of sorrows," quoted from the writings attributed to Isaiah, was in no way connected with Christ, and could by no possibility have been intended for him? The point of this last part of the question is not clear, for it is of course obvious that any teacher, however high above us he may stand now, must at some period or other have risen from the depths like the rest of us, and must consequently have behind him many lives which in the light of his present knowledge he would wish to have spent otherwise.

A. A. W.—I don't know if the querist is acquainted with a little piece of Adelaide Procter's "A Comforter," which puts this feeling very daintily and truly:

If you break your plaything yourself, dear,  
Don't you cry for it all the same?  
I don't think it is such a comfort,  
One has only oneself to blame.

It is quite true that "to be an innocent victim" is a very enjoyable feeling. To all women, I think, and to a good many men, it is a pleasure beyond all actual enjoyments—so called. All lovers and husbands know well that, above and beyond the delight their women-kind find in self-sacrifice for them, the delicate fine flavour—the crown of it—is that it shall be something quite useless, nay rather vexatious to the beloved one! It is not only kittenish mischief mixing with the love in the child-heart; "*se poser en victime*" is a serious attraction, which does not pass with childhood. But if F. P. K. will ask himself why he prefers to be an innocent victim rather than a guilty one, he can hardly fail to see that it is because in the first case his satisfied vanity overflows the suffering, whilst in the latter the wound to his self-conceit is the cruellest pain of all. We *don't* say it is a comfort to have deserved suffering—it is not; but we *do* say that as he grows older he will know better. The rough knocking about we most of us get in life is mainly directed to knocking out of us this conceit—this pride of virtue, which suffers from our failures. I know we are used to protest that what hurts us is our sorrow for the sin; but this is our nineteenth century cant, the pretension to a height of virtue to which very few indeed of us have attained. When such as you and I have really come to the point of being sorry for our failures purely because the world is the worse for them, without one thought of the suffering they may have brought upon ourselves—why, I think the Kali Yuga will be near its end!

The querist's difficulty is the old one; he does not understand that all evil is imperfection, and not theological "sin" at all. We all, without exception, have begun from the very beginning; we have learned by sensations, at first of the coarsest and most selfish nature, to use our powers. As these have developed we have become capable of acting from higher motives, of avoiding the more barbarous actions. There are many things we cannot do now, which a savage commits without the slightest rebuke from the conscience which, indeed, he does not yet possess. But, in like manner, we do things of which when our conscience is better instructed we shall be ashamed. In our degree (as the savage in his) we have to learn virtue by repeated failures. In our ignorance we run our heads against the "laws of nature" and hurt ourselves; as the infant does in learning to live on the physical plane. If F. P. K. will put quite out of his mind the idea of "sin or wickedness" which deserves "reprisal" he will understand the view we take of the case he adduces as a sort of *reductio ad absurdum*. Every Master has begun at the beginning, just like ourselves; and has blundered again and again. There is nothing outrageous in the suggestion that some of his lives may have been what we should call "evil" ones; and we are told that even in his final life on earth, after ages of exaltation above average humanity, Gautama Buddha made mistakes which have taken much trouble to set right. But what has made Him a Master whilst we are yet what we are, may, I think, be fairly summed up in the words of an American politician, "I have made as many mistakes as anybody, but I never made the same mistake *twice*!"

#### QUESTION DVII.

S. M. B.—*Is it permitted to commune or talk with the Masters in loving, reverent familiarity, as with a revered parent, about trivial trials and temptations as they arise a hundred times throughout the day?*

C. W. L.—All those who have ever come into contact with the Masters of Wisdom have been most deeply impressed with their exceeding kindness and readiness to help, but at the same time no one who really understands the magnificent and far-reaching work in which they are always engaged, upon planes far higher than these, would ever dream of intruding his own petty affairs upon their notice for a single moment.

It should be remembered that they know all that they feel it necessary or useful to know with regard to all those who aspire one day to become their pupils; it is far better therefore to leave the initiative to them, in reverent belief (and indeed certainty) that when they see it to be well for us that they should in any way communicate with us, they will assuredly do so.

The state of affairs of which the questioner is evidently thinking is that which is enjoyed by one who has been definitely accepted as their pupil, and has passed at least some stages of initiation on

what is called the Path Proper—a condition, I need hardly say, enormously in advance of that of the ordinary student.

#### QUESTION DVIII.

S. M. B.—*How far are friends in the other world conscious of grateful or loving thoughts that I send them, and can they distinguish such impressions as generated by me individually? Can they recognize the fact that I am sending them these loving, helpful greetings?*

C. W. L.—Friends in the other world would certainly be conscious of the grateful or loving thought that you send them, and in all probability they would be aware that such thoughts came from you. But after all if they get the benefit of the good wish, what does it matter whether they know from whom it comes? In most cases they would so know, but if they were undeveloped or only partially conscious upon the astral plane they might simply feel the influence without being able to trace it to its source.

#### QUESTION DIX.

E. M. W.—*Is karma transferable from one person to another? Is not the transferability of karma the esoteric truth underlying the Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement?*

A. A. W.—The querist has not thoroughly grasped the idea of what karma really is. The Christian idea of “punishment for sin,” which is what E. M. W. has in his mind has no place whatever in the Wisdom. The words in Book VI. of *The Light of Asia* will at once answer his question:

—all the sum of ended life—  
The karma—all that total of a soul  
Which is the things it did, the thoughts it had,  
The “Self” it wove—with woof of viewless time.  
Crossed on the warp invisible of acts—  
The outcome of him on the Universe—

“karma” is in truth himself—his personal identity; what he has made himself. So completely is this the case that Southern Buddhism has no other word to express what it is which passes from one life to another. Judge then whether karma is “transferable from one person to another!” No one can eat your food for you—nor live your life for you—nor bear your karma for you, without simply annihilating you.

But it is true that a portion of that karma may be to endure a certain suffering. We may have made others suffer, and this may recoil upon ourselves. Can anyone bear it for us? Let me answer the question by two others. First, is it possible that anyone *can*, by any exercise of freewill, bring upon himself a suffering which is not due to his *own* karma? Second, is it possible that anyone whose karma requires him to suffer, can by any action of another be relieved from it? To say yes to either of these questions is to assume a breach of the

highest Law of the Universe—a miracle; and the Wisdom knows no miracle. Of course (on the physical plane) one man may submit himself to a punishment destined for another; that may satisfy human justice, but never the Law. Whatever comes of it is a matter of the sufferer's own karma and no one else's; it is, and can be, no satisfaction of the original kârmic debt, which still remains to be paid, to the uttermost farthing, by the soul which incurred it. “Vicarious atonement” is unlikely, unreasonable, unmoral, to the exoteric philosopher; to the ancient Wisdom it is absolutely impossible, to God or man. Nor is there anything in the recorded words of the Christ which clashes with this view. He, like every other adept in similar circumstances, came to “save the world” by the preaching of the Law. By His Divine power He “forgave sin” by the very fact that He gave strength to “go and sin no more.” There is no other test, no other manifestation of a Saviour's power than this; a God from whom virtue does not flow forth to strengthen and enlighten His disciples to rise above sin in *this* life can make no atonement for sin in any other, though His blood were shed daily on millions of altars all the world over. This is distinctly laid down in numberless passages of the New Testament wherein it is said in so many words that one truly “forgiven” *can* sin no more; for if this be so “forgiveness” must be something different indeed from the mere release from punishment which is all the doctrine of Vicarious Atonement contemplates. It is to the esoteric doctrine we must go to learn the true Christian teaching—not *vice versa*; and this is a truth seriously to be laid to heart by all.

O. C.—If it be permitted to vary the wording of this question and eliminate the word karma, it is possible that not only shall we be able to approach nearer to the idea in the mind of the questioner, but at any rate we shall escape from the confusion caused by the employment of half-understood terms and profitless discussions arising therefrom.

The idea, put broadly, seems to be, “Is it possible to fulfil the injunction, Bear ye one another's burdens, or is this precept based on a misunderstanding of the Law?”

If it be granted that there is such a possibility, then “does not that idea form the basis of the doctrine of Vicarious Atonement?” Now, if we take the most rigid view of the law of cause and effect and say that nothing befalls any individual except precisely that for which he is personally responsible—then seemingly the possibility of “bearing another's burden” is eliminated, but unfortunately for this cut-and-dried theory, the facts seem to be otherwise, certainly it is not so on the physical plane, and there does not seem any reason to presume that the same rule does not hold good on other planes of being—also there is an instinct deep down in the human heart which loudly proclaims the possibility, an instinct which lies at the root of all altruistic effort and endeavour

and which may safely be counted on to resist any purely intellectual attacks from without.

May it not be that our way of regarding all things from the un-real standpoint, from below, introduces an element of falsity into all our speculations when dealing with the operations of the Law in its innermost workings?

Theoretically we admit in our philosophy as lying at the back of all things this conception of Unity, of the Monad, call it what you will, but in our thinking we are very apt to lose sight of this side of things. If we pause and consider we at once recognise that we cannot in reality separate ourselves off from others, let our dividing walls be built never so solidly, no man liveth and no man dieth to himself, in every thought and act we are either adding to or diminishing the burden of our neighbour.

If this be the actual fact with all of us, surely something analogous but on a far grander scale may be possible, with absolute directness, for those who, having consciously become one with the many, act as the saviours of the race to bear on themselves much of that burden of darkness and of suffering—"vicariously," if looked at from below, but as one with others, as regarded from above—which would otherwise delay and hamper the progress of humanity.

Who shall limit the possibilities which lie before one who has attained this level?—certainly we cannot.

The inner spiritual life of Christianity has centred round this idea of vicarious atonement for centuries—may it not be possible that there is more in this doctrine than some may think—that it has not all sprung from the base desire to palm off the payment of our just debts on another—but that, materialised and debased as the conception has become, it does in reality enshrine a very vital esoteric truth?

In *The Voice of the Silence* we catch the faint echo of the same idea, where towards the close of the portion called "The Seven Portals," we read of the Guardian Wall "built by the hands of many Masters of Compassion . . . shielding mankind from still greater misery and sorrow." And again we seem to catch a fainter echo, coming down to us from still loftier heights, where we read in *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. i., p. 228) of that Great One, named the Silent Watcher, or the Great Sacrifice and his self-imposed task.

S. M. S.—The gradually widening knowledge which comes with the passage of time should teach us at least one important lesson—to be very careful in the use of the word impossible. It is so easy to reject theories and statements, and to stamp them as altogether false, so far more difficult to clear our minds from prejudice and from our own misconceptions of the meaning certain words and phrases which do not appeal to us may bear to another. And yet, after all, we are only like children, and need to be led on step by step. A child plays with its box of bricks, and we also build our toy houses. The child's ideas are very

elementary, and the defects in his building are obvious; but if an impatient person comes along and pulls down the whole structure, the result will be bitter grief and disappointment, and even if the destroyer build up in the place of the original building one which is perfect in every detail, the child will take no interest in it, because he cannot see its beauty, and because it is not his own.

So it is with children of a larger growth. To those in advance of us the structures which we build must appear lop-sided and top-heavy, and altogether out of proportion; but they are at least our own, they do represent our ideas at each particular stage of our growth, and if they be condemned or destroyed before we have realized their imperfections or found a temporary shelter, we shall be left destitute and homeless.

It will be clear to all of us that so long as a man is satisfied with his own particular form of faith, he will not need help from us, who have had opportunities of gaining wider views. But as soon as he begins to realise its inadequacy and to feel that it cannot give him all he wants, then is the time that we, as Theosophists, ought to be able to step in and help him. We shall only help him, however, in so far as we are able to see things from his point of view, and therefore to judge exactly how much and in what way his bricks may be improved in quality. It does not, it cannot, help a man to tell him that his house is built upon the sand and therefore utterly worthless, and that there is no foundation for the beliefs which he has held most sacred; and, moreover, it is unlikely that any conception which has influenced large numbers of people and has been by them held in the utmost reverence, should have no foundation of truth.

The question of the doctrine of the Atonement is one of those which are continually recurring, and its origin has of late been most beautifully and convincingly traced back for us to the eternal sacrifice of the Logos. But in addition to this highest conception of all, there would seem to be a special sense in which the Atonement is true, a sense, moreover, in which it is connected, in some way beyond our understanding, with vicarious suffering. It may be that the Saviours of the world do, for a special purpose and for a certain time, take upon themselves definite limitations of consciousness; and that he whom we call the Christ thus "led by the Spirit into the wilderness," as it is so suggestively written, stood—not between an avenging God and his erring creatures—but between mankind and those opposing forces, those powers of darkness, so often spoken of, and symbolised under various names by various peoples.

If there be any hint of truth in this idea, then surely even a faint realisation of all that it involves would make clear many things now obscure, and would put a world of meaning into passages in the Gospel story which are now too lightly cast aside because the words are taken literally. Taken so, it is true that they appear blasphemous and terrible, and sometimes even childish; but read symbolically, though of necessity imperfectly,

they shed a flood of light upon that wondrous chain of sacrifice, in which any one of us, even here, might become a tiny link, if only we could understand.

And, through all, the eternal truth remains, that what to the lower consciousness seems to be darkness, to the eyes of the spirit is dazzling light; what to the perishing form is a cry of anguish and desolation, is to the life, the divine life which is *our* life, an ever completer and more glorious song of triumph.

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QUESTION DX.

H. K.—*Nirvâṇa*, according to H. P. B. (*vide* Key glossary), is “the state of absolute existence and absolute consciousness.” Yet according to the latest Theosophical statements *Nirvâṇa* is not a state of absoluteness, since there are two states beyond it. How can these be reconciled?

C. W. L.—Obviously they cannot be reconciled, for the statements are made from entirely different points of view, and must refer to quite different planes. But what of that?

In the later literature we are using the word *Nirvâṇa* to indicate the plane to which the *âtma* of man, as he is at present constituted, corresponds; and he who can function in full waking consciousness upon that plane has, in ordinary parlance, “attained *Nirvâṇa*” even while still in the physical body. But of course that state is still infinitely far removed from the Absolute.

It seems probable that Madame Blavatsky uses the word absolute in a somewhat less restricted sense than we do, for in spite of her definition quoted above she fully recognized the existence of planes higher than *Nirvâṇa*, and recognized also that even they were not absolute in our sense of the word. Although in *The Secret Doctrine* she speaks of *Paranirvâṇa* as absolute perfection, she yet adds: “It is absolute, however, only in a relative sense, for it must give room to still further absolute

perfection, according to a higher standard of excellence in the following period of activity” (i. 74).

In reality the question needs no argument, for the very existence of the words *Paranirvâṇa* and *Mahâparanirvâṇa* shows that those who used them knew that there were states beyond *Nirvâṇa*, and that the latter therefore was by no means the absolute.

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QUESTION DXI.

E. S. W.—*Are orthodox Christians permitted to become invisible helpers and be conscious of so doing?*

C. W. L.—The questioner will have seen in *THE VÂHAN* for February what are the qualifications required in one who wishes to join the band of invisible helpers, and she will notice that no question of mere belief comes into the matter at all. If she will read my new book *Invisible Helpers* she will find there, in addition, the qualifications required for the Path of Discipleship, and she will see that along that line sectarian bigotry distinctly prevents progress. So that the answer to the question would be that even the narrowly orthodox might help in the way described on page 101 of my book, but they would hardly be likely to find anyone who would take the responsibility of fully awakening them until they had advanced somewhat further along the path of progress.

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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.

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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.—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.

VOL. VIII.

LONDON, JUNE 1, 1899.

NO. 11.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN SECTION.

Members are reminded that the financial year of the Section ended on April 30th, and that subscriptions for the year 1899-1900 are now due.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary*.

### THE CONVENTION.

The Ninth Annual Convention of the European Section will be held in London on Saturday and Sunday, July 8th and 9th.

On Friday evening, July 7th, there will be a Reception in the Council Chamber, Westminster Town Hall, from 8 to 10 p.m., to which members will be at liberty to invite any friends interested in the objects of the Society. Cards of invitation will be printed and members will be able to obtain those they require by applying to the General Secretary any time after July 1st.

The Convention will meet in the Council Chamber, Westminster Town Hall, at 10.30 a.m., on Saturday, July 8th.

On the same afternoon there will be a Reception at 19, Avenue Road, from 3.30 to 5.30 p.m. During the afternoon, weather permitting, the usual group photograph will be taken.

On Saturday evening there will be a Public Meeting of the Convention in the Council Chamber, Westminster Town Hall, at 8.30 p.m.

On Sunday, July 9th, there will be a Public Meeting of the Convention in the Small Queen's Hall, at 7 p.m.

At both of these Public Meetings addresses will be given. The names of the speakers will be announced later.

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 at least 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*.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### New Branches.

May 15th, 1899. Charter issued this day to Mme. Villiers Thomassin, Mlle. Thérèse Thomassin, le Comte de Gramont, Mme. Z. Blech, Mlle A. Blech, Léon Cléry and Mme. Sauvan-Deleuze, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society in Paris, to be known as Le Sentier Branch.

May 15th, 1899. Charter issued this day to André Perrier, Paul Mounier, Mme. Silet, C. Faure, Pierre Mounier, E. Brunet, André Perrier (fils), J. Julio, M. Belle, H. Francou, Mlle. Deliard, Mme. Poirier, Mlle. Poirier, B. Dussert, G. Durand, A. Arnaud, Mme. Arnaud, and Mlle. Taure, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society at Grenoble, France, to be known as the Grenoble Branch.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary*.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to May 20th: T. Jackson (monthly), 3s.; Miss Caroline Cust, 10s.; Pax, 15s.; Mrs. Robinson, 15s.; C. Harvey, 10s.; A. J. V. R., £10; Miss

Bowring (monthly), £1; The Hon. Mrs. Fox Powys, £2 10s.; Miss E. Fowler, 5s.; Lady Butt, £2; Miss Isabel Bruce, £5; Mrs. Kilburn, 5s.; A. F., 10s.; E. E., 10s. 6d.; Mrs. Jeffcock, 15s.; Captain and Mrs. Lauder, £5; A Friend, £2 5s.; Anon., 5s.; Mrs. Wallis, £1 1s.; R. C. Minton, 5s.; J. C. Scoble, 5s.; Mrs. MacCarthy, £1 5s.; Miss Minet, £1 17s.; Miss Webster, 5s.; Mrs. Bond, 15s.; Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, 2s.; Mrs. Beatty, 5s. Total: £38 18s. 6d.

### The Section Library.

Notice is hereby given that for the future on Sundays the Library will not be open for the use of members until 3.30 p.m.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
General Secretary.

The following books have been added to the Library: *De Meesters als Feiten en Idealen*, Annie Besant, Dutch trs. Johan van Manen, Amsterdam, 1899; *Karma*, Annie Besant, Dutch trs. J. van Manen, Amsterdam, 1899; *Theosofie en Okkultisme*, G. R. S. Mead, Dutch trs. J. van Manen, Amsterdam; *Out of the Depths*, Poems, W. Dutton Burrard, London, 1892; *Human Immortality*, William James, Westminster, 1898; *Euthanasia*, *Drey Gespräche über Das Leben nach dem Tode*, C. M. Wieland, Vienna, 1812; *Indische Märchen*, Friedrich v. der Leyen, Halle; *A Treatise on Self-Knowledge*, John Mason, A.M., London, 1810; *Die Seherin von Prevorst*, Justinus Kerner, Leipzig. A. J. WILLSON, Librarian.

### The Theosophical Lending Library.

The following books have been added to the Library: *Invisible Helpers*, C. W. Leadbeater; *Animal Intelligence*, Vols. II. and III., G. J. Romanes; *History of Dogma*, Vol. VI., A. Harnack.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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.

### Lotus Circle.

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

C. W. LEADBEATER.

### Mrs. Besant's Lectures.

Mrs. Besant will deliver two series of lectures respectively in the Small Queen's Hall and in the

French Saloon, St. James's Restaurant, on Sundays and Fridays as mentioned below; the subjects are "The Ascent of Man" (Small Queen's Hall), and "The Iliad of India—*The Mahābhārata* (French Saloon). The first course began on Sunday, May 28th.

The following are the complete lists of subjects:

"The Ascent of Man":—

May 28th. I. *The Man*.—His parentage—His nature—His evolution—His relation to the world outside him.

June 4th. II. *The Man's Instruments*.—The matter of which they are composed—Its Evolution—The apparatus for action, feeling and thought.

June 11th. III. *The Savage*.—*The Sub-moral State*—Consciousness and self-consciousness—The awakening of self-consciousness—The Oversoul and the soul—The necessity for experience—The effects of experience—The Teachers and the Law—The slave.

June 18th. IV. *The Combatant*.—*The Moral State*—The struggle of the selves against the Self—Conscience—The necessity for combat—The growth of intelligence—The self-assertion of the individual.

June 25th. V. *The Combatant*.—*The Moral State* (continued)—The clash of warring individualities—The transference of struggle from the physical to the mental—The wider selfishness—The growth of conscience—Altruism.

July 2nd. VI. *The Christ*.—*The Super-moral State*—The recognition of the Self—The unity of the Self—The Law of Life—The results of the evolution.

Doors open at 6.30, to commence at 7 p.m. Admission free. Seats 6d. and 1s. Reserved and numbered, 2s. Course tickets 10s. and 5s.

"The Iliad of India":—

June 2nd. *Introductory*.—The nature of the book—Its main divisions—Its framework and episodes—Its leading characters—Underlying Ideas: the "supernatural"; the moral law as affecting nations; men as agents of the law; the relative nature of morality; curses—The youth and marriage of the heroes.

June 9th. *In Towns and Forests*.—The three assemblies: the palace, the sacrifice, the dice-match—Controversy between Yudhishthira and his wife—Hindu ideals of life: The Brāhmaṇa taught by the fowler.

June 16th. *Lessons in Exile*.—The Hindu ideal of marriage—Nala and Damayantī—Rāma and Sītā—Sātyavan and Sāvitrī.

June 23rd. *Action and Inaction*. The year in disguise—The efforts to make peace—The outbreak of war—The *Bhagavad Gītā*—The essence of its teaching—Hindu ideals of duty: fighting for one's king, reverence for hostile elders and teachers, readiness to die, unimportance of death.

June 30th. *Society and the Individual*. Bhishma's Fall—Hindu Ideals: Kinship; Caste; General Duties; Parents; Gratitude; Emancipation; Renunciation; Hospitality.

July 7th. *Philosophy for the Masses*.—Hindu philosophical ideas: The One Existence: The Evolution of Worlds; The Soul; Content; Desire and Sorrow; Reincarnation; Karma—The end of the story.

Doors open at 4.45, to begin at 5 p.m. Single seats, 2s. Course tickets, 10s.

The whole profits of these lectures, "The Iliad of India," will go to the Hindu College, Benares.

### Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on alternate Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: June 11th, *The Advances of Science*, F. J. Hooper; June 25th, *The Evolution of the Idea of God*, T. H. Duffell.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings at the Commercial Hotel, Westgate, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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, on one Tuesday in each month, 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 Thursday in each month, and by appointment.

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

HANOVER LODGE. Meetings at the "Zukunft," Herschelstrasse, 29, on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: June 4th, *Reincarnation*; June 11th, *A Modern Mystic*, C. Corbett; June 18th, *Some Teachings of Giordano Bruno*, W. H. Thomas; June 25th, *Ruts, their Use and Abuse*, W. Bell. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 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 by arrangement. For information apply to H. E. Nichol, 56, Albany Street, Hull.

LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE. Meetings held on Mondays, at 8 p.m., at 36, Hawthorne Mount, Chapel Allerton. Enquiries may be addressed to

W. H. Bean, 9, Winstanley Terrace, Headingley, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Pomona" Vegetarian Restaurant, Kurprinzstrasse, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m.

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

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Meetings at the Battersea Free Library, Lavender Hill, every Sunday, at 7.30 p.m. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: June 1st, *The Ladder of Life*, A. H. Ward; June 8th, *Tehuti, the Master of Wisdom*, G. R. S. Mead; June 15th, *The Search for the Soul*, Miss Arundale; June 22nd, *The Pendulum*, M. U. Moore; June 29th, *Occult Astronomy*, A. P. Sinnett.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: June 5th, *Some Common Phenomena of Spiritualism*, A. M. Glass; June 19th, *The Records of Mystic Societies*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Students' class on alternate Thursdays for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Meetings on Sundays, at 11 a.m.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m.: June 12th, *Karma*, Alan Leo; June 26th, *Peeps Across the Threshold*, R. King.

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

LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.15 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.: June 2nd, *Some Notes on the Life of Pythagoras*, Miss Pope; June 9th, *A Philosopher and Mystic of the Eleventh Century*, Hon. Otway Cuffe; June 16th, *Illusion and Reality*, Miss Ward; June 23rd, *Uses of Discrimination*, A. H. 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 CENTRE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m. On alternate Thursdays, study of *The Devachanic Plane*.

MUNICH CENTRE. Meetings at 5, Lerchenfeld Strasse, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 10, Upper King Street, every Monday evening, at 8 p.m.

PARIS. Meetings at 21, rue Tronchet (office

of *La Revue Théosophique Française*), on the first Sunday in each month, at 3 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., at 58, rue de Verneuil. Lectures on the second and fourth Wednesdays in each month.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "Oddfellows' Hall," Morley 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.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meeting at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

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### The Countess Wachtmeister.

Countess Wachtmeister left Nice on April 13th, and went to Toulon, where she spent a few days, holding meetings, which were well attended, and receiving enquirers at her hotel. After Toulon she visited Marseilles, giving a lecture in French, which was attentively listened to by a crowded audience. The Countess followed this by holding meetings and replying to many enquirers.

The next city visited was Grenoble, where she again lectured in a hall that was crowded with an appreciative audience, and also daily received many persons, whose questions she most kindly answered. Here a Branch was formed. The members of the new Branch are evidently in earnest.

From Grenoble Countess Wachtmeister proceeded to Lyons, where she worked with her accustomed energy, holding well-attended conversazioni twice a day, besides receiving in the mornings enquirers at her hotel. Here also a Branch has been formed which will doubtless develop in the future.

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### Blavatsky Lodge.

The usual Thursday evening lectures have taken place during the past month, and the speakers have been Mr. Mead on two occasions, Mrs. Hooper, Mr. Leadbeater, and on May 11th, Miss Pope, who gave a most interesting lecture on the "Riddle of Pythagoras."

But the most important, as also the most widely interesting, event of the month has been the meeting which was held on White Lotus Day, May 8th. On that evening many members of the Lodge, as well as of other London Lodges, gathered to do honour once more to the memory of H. P. Blavatsky. There was a far larger number than there has been on any previous occasion, and the flowers, which completely hid the platform, were, if possible, more beautiful than ever before.

The Lodge also had the great pleasure and privilege of listening again to its President, who

had but just returned from India, and who, after the usual readings from *The Light of Asia* and *The Song Celestial*, addressed the members.

Mrs. Besant spoke very strongly of the necessity for the study and intellectual understanding of H. P. B.'s writings, and of the profound gratitude which every member of the Society owes to her; and she laid much stress upon the magnitude of her sacrifice and suffering for the sake of the cause to which her life was wholly given. These things will only begin to be faintly realised by us when, long, long hence, we shall perhaps be walking more steadfastly in the path which she hewed out at so great cost.

To follow that path, even falteringly, is the only tribute to her life and work which it is of any worth to pay; to follow it unwaveringly were indeed to make her feel these had not been in vain.

S. M. S.

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### Rome Branch.

White Lotus Day was observed with much enthusiasm by the Rome Branch, and a large quantity of lovely white roses, arum lilies and other flowers, were brought by the members and grouped round the portrait of Madame Blavatsky. The meeting in the evening of May 8th was crowded, and passages were read by the President, Signor Aureli, from the Countess Wachtmeister's *Reminiscences of H. P. B.*, and from *The Voice of the Silence*, by Signor Decio Calvari.

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### CORRESPONDENCE.

I write with reference to Mr. T. B. Chatworthy's assertion in the February issue of THE VĀHAN that "the statement is absolutely without foundation in fact," regarding a quotation from *The Secret Doctrine* to the effect that there is a seedless apple tree in Virginia, basing this assertion on the opinion of a fruit auctioneer who is pretty well acquainted with Virginia. Now Virginia is a vast territory, and it is safe to say that there are thousands of orchards in that State whose apples have never seen a market. The writer is also familiar with Virginia, but he would not venture to deny the statement referred to even if his familiarity were more complete, especially in view of the seedless orange—that is not only seedless, but contains in its matrix another small orange, which in turn, in some instances, contains in its matrix still another orange, making three in one—seedless grapes, seedless bananas and other fruit, and the large families of organised animal life, as the polyps, that propagate by fissure or separation of one part of the mass from the other. See VĀHAN, Question CCCCLXVI., and reply in the number above noted.

A. J. CORY.

Washington, D.C.



## ENQUIRER.

## QUESTION DII.

(Continued.)

W. T. E.—*If oriental nations are spiritually so far in advance of the western nations, why is it necessary for strenuous efforts to be made in India by the most advanced European workers; ought there not rather to be an overflowing of spiritual fulness in Eastern missionary enterprise directed to European countries?*

A. A. W.—In this question there are several big assumptions of which the querist is probably unconscious. First, and biggest, that “missionary enterprise” is wanted *anywhere*. Until something over two thousand years ago the evolution of the world went on very well without it; and to this day the large majority of mankind, including those who have best retained the tradition of the Wisdom, have no such conception in their minds at all. As far as I know the very first appearance of anything like this was when Gautama Buddha sent out his disciples to preach the Law. I say, “appearance”; for it is an appearance only. The Law was emphatically not a new *religion*, but a re-statement—a “revival”—of the spiritual truths which underlie all religions, and which the votaries of all religions might receive and gain good from; such a revival, in short, as those who stand behind the Theosophical Society are attempting at the present time. Missionary enterprise—the feeling summed up, for example, in the sermon in Mrs. Steel’s *On the Face of the Waters* (to take the first book which comes to hand), which says: “I conceive it is ever the hope and aim of a true Christian that his Lord should make him the happy instrument of rescuing his neighbour from eternal damnation”—is emphatically the precise and entire contradiction of the Wisdom; it has been, and still is, the cause of nearly all the mischief which has gone on in the world since Christianity invented it (for that, at least, the Jew is not responsible). It was copied and (if that be possible) improved on by Mohammed; and if anyone will take the trouble to reckon up how little misery and bloodshed every conceivable wickedness has brought about in the world compared with that which has followed Christian and Moslem “missionary enterprise,” I think he will be somewhat astonished.

Mrs. Steel’s book, from which I was just quoting, is an illustration of how this very thing was the indirect cause of the Indian Mutiny; and nearly every war which has taken place in the East since has been thus provoked. And upon the victors the result has been nothing but evil. What does the “cant” so universally ascribed to the English-speaking races mean but that whilst not one in a hundred now believes that missionaries can or do save the heathen from “damnation,” all join in the contributing and fighting, pocket the

compensations and annex the provinces just as if they were so many Moslem warriors fighting for the Faith? No; with no less earnestness than Talleyrand, I repeat: “Above all things, gentlemen, no (missionary) zeal!”

But even if we limit ourselves to the right and justifiable missionary ardour of the Buddhist disciples of the Master, the point is not cleared up. From whom does W. T. E. get the crude statement that “oriental nations are spiritually far in advance of the western nations”? I speak with the fear of our Hindoo friends before my eyes—but I don’t think any of them has ever said so. That the physical, mental and spiritual organisation of the Hindoo, unspoilt by beef and brandy-pâni, is a far finer one for spiritual purposes than most of us Westerners possess “goes without saying.” That, in spite of this, the spiritual life has for the most part died out under the edge of the Moslem sword and the brutal materialism of the English Rāj is equally unquestioned, as far as I know. Hence, in England, Mrs. Besant lays special stress on the refining of the instrument; the minute care of food and drink, the ceaseless watchfulness over thoughts and desires, which must go to raise us Europeans up to the level where the Soul can feel and act through the renewed brain and bodily senses. But in India her message is quite otherwise. There she joins herself with those (alas, too few) whose souls have kept the true spiritual life, to rebuke, to warn, to encourage those who are letting their hereditary gifts go to waste, and worse, out of pure discouragement and sloth. Just now circumstances are such that encouragement is more effectually given by such as Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Besant, of the ruling white race; the task is to make the multitudes once more believe in themselves, their powers, their religion, and their future. When this is done (and we have faith that it will be done) the renewed India will, then, be indeed far in advance of the western nations, unless we have honestly and faithfully worked upwards on our path in the meantime; and if we have failed, doubtless “eastern missionary enterprise” will not be wanting.

Lastly—did W. T. E.’s nurse ever teach him the three excuses as to the borrowed pitcher? First, “’twas broke when I had it.” Second, “’twas whole when I returned it.” Third, “I never had it at all!” Surely he is not ignorant of the many and most estimable men who have already come over to England and America, and with very good result too, to help us with the overflowing of their spiritual fulness, in return for what we have done for them. There are, as I have suggested, good reasons why this should not be expected, but it has come to pass: and everyone must, I think, join with the querist in anticipating great advantage from the intermingling of eastern and western workers in both worlds—for us, the breaking down of our self-conceit; for the East the staying of their fall down to our level, and the making of India once more the Land of the Gods.

## QUESTION DIX.

(Continued.)

*E. M. W.—Is karma transferable from one person to another? Is not the transferability of karma the esoteric truth underlying the Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement?*

A. A. W.—In reading the answers given by O. C. and S. M. S. to this question in the last number of THE VĀHAN it strikes me that it would be useful to add a few words to mine. It is beyond all question that, in the sense in which I was using the words, no one *can* bear another's burden. Our friend, O. C., is thinking of the old saying of the "few strong hands which hold back the burden of the world's karma"—quite another matter from the individual karma to which the question refers. What we *can* do for another is to help *him* to bear it—a much better service than would be the taking from him of the appointed means for his advance. Such is our weakness that time after time the burden laid upon us seems greater than we can bear. I well remember once quoting to an intimate friend the grim old legal directions for pressing a refractory prisoner to death, "that there shall be laid upon him as great a weight of iron as he can bear, *and more*," as an exact description of my feelings at the time. I did not in so many words ask for help, but I spoke to one who could give it, and the help came not as removal of the burden, but as new life infused into the fainting soul to endure. I was able to stand up as a man instead of being crushed under it as the hapless and helpless prisoner of whom I spoke. There is *no* other kind of help that a self-respecting soul can receive without humiliation and shame.

Our friends seem to think of suffering as the one thing to be dreaded—the horror to be escaped at all hazards—that the one service a friend, a God, can render them is to save them pain. Not so; the "saviours of the race" of whom O. C. speaks, have no more in common with the popular Christian "Saviour" who "saves" his followers from the fire than they have with the Christian "God" who desires to cast them into it. *Both* are matters of this world of illusion, and of this world only; the true Saviours see with other eyes, live in higher worlds, and think quite other thoughts of the souls whose life they watch.

Our business in the world, our one means of growing beyond the world, is steadfast, manly endurance; our path is, and must be, a "path of woe" as completely as it is, if rightly borne, also a path of true and perfect peace. He would be no benefactor, but an enemy, who would deprive us of a single one of the sorrows which are to form our future bliss; and, if we understood our own interests, we should regard a suggestion that a friend should "bear our burden" as an insult—an insinuation that we were too soft, too childish, too cowardly to fight in the ranks with our brothers—not fit to be trusted with a sword. But every kind word and encouragement, every thought of help for those we see in trouble around us, is, in truth, something far better than making

"vicarious atonement" for them; it is real help and strength for them; and, many lives hence, we may meet with those (perchance then far beyond ourselves) who still remember with gratitude that, when their strength was exhausted and courage failing them, a cheering look or word of ours refreshed their fainting spirits to continue the fight to victory. In the Egyptian desert Christians knew this well, though it is now nearly forgotten. An old man's novice was long troubled with temptation, and his master said to him, "Shall I pray God to take away this temptation from thee?" and he answered, "No, Father; it is a hard struggle, but I see that I gain by it—only pray that I may have strength to endure." And the old man said solemnly, "Now know I that thou hast made much progress, and art far beyond me."

## QUESTION DXII.

*M. J.—Since the quickening of karma in the life of a disciple cannot but affect near relatives, how can it be right to call down suffering upon one's self which may cause suffering to others?*

C. W. L.—It might perhaps be suggested to the questioner that the aspirant does *not* "call down suffering upon himself." All that he does is to take his own evolution earnestly in hand, and to endeavour as rapidly as may be to eradicate the evil and develop the good within himself in order that he may become ever a more and more perfect living channel of the divine Love. True, such action will assuredly attract the attention of the great Lords of Karma, and while their response will be to give him greater opportunity, it may (and often does) also involve a considerable increase of suffering in various ways.

But if we think carefully we shall see that this is exactly what might be expected. All of us have more or less of evil karma behind us, and until that is disposed of it will be a perpetual hindrance to us in our higher work. One of the earliest steps in the direction of serious progress is therefore the working out of whatever of this evil still remains to us, and so the first response of the Great Ones to our upward striving is frequently to give us the opportunity of paying off a little more of this debt (since we have now made ourselves strong enough to do so) in order that it may be cleared out of the way of our future work.

The manner in which this debt shall be paid is a matter which is entirely in their hands, and not in ours; surely we can trust them to manage it without inflicting additional suffering upon others—unless of course those others have also some outstanding kârmic debt which can be discharged in this way. In any case the great Kârmic Deities cannot act otherwise than with absolute justice to every person concerned, whether directly or remotely; and all such questions as imply a doubt of that fundamental fact show a strange lack of comprehension of their nature and their powers.

## QUESTION DXIII.

R. B.—Mrs. Besant says in her lecture, *Emotion, Intellect and Spirituality*, p. 8: “None of the combats that take place on the physical or the astral planes are to be compared in their intensity, in their importance, in their subtlety, with the combats that are waged on the mental plane. . . . It is there that the ‘I’ develops, the root and the centre of individuality; hence it is that on this plane all the most terrible combats are waged.” How is this to be made consistent with the statements as to devachanic bliss, the mental and devachanic plane being the same?

A. B.—If R. B. will refer to *Ancient Wisdom*, p. 179 (chap. v.), he will see that devachan is described as “a specially guarded part of the mental plane, whence all sorrow and all evil are excluded.” Hence no combats take place there. But if R. B. will study his own mind, he will find that painful combats do take place therein, and that mental is far keener than physical suffering.

## QUESTION DXIV.

E. J. C.—Regarding the Essenes:

(a) What book could one read in order to obtain authentic information concerning them?

(b) Were they indebted for the general trend of their traditions to the Neo-Pythagorean School of the Greeks, or to the Parsees, or to some more remote source?

(c) Lightfoot, in the dissertation at the end of his *Colossians*, takes great pains to explain how improbable it is that Jesus was ever a member of the community. Along what line can his arguments best be met?

G. R. S. M.—(a) The best article on the subject is by F. C. Conybeare in the new *Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by Hastings, and published by T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh. The first volume (A—F) was published in 1898, and the second (F—K) is just out. The price is 28s. per volume. Conybeare’s article is absolutely impartial and gives all sources and some useful references to the general literature.

A full record of the literature will be found in Schürer’s *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh; 1897, trs. from the German).

Conybeare does not discuss opinions, he simply gives a translation of all the sources. The opening and concluding paragraphs of his eight column closely printed article run as follows:

“In regard to the origin and nature of this sect very various views have been held. It is therefore best to confine oneself to stating succinctly what is known about them from ancient authors. . . .

“The literature relating to the Essenes is so vast as to defy detailed reference. The student may be advised to study for himself the very limited documentary sources relating to them and then to draw his own conclusions.”

(b) This question requires a very lengthy answer, in fact a monograph on the subject, and the writer hopes in a couple of years or so to attempt such a work. A bald statement of conclusions without the full evidence—of not only the documents relating directly to Essenism but also of the subsidiary, though all important, environment and setting of the picture of this famous community, that is to say of cognate and contemporaneous organisations—before us, would be a purely dogmatic statement, and this at present would be premature.

(c) Lightfoot, though an excellent scholar, was an apologist, in fact he was the founder of the school of orthodox and apologetic criticism in England to oppose the German purely scientific school. Before his time there was nothing in this country that could be called criticism. Every one of the arguments in his interesting Commentary on *Colossians* has been met, and views equally strong but absolutely contradictory have been marshalled against him with equal if not greater acumen and learning. (See Ginsberg’s article “Essenes” in Smith and Wace’s *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, which is more easily accessible than most of the literature).

Occult tradition asserts that Jesus was a member of the Essene community.

## QUESTION DXV.

E. N.—I am very anxious to help a friend who is making a collection of true ghost stories; can you advise me as to where such can be found—whether in Theosophical books or elsewhere?

C. W. L.—Theosophical books no doubt contain a few of such stories, but they are usually introduced only as illustrations of some point which happens to be under discussion. Some very good ones may be found by searching the volumes of *Lucifer* and *The Theosophist*, and I have quoted several in my recent book on *Clairvoyance*.

But there is a large literature of the subject, and if our questioner wishes to take up the matter seriously and collect good and well-authenticated stories for translation into a foreign language, she will do well to read through the principal extant collections of such tales, and select a few typical narratives which bring out the especial points she wishes to emphasize. She might begin with the following:

*Real Ghost Stories*, by W. T. Stead.

*Dreams and Ghosts*, by Andrew Lang.

*The Other World*

*More Glimpses of the World Unseen* } by Dr. F. G. Lee.

*Glimpses in the Twilight*

*Sights and Shadows*

*The Night Side of Nature*, by Mrs. Catherine Crowe.

*Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World* } by Robert Dale Owen,

*The Debatable Land*

all of which can be obtained from the Theo-

sophical Publishing Society, 26, Charing Cross, London.

Many interesting stories may also be extracted from the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, while isolated instances are constantly making their appearance in current literature. It is probable, however, that the questioner will find in the books above-mentioned a sufficient number of well-authenticated examples of almost any known variety of manifestation to suit her present purpose.

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#### QUESTION DXVI.

*A. S.—If a number of ultimate physical atoms are dissolved into astral matter, will all these physical atoms yield identical combinations of astral matter, or will some differ from each other as regards their composition of astral matter; further, what renders these, possibly varying, heterogeneous aggregations of astral matter homogeneous and interchangeable physical atoms? Is it the uniform spiral arrangement or vortex, along which they are made to rotate?*

C. W. L.—This question was practically answered in the correspondence on atomic sub-planes which appeared in *The Theosophical Review* for February last, to which the querent may be referred. He should, however, remember that while physical atoms are absolutely alike in structure (with the exception perhaps of a difference in the direction of the spirals) there is yet variation possible as to the extent of their development. In some the inner spirillæ have already been aroused into action, and they are consequently capable of responding to certain finer vibrations which would leave the less evolved atom unaffected.

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#### QUESTION DXVII.

*E. J. G.—How is it an infant or a very young child is so deficient in an elementary knowledge of such matters as fire, water, space? One would think if the ego or consciousness had been in existence during a long series of lives, that the child would display more knowledge relative to these matters, and if the ego does not carry over those elementary lessons, how can one expect it to guide one morally?*

B. K.—The answer is a short one, though it embodies a basic principle which runs through a very considerable portion of our teaching. This principle in its abstract and general form may be (though of course very imperfectly) stated as follows: In order that consciousness may function upon any given plane, it must possess an adequate vehicle composed of the matter of that plane.

And further: The range and responsive power as well as the extent to which consciousness can express itself on any plane varies as the degree of development of the vehicle upon that plane and of the matter itself composing that vehicle.

Applying these abstract propositions to the case in point—the functioning of consciousness in a child's body, we see: (a) The special vehicle of mind on this plane, *i.e.*, the brain and nervous system, are most imperfectly developed and almost wholly uncoordinated at birth; (b) the control of the nervous system over the muscles is still quite undeveloped and uncoordinated. Hence with a vehicle so imperfect it is obvious that the functioning of consciousness through it must be of the barest and most rudimentary type.

Moreover, a still further obstacle exists to its manifestation on this plane in the fact that the astral body, which links the mind to the brain, is itself at birth in almost, if not quite, as imperfect a condition as the physical brain and nervous system.

Again, to look at the question from another point of view, it must be remembered that the special characteristics of three-dimensional space, of fire, of gravity, and so on, all belong exclusively to this physical world of ours; and hence they only exist for a consciousness which is identified with those special limitations which constitute the physical plane. Hence the ego on its own plane, even when fully self-conscious, knows nothing of these things, except (possibly) in those very exceptional cases where the whole consciousness on the physical, astral and mental planes has been completely unified, and so a "reflection from below," as it were, of the limitations belonging to the physical plane may have been impressed upon the ego. In ordinary cases the ego would, I think, know nothing whatever of space, time, gravity, fire, etc., as we know them down here, and though through the experience of ages the ego has more and more acquired the power of rapid adaptation to these limitations, it nevertheless requires an adequate vehicle and a certain amount of fresh stimulation and calling forth of this accumulated capacity from the latency into which it passes, when life is withdrawn from this plane into the ego after death.

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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.

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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

## 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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LONDON, JULY 1, 1899.

NO. 12.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

good as to forward their contributions to me I will undertake that they reach Colonel Olcott.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary*.

### THE CONVENTION.

With this number of THE VĀHAN a programme of the Convention goes to each member.

It is hoped that as many members as possible will attend the reception on Friday, July 7th, and they are reminded that they are at liberty to invite friends. Cards of invitation can be obtained from the General Secretary's office, but are not necessary for admission.

The meetings on Saturday and Sunday evenings, July 8th and 9th, are free to the public. Cards notifying these meetings are printed and can be obtained by members for distribution by applying to the General Secretary. If members will kindly do what they can to fill the hall, the success of the meetings will be increased.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary*.

### THE PRESIDENT-FOUNDER'S AFRICAN TOUR.

The President of the Society is arranging to make a tour in South Africa, with a view to bringing the teachings of Theosophy before the public in that region, and with the hope of establishing centres qualified to carry on the work for which he proposes to sow the seed.

This will be the first organised attempt to reach the South African public.

The members of the Society in South Africa are few in numbers, and are alone unable to bear the whole expense of the President-Founder's visit.

If, therefore, those who are willing to subscribe to help their fellow members in South Africa and who wish to see this work taken in hand, will be so

### LETTER FROM THE AMERICAN SECTION.

THE HON. OTWAY CUFFE:

*General Secretary of the European Section.*

MY DEAR SIR,

The Thirteenth Annual Convention of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, assembled in Chicago on May 21st, have directed me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of May 8th, and also the cablegram of May 21st, from the European Section.

Your letter of fraternal greeting and sympathetic wishes were received with hearty appreciation and ordered to be spread upon the minutes of the Convention. The same action was taken with regard to the greetings from the European Section.

Messages of love and fellowship from other lands bring us at such special times into a fuller sense of the unity of purpose for which we strive and the indivisibility of one real brotherhood.

Thanking you on behalf of the Convention,

I am, sincerely and fraternally yours,

PAULINE G. KELLY,  
*Secretary to the Convention.*

### ACTIVITIES.

#### New Branches.

May 23rd, 1899. Charter issued this day to Mme. Charousset, Mme. Sevez, Mme. Nublott, Mme. Bouttier, Mlle. C. Perrin, Mme. Gandy and Mme. Millet, to form a Branch of the Theo-

sophical Society at Lyons, to be known as the Lyons Branch.

May 31st, 1899. Charter issued this day to Mme. Aglaé Fabre, Mme. Reine Houetz Aze, Charles Lasne, Mlle. Claire Lasne, Jules Dianoux, Auguste Cahier and Mlle. Julie Amy, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society at Marseilles, to be known as the Marseilles Branch.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
General Secretary.

### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to June 20th: T. Jackson (monthly), 3s.; H. W., £1 1s.; Paul Gillard, 16s.; Mrs. Scott (Denver), £1; Miss B. M. Young, 5s.; Mrs. Tweedie, £2; Mrs. Hogg, £1; Miss M. Smith, £5; Mrs. Greene, 15s.; Anon., £1; A. Weekes, £2; Miss Tisdale, £1; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; Mrs. Kennedy, £10; American Section, £10 2s.; Anon., £2 5s.; Mrs. Despard, £1; Mrs. Dean, 3s.; Miss Kirkman, 10s.; P. Tovey, 10s.; Mrs. Gibson, 2s.; Miss Stephenson, 10s.; Mrs. Wilkinson, £3. Total: £45 2s.

### Section Reference Library.

*This Library will be closed during the month of August.*

The following books have been received during the month and are now acknowledged with thanks: *Viatorium, hoc est de Montibus Planetarum septem seu Metallorum*, Michaelis Maieri, Rothomagi, Sumpt. Ioannis Berthelin, 1651; *The Fame and Confession of the Fraternity of R. C., commonly of the Rosie Cross*, Eugenius Philalethes, London, 1652; *Themis Aurea. The Laws of the Fraternity of the Rosie Crosse*, Michael Maierus, London, 1656; *Arcana Arcanissima hoc est Hieroglyphica, Aegyptio-Græca*, Michael Maiero Comite; *Traitez concernant l'Histoire de France: Sçavoir la Condamnation des Templiers, avec quelques Actes: L'Histoire du Schisme, les Papes tenans le siege en Avignon: et quelques procez Criminels. Composez par Monsieur Dupuy. Conseiller du Roy en ses Conseils, Garde de sa Bibliotheque*, Paris, 1654.

The above valuable books have been presented by the kindness of A. V. H., Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Heymanson, Messrs. Bradley and MacIntyre, and an American friend per J. C. Chatterji.

*The Polychrome Bible*, Joshua, the Rev. W. H. Bennett, M.A., London, New York and Stuttgart, 1899; *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, C. H. Toy, LL.D., 1899; *The Psychology of Reasoning*, Alfred Binet, Chicago, 1899; *Clairvoyance*, C. W. Leadbeater, London, 1899; *Karma*, Annie Besant, Leipzig, 1899; *La Force Courbe Cosmique*, Dr. H. Baraduc, Paris, 1897; *Die Seherin von Prevorst*, Justinus Kerner, Leipzig; *Indische Märchen*, Friedrich v. der Leyen, Halle; *Euthanasia. Drey Gespräche über Das Leben nach dem Tode*, C. M. Wieland, Vienna, 1812; *A*

*Treatise on Self-Knowledge*, John Mason, A.M., London, 1810.

A. J. WILLSON, Librarian.

### Theosophical Lending Library.

The following books have been added to the Library:

*L'Âme Humaine and La Force Vitale*, Dr. H. Baraduc; *Clairvoyance*, C. W. Leadbeater; *Evolution of Life and Form*, Annie Besant.

This library is open to all, whether members of the Theosophical Society or not.

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.

### Lotus Circle.

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

C. W. LEADBEATER.

### Lecture List.

**BIRMINGHAM LODGE.** Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on alternate Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: July 9th, *The Law of Sacrifice*, Miss Hustler; July 23rd, Report of Delegate to the Convention.

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

**BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE.** Meetings at the Commercial Hotel, Westgate, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 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. 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, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

**EXETER CENTRE.** Meetings suspended till further notice.

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

**HANOVER LODGE.** Meetings at the "Zukunft," Herschelstrasse, 29, on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m.

**HARROGATE LODGE.** Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: July 2nd, *Brotherhood*, A. R. Orage; July 9th, *Flocks and Shepherds*, Baker Hudson; July 16th, *Who is the Master?* Mrs. Bell; July 23rd, *The*

*Study of Human Nature*, E. J. Dunn; July 30th, Mrs. Besant. 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 by arrangement. For information apply to H. E. Nichol, 56, Albany Street, Hull.

LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE. Meetings held on Mondays, at 8 p.m., at 36, Hawthorne Mount, Chapel Allerton. Enquiries may be addressed to W. H. Bean, 9, Winstanley Terrace, Headingley, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Pomona" Vegetarian Restaurant, Kurprinzstrasse, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m.

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

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Meetings suspended for the summer. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Road, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: July 6th, 13th and 20th, *The Place of the Emotions in Human Evolution*, Mrs. Besant; July 27th, *The Mystic Quest*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Students' class on alternate Thursdays for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Meetings on Sundays, at 11 a.m.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m.: July 10th, *Marcus Aurelius*, P. Tovey; July 24th, *Conversazione*.

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

LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings discontinued during July.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W., on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m. Meetings suspended during July.

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 CENTRE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 7, Ryedale Terrace, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m. On alternate Thursdays, study of *The Devachanic Plane*.

MUNICH CENTRE. Meetings at 5, Lerchenfeld Strasse, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 10, Upper King Street, every Monday evening, at 8 p.m.

PARIS. Meetings at 21, rue Tronchet (office of *La Revue Théosophique Française*), on the first Sunday in each month, at 3 p.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "Oddfellows' Hall," Morley Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

ROME LODGE. Meetings are discontinued till further notice.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings are discontinued during July and August.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meeting at the Vegetarisches Speisehaus, 27, Sihlstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

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### Paris.

The Theosophical movement in Paris has increased in activity in a remarkable manner within the past few months. Mrs. Besant spent a few days there in May, and the Countess Wachtmeister stayed for about six weeks. During the whole of her visit the Countess worked with great energy, assisting at the formation of a new Branch, and presiding at the meetings of both the Paris Branches. She also gave two public lectures, and held reunions twice a week, besides receiving numerous enquirers.

Mrs. Besant visited Paris from May 22nd to 27th, which time was occupied by the reception of enquirers and members who came to discuss Theosophical matters and to receive assistance in their study. She delivered three lectures, one of which was public and attracted a very large audience, who showed the greatest possible appreciation of the lecture. The visit was in all respects a remarkable success and gave every reason to hope for the future of the movement in France.

Dr. Pascal is now in Paris and expects to reside there in the future, devoting his time to Theosophical work. It is the intention of the French Branches shortly to form a French Section.

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### North of England Federation.

A most successful meeting of the federated Branches in the North of England was held at Harrogate on May 27th, under the presidency of Mr. C. W. Leadbeater. Delegates and members were present from Harrogate, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, York, Sheffield, Hull, Middlesbrough and Baildon. The reports by the delegates of the work done during the past three months were of an encouraging nature, and showed that steady progress was being made. The subjects chosen for discussion were "Asceticism," introduced by Mr. C. Corbett, and "Individual and Corporate Theosophic Life," introduced by Mr. Hodgson Smith. After both subjects had been debated, the members adjourned to tea in the Winter Gardens, at the invitation of the Harrogate Lodge. On the re-assembling of the Federation, Mr. Leadbeater delivered an address on "The Purpose of the Theosophical Movement," in which he tried to impress on the members the great importance of the work in which they were engaged. Shortly afterwards the Federation adjourned.

The next meeting of the Federation will be

held at Harrogate on Saturday, July 29th, when Mrs. Besant will preside. Mrs. Besant will also deliver two public lectures in Harrogate the next day (Sunday). All members of the Society are invited to the meetings.

W. H. THOMAS,  
Hon. Sec.

#### Middlesbrough Branch.

The annual meeting of the members of the Branch was held in May as usual, when the secretary reported that the membership remained the same as during the previous year—one member had resigned and one new member had filled the vacant place. A series of public meetings held during the winter quarter of 1898 had, it was hoped, aroused some interest in the work although it had not increased the Branch membership. The weekly meetings had been fairly attended, and the various subjects of study received a good share of the attention of members. It has been decided to vacate the present home of the Branch in Albert Road, and meetings will in future be held at 7, Ryedale Terrace.

The subjects upon which the members are at present engaged in study are "The Evolution of Man," and *Four Great Religions*.

BAKER HUDSON, Hon. Sec.

#### ENQUIRER.

##### QUESTION DXVIII.

*W. B.—With regard to the broad laws governing reincarnation, how is it that when one meets an Indian ascetic, and finds that all his teachings fall into line with the purest Theosophy, and that his life is in the best sense holy, yet in this one question he is unhesitatingly at variance with our theosophical concepts? For he states positively that reincarnation is practically immediate, or within a few hours, and that the problematic 1,800 years spoken of is only a human method of calculation, nine hundred yogin breaths being equal to one hour.*

*C. W. L.—Immediate reincarnation is certainly not the teaching of the holy men of India as a whole. The questioner is evidently speaking from personal experience as to the opinion of some individual ascetic, but further inquiry will probably satisfy him that his friend stands alone in this opinion, or at any rate that it is not shared by the real philosophers and teachers of the East. It is quite true that many people in India would assign a much lower average to the devachanic period than is given to it in Theosophical literature, but I have never heard it put at much less than a century except among the Burmese. I think many Indian teachers would give it as their belief that while the life in the heaven-world ought to be not only as long as we suppose but even much longer, yet in the present material age it is a good deal shorter, because men now are so entirely ensnared by the affairs of this world that they no longer fix their thoughts and hopes upon the higher life as they should.*

After all, however, this is a matter not of opinion, but of fact. Fifteen hundred years was mentioned in the earlier Theosophical teachings as a rough average for the man who lived to moderate old age, and as far as the recent researches touch the subject they have all testified to the accuracy of this statement. In a list of sixteen successive incarnations of the same individual it was found that his average earth-life was forty-eight years, and his average period out of incarnation 1,265 years. This list, however, includes two lives in which the man dies almost in childhood—at the age of twelve, and has therefore only twenty-two and forty-one years of heaven-life respectively—the difference between these two results being apparently a question of development and education. On the other hand a long life of eighty-five years under exceptionally good conditions produced in the same man a devachanic period of no less than two thousand three hundred years. Other lines of lives which have been followed show a somewhat higher average, so that the trend of later observation has been distinctly to confirm the information given at the beginning. It may be taken as abundantly proved that the fifteen-hundred-year average holds good for the section of humanity which we have called the first-class pitris, but of course that is after all only a very small section of mankind, and there is room for great divergence from its rules in the comparatively unexplored region which lies outside it.

It is obvious that less developed entities would be likely to have far less of the higher spiritual forces in action within them, and their stay in the heaven-world therefore could not but be much shorter. To some slight extent this shortening of the period between incarnations would be compensated by the increased length of the astral life, caused by uncontrolled desire, but nevertheless the lower classes of pitris must undoubtedly return into earth-life much more rapidly than comparatively highly evolved beings would do. Although but little investigation has as yet been devoted to these problems, it is probable that the average given to us was not intended to apply to any but the highest class, from which all those who were keenly attracted to the occult life would be likely to be drawn.

There is a certain amount of evidence from outside which tends to confirm this view, although as it has not yet been sifted or specially examined it is impossible to pronounce definitely upon its reliability. The widely-spread belief in India that incarnation takes place after an interval of a century or two, and the numerous stories (related on apparently good authority) which reach us from Burma and from some parts of America as to children who distinctly recollect a comparatively recent previous life, and have in some cases, it is said, been able to prove their recollection of it satisfactorily, are some of the items of this evidence.

So that while the questioner may set his mind entirely at rest as to the general accuracy of the teach-



ing, he may also solace himself with the idea that there are probably a large number of variations from the rule given to us—quite enough, I should imagine, to account for the diversities of opinion which have puzzled him. Another vast question which is so far almost entirely uninvestigated is that of the difference (if any) between the average incarnation-periods of man in the third, fourth, and fifth root-races.

QUESTION DXIX.

*L. W.—Did the Gnostic teaching include or preclude the presence in man's nature of both the divine and human?*

G. R. S. M.—The Gnostic teaching on this point was identical with our own Theosophical ideas. The Gnostics taught that the way up to union with the Divine was divided into many stages; that men could become gods, and finally God.

Believing as they did in evolution, they carried the idea to its logical conclusion, and perceived the patent fact that mankind as at present constituted, is in various stages of development. Thus they divided humankind into three classes: (a) the lowest or Hylics were those who were so entirely dead to spiritual things that they were as The Hylê, or unperceptive matter of the world; (b) the intermediate class were called Psychics, for though believers in things spiritual, they were believers simply, and required "miracles" and signs to strengthen their faith; (c) whereas the Pneumatics or Spiritual, the highest class, were those capable of knowledge of spiritual matters, those who could receive the Gnosis.

But the Pneumatics themselves were also in various stages of advancement towards perfection. Gnosis was but the beginning of the Way. Only when a man had become a Christ could one say that the Divine was really manifest in him, though even then not fully. He had become a god, but not yet was he at one with the Logos. He was a Son of God, but not yet God Himself.

On the other hand the Divine was in everything, in the lowest of men, in animals, in plants, in stones. For all things were made by Him, and in Him they live and move and have their being. But all below the Christ had the Divine implicit in them and not yet unfolded. This "manifestation of the Sons of God" was the consummation of human evolution for the Gnostic philosophers, and Jesus for them was one of those Sons of God.

In present day Theosophical nomenclature, this stage of perfection is spoken of as the attainment of the Nirvânic consciousness. This stupendous consummation marks a grand stage in the Great Journey, when the Divine *dominates* the human, the point of balance being on what is called the buddhic plane. Only when the Divine dominates the human does it become *manifest*; until that stage is reached it is implicit, germinal, unmanifest.

For though the Divine exists in all mankind, the majority are entirely ignorant of its presence;

many, however, believe in it and sense it dimly, while some begin to feel it in greater abundance and continually, and of those, again, a few know it throughout their whole being.

The Divine and human are then *actual* in *men* only, for as Hermes says, he who has not the Mind does not deserve to be called a *man*. In the rest of human kind the Divine is in them only *potentially*.

The difference between Gnostic and popular Christian doctrine on this point is that whereas the initiated philosophers taught a universal creed and a possibility for all men, the popular exaggeration erected an exclusive dogma which asserted that Jesus was, and will be, the only Christ, and still farther that he was very God of very God, thus confounding and confusing the verities of the Gnosis, and making the whole universe and Godhead centre in Jesus of Nazareth alone. There is no harm, of course, in an ignorant believer thus identifying his own particular teacher with God, and it is one of the old, old ways, we are told, of reaching to higher things, provided of course the believer does not impose his ignorance on others; the outrage consists in fanatics forcing their belief on those who prefer the teaching of the Gnosis—which was the doctrine of the Christ to those who could understand a higher view of the Infinite Love.

QUESTION DXX.

*E. B. W.—Can any explanation be given of the excessive destruction of life which seems inseparable from the evolutionary process? In every division of life, the vegetable, the animal and the human, there is very great over-production resulting in constant warfare and extermination; nature apparently creating only to ruthlessly destroy.*

*T. B. C.—Does Theosophy offer any explanation of the enormous prodigality of Nature in providing for the perpetuation of species? Physiology shows that for every germ that matures myriads upon myriads of spermatozoa and ova fail of development and pass out of physical existence without having accomplished any known purpose. Having reference to the human kingdom—are entities awaiting for reincarnation in any way concerned with what would seem to be lost opportunity for re-embodiment, in that so many possible human forms fail to come into being?*

[*Note.*—The questions of E. B. W. and T. B. C. cannot be answered separately. Perhaps that of T. B. C. covers the ground most completely.—A. A. W.]

A. A. W.—The difficulty of this question arises from our forgetfulness of the very simple fact that the universe exists for a great many other purposes than merely to make men—such as we are here and now. We need do no more than remind the querist that it has been stated that our earth is at this present time the seat of evolutionary processes which have no relationship to man at all; for even in what is taught us of our own there

is sufficient to suggest the direction in which we have to look for the explanation of what *does* at first sight seem strange. We are told that in the process of our own evolution there are first three kingdoms of matter imperceptible to our bodily senses, then mineral, vegetable and animal, and so up to man; and from him upwards again. Now it has perhaps not been made sufficiently clear that *all* these inferior kingdoms are, to a very considerable extent, dependent upon *us* for their advance. We think a vast number of thoughts—entertain a vast number of desires—in themselves indifferent or even injurious to our own development, but all these, good and bad alike (considered from *our* point of view) are movements by which the appropriate elemental essence is stirred and its development advanced. We have been informed indeed that this is true to so large an extent as to form a real danger to us; the blind “elemental” within us becoming an actual tempter to actions which are good for it, but *not* for us. Nor does this action cease when we come down to the physical world. We are taught that the physical atom itself is in process of evolution, and needs (so to speak) ensouling; that it has to learn new and higher combinations—to form new and more complicated “elements” as the chemist calls them. So with the atoms which form part of all living beings; all have to make their own advance, and this is done by their becoming successively portions of ever higher organisations. Hence there is, in reality, no action in the world which does not give to *something* its next step upwards. As each being in its turn breaks up the forms beneath it, it is no blind “destruction of life,” as we are apt to call it, but the only way in which their elements can be raised to their higher life, and made fit to rise in the scale. “That which thou sowest cannot be quickened except it die” is the universal rule; and the physical life-system is not without its counterpart in the moral and political world. That matter should come to be organised in so high a type as “spermatozoa and ova” is in itself, without *anything* following from it, a very considerable progress. It is true that if nothing follows, the matter falls back to the lower type, but we were not long ago assured that even then the advance is only rendered latent, as it were; it is much easier to renew it than it was at first to cause it.

Thus we see that the “prodigality of Nature” has its own ends to serve. In referring to human reincarnation we turn to quite another set of considerations. We are not now dealing with a practically unlimited Nature, but with a certain fixed and determined number of entities who, living habitually on another plane of existence, find it needful at long intervals and for very short periods to “manifest” themselves in the physical world. It is evidently convenient that the normal course of nature should furnish them with the means of so doing, when required; but there can be no question of “lost opportunities,” when these are *not* required. Even at our present stage, men and women are not earth-dwellers, continually

pressing to get back, if by what we call “death” temporarily removed; and complaining of “lost opportunities” each time what might have been a body for one of them fails to come to perfection. When, in the words of the question, possible human forms fail to come into being, the reason is simply that at that moment there is no ego requiring such a body, and hence the preparation for one is utilised by Nature in her ordinary way, as so much raw material for other new forms. This may happen, as we are taught, not only to single forms but to whole races of mankind. As they fall behind the needs of the ever-advancing humanity, the egos decline to utilise bodies so inefficient for their purpose; and the prodigality of Nature at least prevents their being forced into unsuitable bodies, by abundantly providing for their choice, or rather for that of the Lords of Karma, who make it for them. Thus the relics of worn-out races which we call “savages” are dying out, and not savages only. Many of the highest names and what are mistakenly called the highest families have died out in our own country, as in others during the past century. To say that this is simply because their members have deliberately set themselves to make their offspring such as no human ego, even the very lowest, could possibly live in, may sound somewhat startling, but is true.

B. K.—The answer to these two questions can best, I think, be given by taking them together, and so far as the essential idea is concerned, seems to me to be a very plain and simple one, since it involves one of those fundamental truths in its most obvious and striking form which ought to be thoroughly familiar to every student of Theosophy.

In the working out of details no doubt difficulties will be met with; but in its broad outline the conception in question is so simple, and on a little reflection so obvious, that there ought to be no difficulty in grasping it.

This conception is the oft-repeated and frequently elaborated distinction between Life and Form, a distinction which forms one of the key-notes of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, as indeed of all the great scriptures of the world. Forms are ever changing, being built up, destroyed, and re-shaped incessantly. Life alone is eternal, continuous, unbroken.

In evolution, it is true, we seem to deal mainly with the evolution of Form, or rather, to speak accurately, with the ladder or succession of forms in which the evolving life expresses itself and gains fuller unfoldment and a more perfect expression and realisation of the innumerable possibilities which are latent therein. But in truth and accuracy, it is the Life which evolves—not the Form. For the forms are not, strictly speaking, continuous, but successive.

In other words a wolf, say, does not evolve into a dog; that is, no single wolf form passes through a series of changes and becomes a dog form. But if we arrange all the various wolf-like and dog-like forms in ordered sequence, we find a series of

small and gradual changes by which the typical wolf-form is linked to the typical dog-form. But it is not, in strictness, the form which has "evolved," it is the Life which find expression through these forms which as it evolves causes these gradual changes and gives us in the series of its expressions on the physical plane a history of what has been going on in the, to us, imperceptible Life itself.

It is the Life, therefore, which is of paramount importance, the forms being merely its expression and the instruments by means of which its unfolding and evolution are carried on. Hence the importance of the forms is merely as a means to an end, and they exist only for the sake of the evolving Life. Therefore, too, it follows that the moment a form has ceased to assist and further the evolution of the Life manifesting through it, the sooner it is broken up and the Life set free to find another vehicle the better, for such destruction and breaking up of form means a hastening and quickening of the evolution of the Life.

We are ever making the mistake of clinging to the form and attaching supreme importance to its preservation, and this mistake is one of the great elements in the "illusion" with which our life on this plane is so densely enveloped. Even Arjuna in the *Gītā* falls under it, and so almost insurmountable is it for most men, that few indeed realise the truth of Shri Kṛiṣṇa's declaration that the Life dies not nor is it born, it slays not nor can it ever be slain.

The "struggle for existence" therefore in Nature and all the ruthless destruction to which the question alludes, belongs wholly to the Form side of the evolutionary process. The Life goes on its evolving way untouched by it all, and its terrors and its ruthlessness are such only for those who cannot even mentally pierce below the veil of Form and realise that it is the Life and not the Form which is the eternal reality.

The second question calls into play the same fundamental principle, but in another aspect—that of production. Ova and germs are but as it were the points in our physical world at which the evolving Life, ever seeking expression, impinges on physical matter.

Regarded in *themselves* they are the centres in which various grades of life are at work. The evolution of these relatively low grades of life goes on whether or not the ovum is impregnated by the spermatozoon or not. Similarly the higher orders of life which come into play when impregnation takes place, each gain something in unfoldment, whether or not the impregnated ovum develops into a living form or not. With each step in the development of the complex form, higher and higher kinds of life find a vehicle for their own further unfoldment until—say in the case of man—when the infant body is sufficiently perfected, all these lower kinds of life become the vehicle for the expression of the human ego. There is no real waste in nature, whether or no a given form becomes the vehicle for the highest kinds of life or not. And indeed we may do well

to realise that even in adult men and women of our own days in Europe but a small fraction of the really higher orders of emotional, intellectual and spiritual life can find expression. We must remember too, constantly, that the Logos looks with equal love upon every grade and order of life, and that the needs and interests of the very lowest and most imperfectly unfolded drop of the divine life are by His wisdom and love cared for no less than those of the highest man or God.

If we confine our attention to one part alone, say to the human kingdom, it may seem to us that there is enormous waste of ova and spermatozoa. But that is due merely to our ignorance and narrowness of outlook. Regarded as a part of the whole, we should see that there is no waste at all, but that all this making and disintegration of forms is merely the expression of the unfolding and expansion of lower grades in the divine life.

Much more might be said on so fertile a subject as this, but for THE VĀHAN enough, I hope, has been done at least to indicate where the clue lies which we must steadfastly follow if we desire to unravel such mysteries of life as those with which these questions are concerned.

#### QUESTION DXXI.

*T. C. L.—Is it justifiable according to Theosophic teaching to use the hypnotic method of "suggestion" for the cure of drunkenness, kleptomania, etc.? Is it not better in the one long life of the Soul for a man, apparently "incurable" of his passions, appetites, or dishonest proclivities, to sink lower and lower (notwithstanding all possible help of a moral nature rendered by friends in a normal way), and, then, when much bitter experience has at length stimulated the enfeebled will to a healthier activity, to build up a strong virtuous character, capable of resisting temptation, than to temporarily (?) overcome a vice or grow a virtue on the "suggestion" of another?*

*G. R. S. M.—It seems to me that the whole problem revolves on the point of a man's asking for help. If we turn to the life of any Master—no matter how imperfectly the incidents of his earth sojourn may be recorded—we find that help was given only when asked. It was never forced upon the unwilling. The very appeal for help shows that the man is no longer desiring the delights of matter. He would, if he could, free himself from the monster he has allowed to master him. He is, however, too feeble to do it of himself, for he has put too much of himself into the monster. He wants a breathing space in the life and death struggle, and if you can give it, why should you refuse? He is a comrade in arms struck down by the enemy with a victorious foe choking the life out of him. Should you not raise him up upon his feet again, if you can? Doubtless he would be a stronger fighter if he could shake off his enemy unaided, but he is overpowered and the life is nearly out of him, and he has only breath enough to cry for help.*

*If on the other hand help were forced upon the*

world, if it were ordained that all should be made perfect by *force*, then we should be slaves and automata. We should *fear* God and not love Him. To ask is to desire, and to desire is the beginning of love. And Love is the fulfilling of the Law. And if the Law is fulfilled, the Law will aid, and the aid that comes to the repentant drunkard may have to come sometimes by "suggestion."

On the other hand, we should be very careful in the choice of a physician to aid us in moral sickness. If an operation is to be performed on the physical body, it is absolutely necessary that every appliance and instrument and the hands of the surgeon should be scrupulously clean, otherwise the patient may find himself in worse case than before the operation. Much more, then, should it be required that a mental and moral operation should be performed with "clean hands"; otherwise a man while aiding to drive out drunkenness may "suggest" something that is worse.

It may of course be argued that the cleanliness of the channel through whom help comes is a matter of indifference, just as in the Roman Catholic Church it is argued that the sacraments are of full effect if the recipients are sincere, even though the priest may be a sink of immorality and fore-sworn. But the analogy of the surgeon seems to teach us another lesson.

We cannot, however, help sympathising largely with the point of view of the questioner; we cannot doubt that the most noble view is that each man should win his own freedom, but equally sure is it that the Self lives by giving and that we are bound to give if we can. Still, perhaps there is no real contradiction; we want to do the right thing either way; if we fall short we would try to perfect ourselves without begging from any or troubling anyone with our insufficiency, but if any one ask for a cup of water and we have it to give, we hasten to give it. Thus either way we try to live as to the Law.

#### QUESTION DXXII.

X. Y. Z.—*How long does the "blankness" last which comes over a man after he has partially succeeded in "cutting himself loose from his fast moorings in the world of sensation?" Could it by any possibility last until the end of his present earth-life?*

S. M. S.—The answer to this question must depend upon the earnestness of each individual. If a man really has succeeded in breaking away from the life of sensation—if his centre of consciousness has really shifted from the life of the senses to a somewhat higher level—and if he be in earnest, there must gradually dawn upon him some feeling of the reality behind all the changing shows of earth. Once he has gained this, the blankness which he may still feel will

never be quite of the same quality as before. Moreover, the sense of reality will continue to grow—again in proportion to his earnestness—and with it will come an ability more and more to forget himself and his own feelings, and to live increasingly in a larger life.

But if the questioner have in his mind, as the ending once and for all to blankness and dissatisfaction, a consciousness in his physical brain of higher planes than the physical, then perhaps one or two suggestions may prove of some slight help.

The object of our endeavour, whether we recognise it fully or not, is to break away from the life of form, which is constantly changing and never permanently satisfying, and to learn to live in the life itself, which is unchanging, eternal, sure.

That is the final goal of human evolution, to which, in the far, far distance, we direct our inner gaze. But we are apt to pass quite lightly over the huge gulf which yawns between our present condition and that goal, and to imagine that, the first conflict won, all else will be comparatively smooth and easy. Such, however, is not the case, and it is well that, as far as may be, we should realise that it is not. The battles that we fight now are but the shadows of those which will meet us on higher levels, and in proportion to the number that we are able now to win will be the reserve of strength that will be ours later on.

From this it would seem that it is not well to make happiness the object of our effort, but that we should rather strive for patience and the spirit which is contented in whatever circumstances we may find ourselves. For the growth of the individual brings either a greater and greater power of grasping and holding for itself, or a greater and greater power of letting go. The one is a force working against the Law, and must mean failure in the end; the other will at last lead us out of the worlds of form and change and sorrow into the world where life is felt as one.

Thus, at every stage comes the demand, "Give up thy life if thou wouldst live," and wise are we if we listen and obey; for there is nothing in the three worlds which can give us perfect joy, and there is that within us which finally will be content with nothing less. And although in the midst of the dust and whirl of the struggle we shall not be able to realise it, yet when it is over we shall know with blessed certainty that "he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it unto life eternal."

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