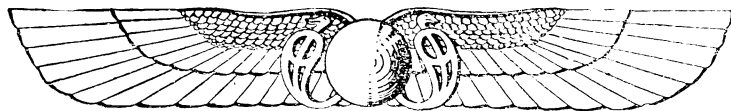


# THE VĀHAN



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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

Vol. X.

LONDON, AUGUST 1, 1900.

NO. 1.

Edited by OTWAY CUFFE.

### REPORT OF THE CONVENTION.

WITH the present issue of THE VĀHAN the Report of the Tenth Annual Convention of the European Section is sent to members.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary*.

### CLOSING OF THE ROOMS AT HEAD-QUARTERS.

As notified in the last issue of THE VĀHAN, the Library and members' rooms at 28, Albemarle Street, will be closed during August, the office remaining open for business purposes.

### LETTER FROM THE AMERICAN SECTION.

*The Hon. Otway Cuffe, General Secretary, European Section.*

MY DEAR SIR,

At the Annual Convention of the American Section lately held in Chicago, Mr. Fullerton presented the greetings of the European Section as extended through yourself.

As Secretary to the Convention I was instructed to express the appreciation and thanks of the body for the words of fraternal love, and wishes for our welfare. The American Section sends in return greetings to the friends and brothers across the sea with the hope and prayer that the years of the coming century will bind us closer together in love and fealty to the cause we have chosen for our devotion.

With kindest regards and best wishes,  
I am, ever sincerely and fraternally yours,  
PAULINE G. KELLY.

### LETTER FROM THE DUTCH SECTION.

*To the General Secretary, European Section, Theosophical Society.*

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,

I have been instructed by the Fourth Annual Convention held at Amsterdam, the 10th June, to send to your Section a message of fraternal greeting and fellowship, and to wish you an ever increasing success in your work on behalf of the great cause.

For the Convention,  
W. B. FRICKE,  
*General Secretary*.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Branch Dissolved.

The Ionian Branch of the European Section has been dissolved. It has for many years been practically dormant and the Executive Committee have decided to remove it from the list.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary*.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to July 20th: Captain and Mrs. L., £5 5s.; M. G., 10s.; F. H., 5s.; F. A. J., £1; M. W., £1; Brighton Lodge, 5s.; M. H. L., £2 10s.; A. L., £1; A. D., 7s.; H. and K. D., 7s. 6d.; B. M., £1 10s.; R. C. M., £3 13s.; J. W. C., 5s.; E. S., 5s.; E. N., £1; E. O., 10s.; E. M., £1 1s.; S. H., 3s.; H. L., 5s.; per A. B. for Convention expenses, £5 5s.; F. C., 10s.; M. H., £1; B. P. M., 5s.; M. B., 15s. Total £28 16s. 6d.

### Northern Federation.

The next quarterly meeting of the above will be held at Harrogate, on Saturday, August 11th, under the presidency of Mrs. Besant. All members of the Society are cordially invited to attend. Mrs. Besant will also lecture August 10th and 12th, at Harrogate; August 13th, Middlesbrough; August 14th, Leeds; August 15th, Bradford. Further particulars on application to W. H. Thomas, 7, Ryedale Terrace, Middlesbrough.

### South Western Federation.

The President-Founder presided at the meetings of the South Western Federation held at Bournemouth on July 17th and 18th.

### Mrs. Besant's Lectures.

Mrs. Besant's course of lectures at 28, Albemarle Street, on "Thought-Power, its Control and Culture," has been very well attended, all available space being occupied. Mrs. Besant also during July visited the northern towns, lecturing at Manchester and Birmingham, and delivered two Sunday evening lectures in the Small Queen's Hall on "The Search for Happiness," and "The Reality of Brotherhood."

### Blavatsky Lodge.

On June 21st Mr. Moore gave the second of his two lectures on "Mathematics—Ancient and Modern." The lecture was peculiarly interesting, indicating many directions in which certain of our Theosophical teachings might possibly be scientifically demonstrated. On June 28th Mr. Mead delivered the third of his course of lectures on "The Earliest Inner Commentary on the Original Outer Gospel."

On July 5th Mrs. Besant delivered one of the most instructive of the many lectures which the Lodge has been privileged to hear from her; she spoke on the Parsifal legend, showing its deep and most mystical meaning as a description of the path trodden by the initiated soul. On July 12th Mrs. Besant lectured on "India and England"; a lecture of a very different character, but no less important; perhaps, as regards the immediate future of the mass of humanity, of more pressing importance than that of the preceding week.

On July 19th Mr. Mead read an exceedingly beautiful and instructive translation of a sermon of Hermes the Thrice Greatest. The Lodge closes during August and until September 20th, when it re-opens with a lecture from Mr. Mead.

S. M. S.

### Theosophical Lending Library.

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

Terms of subscription; three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W.

*The Library is closed during August.*

LILIAN LLOYD,  
Librarian.

### Lotus Circle.

As many children are away the Lotus Circle will not meet until the middle of September.

### Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings suspended during August. For information apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings in the Yorkshire Penny Bank Buildings, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of *Karma*.

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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

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 19, Bedford Circus, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on the second Thursday of each month.

HAMBURG LODGE. Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

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

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, Clarence Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.; Aug. 5th, *God, Man and the Devil*, Miss Shaw; Aug. 12th (3 p.m.), *Whence Come Religions?* and (7 p.m.) *Ancient and Modern Science*, Mrs. Besant; Aug. 19th, *Theosophic Life*, Hodgson Smith; Aug. 26th, *Spiritual Alchemy*, Mrs. Bell. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of "Some Problems of Life."

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 every Monday at 8 p.m., at 97, Westbourne Avenue.

LEEDS CENTRE. Meetings on the first Monday in each month at 3, Roseville Road, at 7.30 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Enquiries may be addressed to Mrs. Lees, at above address.

LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE. Meetings held on Mondays, at 46, Hawthorn Mount, Chapel Allerton. Enquiries may be addressed to W. H. Bean, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Pomona" Vegetarian Restaurant, Kurprinzstrasse, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings are held on Mondays at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C., for the study of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Public meetings are suspended during the summer. Class on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings suspended during August.

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

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Students' Class on alternate Thursdays.

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

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings suspended during August.

LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings suspended during August. Will be resumed in the middle of September.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 31, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

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. Subject for study, *Four Great Religions*.

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.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. No meetings in August and September.

ROME LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at 6 p.m., at 72, Via S. Niccolo da Tolentino.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.

## ENQUIRER.

### QUESTION 72.

*M. B. I.*—*The questioner would be glad of a Theosophical explanation of the parable of "The Prodigal Son." She is acquainted with the Christian explanations but would also much like a Theosophical view.*

*G. R. S. M.*—The beautiful Parable of the Prodigal Son is found in the third Synoptic (xv. 11-32), and should be so well-known to every reader of THE VĀHAN that we may proceed to a consideration of its contents without quoting text or giving translation. Whether or not the following will be called a "Theosophical" explanation, I am unable to say; it is the result of a study of both the present presentation of theosophic thought and also of the writings of the great Christian philosophers of the earliest centuries.

*M. B. I.* should first of all read the beautiful "Hymn of the Robe of Glory," given in my paper on "Bardaisan the Gnostic," in the March number (1898) of *The Theosophical Review* (xxii. 9ff.). The whole Hymn, which is almost indubitably the work of Bardesanes himself, is the same Parable of the Prodigal Son in another guise. It is generally referred to as "The Hymn of the Soul," and tells how the younger son left his Father and Mother, the King and Queen of Glory (Ātman and Buddhi), and his elder brother (Higher Manas, Kāraṇa Sharīra, or causal body) and went down into Egypt to find the "one pearl" (the gnosis, gñānam, Brahma-vidyā, wisdom, theosophia). It tells of the realms he passed through on his journey from the East (his descent into matter) and the dangers of the way; how he was abandoned in Egypt (matter); and put on a robe like the robe of the people of Egypt, and eat their food and forgot his high mission. It tells of how repentance (change of mind, the turning it to higher things) came to him. The holy bird (in this case an eagle and not a dove) descended, bringing a letter of comfort from above. And he remembered he was the son of kings. So he arose and lulled the terrible serpent (Kāma) which guarded the pearl, to sleep, and snatched it away and turned to go back to his Father's house. And so he journeys eastwards (and upwards again); and when he has accomplished a great part of his journey, there is sent to him the glorious robe (? Buddhi) which he had left behind in his Father's house.

"The garment seemed to me like a mirror of myself; I saw it all in my whole self. . . . And I saw that all over it the motions of knowledge were stirring. . . . And I perceived in myself that my statue was growing according to its labours. . . ."

“ And my toga of brilliant colours  
 I cast around me, in its whole breadth.  
 I clothed myself therewith, and ascended  
 To the gates of salutation and homage;  
 I bowed my head and did homage  
 To the Majesty of my Father who had sent it to  
 me,  
 For I had done his commandments,  
 And he had done what he promised,  
 And at the gate of his princes  
 I mingled with his nobles;  
 For he rejoiced in me and received me,  
 I was with him in his kingdom.  
 And with the voice of . . . . .  
 All his servants glorify him.  
 And he promised that also to the gate  
 Of the King of kings I should speed with him,  
 And bringing my gift and my pearl,  
 I should appear with him before the King.”

It would seem to me that here we have a hint of a still higher initiation (the *âtmic* after the buddhic), when the arhat reaches nirvāna and becomes one with the Logos—the true *Ātman* of the cosmos and not the *âtman* (the Father) in man.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son, as found in the tradition of the compiler of the third Synoptic, seems to me to be part of the public teaching intended for the people. Its setting is Jewish; there is the strong antithesis of the eating of swine's food, for a Jew the foulest food of the foulest animal, and the slaughtering of the choice fatted calf to make merry for the returned prodigal.

The Gnostic tradition preserves for us a far more detailed and delicate setting of the great mystery-teaching of the fall of the soul into matter and its re-ascent to spirit, when it becomes higher than its brother-souls who have not descended and re-ascended, who have not been lost and been found. “Ye shall be higher than all Gods.”

An ancient Gnostic legend tells how that Lucifer was God's eldest born, who left his Father's house to seek for freedom, and how God loved him more than all the rest. “There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.” For the sinners become the saviours.

#### QUESTION 73:

A. M. M.—*In one of the answers to Question 57 it is stated that “wisdom, not book-learning” is the qualification of the spiritual man. How are we to get wisdom? What is the best way? Need we always go to books to learn wisdom?*

B. K.—The associations which the word “wisdom” seems to call up in the mind—especially when used as in the context referred to—distinctly point to something which is *not* intellectual knowledge, whether we think of intellectual knowledge as concerned with facts or with processes of reasoning and their results. Nor can it refer

simply to the mere material of knowledge, observations and experiences, by whatever channels these may reach us. “Wisdom,” therefore, means something super-intellectual, which at once brings to our minds the thought of man's spiritual nature. Indeed, I venture to think that a study of all the deepest writers and thinkers will show that they have regarded “wisdom” as involving the activity and guiding of that highest element in man. If that be so, it is at once obvious why “wisdom, not book-learning” is said to be the qualification of the spiritual man. For since “wisdom” involves the activity and influence of the spiritual nature upon the mind and life, it is clear that in a man who possesses wisdom, the spiritual life must be active and strong enough to manifest its influence.

These considerations seem to me to suggest the truest and best, if not the most pleasant-sounding answer to the actual question asked: “How are we to get wisdom?” Develop your spiritual nature, sounds perhaps too brief, but it *is*, I believe, the one and only real answer. But again how? As *Light on the Path* teaches us, by renouncing selfishness, and dissolving the personality whose fetters prevent the unfoldment of the divine within us. It is the old, old answer again: Tread the path of holiness, forget self, live for all and in all, that the divine within you may have space and freedom to manifest its power and glory.

It sounds, doubtless, simple and elementary; it lacks the attractiveness of sensational effort or abnormal experiences, or strange practices? True; moreover how hard, how unceasing the struggle is none know but those who have faced it in earnest. But that road *does* bring to light the hidden light of the spirit and with it “Wisdom.” Other road there is none.

A. A. W.—The querist has asked a very large question, and one which, strictly speaking, cannot be answered at all. If we should meet again, say a million years hence, one might ask him how far he has progressed towards an answer; but he will by then be too wise to reply that he has got wisdom. For to get Wisdom is in truth the sole object of the monad's long pilgrimage through the worlds, and not until we are ready to be re-absorbed in the Logos at the end of the Manvantara shall ordinary people like us dare to say we have attained. There is a favourite triad of names all are familiarly acquainted with, usually running as Power, Wisdom and Love, which may somewhat mislead the enquirer. The wisdom there named should rather be called Knowledge, for the true Wisdom contains all three. A soul may love, and yet have no power and no knowledge; it may have power and yet be ignorant and unloving; but it cannot be truly wise if it lacks anything. Wisdom is founded on knowledge, it grows by the intelligent exercise of power, but it misses its way and becomes a destroying fiend unless guided by the infinite sympathy which is the root of Love. Ultimately, Wisdom is the “Mind of the Master,” the Logos who knows how to make all things

well, has power to make all things well, and the "love which is the assurance that all things *shall be made well*," as He said to an English mystic of old time; and *we* approach Wisdom as we share in that Mind more and more, till we reach the full identification of ourselves with Him, which is the goal of our evolution.

How to get it? That is still more easily answered—if only anyone could understand the answer. To get Wisdom we have but to *live*. Our lives are planned by the Wisdom for that very purpose. It is not, truly, by reading of books; though without reading we shall hardly gain the knowledge which is one part, and an essential one, of the Wisdom we seek. But as we rise higher in the scale of being, more and more is included in that word "living." No longer is it enough for us to vegetate through life after life, learning nothing from what befalls us, as we see so many around us. The life which shall help us towards the Wisdom must be an *intelligent* life—the soul must ponder and brood over the lessons its daily life has for it—with rapid appreciation catching up the hints which the Lords of life are continually dropping in all sorts of unexpected ways of circumstances, speech, sermon, story, for those who have the quick eye which sees and the loving heart which responds. The Master (to use the word which for us forms the summary of all the Powers who stand above us and are interested in our progress) has nothing so much at heart as that we should get Wisdom, and will give all the teaching to which we will respond. But this response is not the mere "opening of the windows to let the light shine into us," as is often said—we are not "mediums," to be developed in complete passivity; it must be the delighted reception and assimilation of the great Teacher's lessons which a bright and earnest student yields to his revered Master; our whole heart and mind set on not missing one least word or syllable of the treasure laid before us. To one who takes his life in this way the teacher will never fail; and his reward will be to feel as the years go by not precisely that he grows wiser—he will more likely feel more and more his ignorance—but that in some strange mysterious way he is drawing closer to the heart of the Master in whom (for him) the Wisdom is incarnate; not yet knowing as He knows, but more and more distinctly feeling as He feels; and thus gaining the joyful assurance that he is in truth on the way which cannot fail to lead him at last to the Wisdom he seeks.

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QUESTION 74.

E. B. G.—*Can we judge if a soul is undeveloped as a whole by its conduct in this incarnation? Is murder, or any so-called heinous crime proof positive of an undeveloped soul?*

J. v. M.—An ancient maxim to be found in Matthew vii. 1, enjoins us not to judge any one at all. And as there is murder *and* murder, and even the worst type of murder is only one incident

in the whole long conduct of a life, it is not easy to give a concrete answer to this vague and general question. A suggestive reply, however, will be found in *Esoteric Buddhism* on pages 89 and 90, wherein such a case is considered. I once heard Mrs. Besant speak somewhat as follows: "Sometimes a crime may be the last working out of a long kârmic chain. The character may be developed completely, while still one kârmic fetter remains to be worked out. In this case the act will be performed resignedly and without attachment, as the simple requital of a kârmic debt."

In the *Bhagavad Gîtâ* we find something analogous in chap. iv. 14, and in several other places.

E. L.—No, not altogether, perhaps less than we, in our ignorance are apt to think. Each person having, out of his sum total of karma a certain (necessarily limited) portion selected for working out in one life might, when acting unfavourably (as judged by the common standards), be simply getting rid of some imperfection which for the time being, clouded a really earnest and noble nature. Murder is *not* proof positive of an undeveloped soul.

A. B. C.—It is certainly possible to form an opinion of the development of a soul from its *general* conduct in this incarnation, but E. B. G. appears to be puzzling over one of those obscurer problems in karma which are connected with unexpected folly or crime on the part of an entity whose general conduct evinced considerable moral and intellectual advance. It is clear that such cases do occur, and "murder, or any so-called heinous crime," is not in itself proof positive of an undeveloped soul, for it may form one quite isolated incident in a life of general good conduct. On the other hand, it is hardly possible to mistake the "undevelopment" which is evidenced by uniformly foolish or trivial conduct, by interest shown only in the most commonplace affairs of daily life or mere petty, personal gossip. Such things do not depend on the environment of a man, and our judgment would be formed not from a man's kârmic surroundings, but from his general attitude toward them. Lives which seem outwardly dull and sordid may be in reality lives which are showing forth the strength of the ego, therefore it is by the way in which an individual meets his karma that we should judge of his development.

It should not, however, be forgotten that development may be very one-sided. That is to say, an ego may have grown life after life in one direction to the neglect of other parts of his nature, so that great intellectual acuteness may be shown along with very meagre moral qualities, or great devotion may accompany a minimum of mental attributes. In either case the way has to be made up, and in forming an opinion from the person's general conduct, regard must be had to this possible one-sidedness. In addition—there are so many things we cannot see in connection

with others, and so few things we can see—or see correctly—and, further, for the majority of us another person's stage of development is so little our affair, that perhaps it would be quite as well if we did not attempt to make these judgments at all.

“Judge not—the workings of his brain  
And of his heart thou canst not see;  
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain  
In God's pure light may only be  
A scar brought from some well-won field  
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.”

A. A. W.—Let me rather suggest to the querist not to be so curious as to the “development” of the souls he may meet. And this, not only on the general principle all great Teachers have laid down that we should judge no one but ourselves; his question betrays that he has not grasped the true meaning of “development,” with which the popular standards of virtue and crime have but little to do. The crudity of the popular Christian view, that every man, whatever his state of development, is virtuous if he refrains from certain actions which are baptised as (in our querist's words) “heinous crimes,” and is wicked if he does not refrain from them, must be quite laid aside in considering things from the standpoint of the Wisdom. It is not the action, but the attitude of the mind towards it, which marks the doer's spiritual condition. A familiar example is that of the Australian savage who killed and ate his wife, and to all remonstrances that this action was “bad,” replied cheerfully, “No, no; she is very good!” Here everyone, I think, will see that the mark of the man's savagery—of his undeveloped soul—is, not at all that he killed his wife (many highly “developed” men have done that); not even that he ate her—that is a matter of taste only; but precisely in *this*—that having done so he had no feeling about it except that she was good to eat; that he had killed and eaten as a lion or tiger might have done, and that all the vast array of thoughts and feelings which such an act would call up in the minds of a civilised man simply did not exist for him—had yet to be developed. If the querist will follow up this suggestion as to what development really means he will see that whilst a mentally and spiritually developed man could not have murdered in the way the savage did, without feeling or conscience being stirred to action, nevertheless his development gives not the slightest security against his committing murder in his own way. Had David been a savage he would not have wanted to kill Uriah—true; but having done it, he would have had no remorse of conscience for it—it was just his “development” which drove him to murder to conceal a fault of which the savage would have had no consciousness. Our answer to the question then, is that it is not at all the theological *heinousness* of the crime which marks it as done by one not far from the brute; there are virtues as well as vices which belong to the undeveloped stages. Many well-meaning souls are even now going

about doing good, trampling as with iron-shod hoofs over the tenderest sensibilities of the unfortunate objects of their charity, more distinctly marked as “undeveloped souls” by their utter want of feeling and sympathy with those they desire to relieve than if they were to commit every crime in the Decalogue. We develop, first brain, then mind; and lastly, spirit. When we come to this last we are safe; but, till then, the assistance which morality obtains from development of intellect only will go no further than the enlightened selfishness expressed in the immortal Yankee saying: “Honesty is the best policy—I know it, *for I've tried both!*”

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#### QUESTION 75.

C. P.—*In reading Hindu literature, especially books like the Upanishads, one is struck by the repeated assertion that the Self is smaller than the smallest, as well as larger than the largest. To readers untrained in Indian metaphysics, such statements are very puzzling. Is there any easy way of comprehending the intellectual basis of assertions like the above?*

B. K.—Such statements as the one referred to here about the Self of course involve for their comprehension a grasp of the profoundest teachings and reasonings of Hindu philosophy. The discussion of such a topic would lead us into some of the most difficult problems of metaphysics, and would, I fear, neither satisfy the questioner nor earn the gratitude of the VĀHAN's editor. But—apart altogether from any show even of strict metaphysic, a line of thought suggests itself which possibly may help a little to familiarise the mind with the statement quoted and to make it seem less out of touch with habitual thinking.

First let us try to put aside the idea that “me”—the Self is *us*—is this physical body, and withdrawing as people say into our inner consciousness and closing our eyes, we gradually seem to feel as “ourselves” a sort of thinking, feeling point “inside” the body. At first perhaps, it may seem as if the whole brain were thinking, but after a time we can centre ourselves into quite a point, in brain or heart as the case may be. Doing this we shall find that we can make “ourselves” (to our feeling) *smaller* than the smallest atom, or tiniest speck we can imagine. Thus the Self—in this case the “individual” self, the Self is *us*—may be felt and almost realised as smaller than anything we like.

Now take the other arm of the seeming paradox: “larger than the largest.” This time let us expand ourselves in imagination, as before we drew ourselves together into a point. We can imagine the world as contained in the embrace of our consciousness, then the solar system, and so on and on without limit. All—even the largest expanse imaginable, we can conceive of as embraced in, enfolded, enwrapped, by our consciousness, our self. But “we” are only the Self, individualised, limited

and localised by association with the various bodies, physical, astral, etc., which we use. Since then our little self can either embrace the universe of stars, or contract itself till it is less than the tiniest atom, how much more truly can the ancient scripture say of the One Self, the Self unlimited, boundless, eternal, free, that It is "smaller than the smallest, larger than the largest."

J. C. C.—It goes without saying that propositions like the one mentioned in the question cannot be fully comprehended intellectually without going into the most thorough analysis and examination of some of the fundamental problems of philosophy. Although it is not possible to answer in a few words, as the questioner wants to know an easy explanation of the matter I will try to make a few suggestions which may be of help in the understanding of this most difficult idea of the Self being at the same time the smallest and the largest of all things.

Before, however, I do so, let me remind the questioner that the ideas of smallness, largeness, and the like, are all connected with, or even forms of, a single idea—Space, which, like Time, is only a mode of gaining knowledge by limited consciousness. Being limited in our consciousness we know objects either in different directions or in succession or in both. And it is this notion of direction and succession which is the essence of all space and time. Direction measured makes us think of extension, while what we call duration is only measured succession. Now these ideas applied to objects lead us to speak of them as small or large.

The next point to consider is the nature and essence of the objects which we know in space and time, or in direction and succession. Here also any detailed explanation is impossible. It can be shown with mathematical certainty that all through his experience man can know only one thing and nothing more, and that thing is himself or rather his self. It is admitted even by the philosophers and psychologists of Europe that all we know is only our own ideas, modifications of our own consciousness. True, it is assumed by most of them that these modifications in our own nature are produced by certain external stimuli which are movements of some sort or other. But that is only an assumption, an inference. No one has ever seen or known a movement save in or of himself. That is to say, not only are the objects of our knowledge modifications of our own consciousness but also the so-called stimuli which are supposed to be the cause, inducing the ideas of these objects in us are only assumptions and externalisations of internal ideas. In other words, whatever we have so far known as the external universe, to which are applied the predicates of smallness, largeness, and so on, is only aspects of our innermost being or the Self. Not only this, but whatever we can possibly know in the future of, or as, the universe will and can be only aspects of the innermost subjectivity.

If we have understood so far we can easily understand how this innermost subjectivity or the Self must be the smallest, the mathematical point, in so far as It is the subject, and nothing else. It is also the largest, the universe, in so far as It is known as the object. Thus it is that the Self is described in apparently contradictory terms.

So far with regard to a brief intellectual explanation of the problem. Another hint, helpful in the understanding of the question may also be derived from a practical observation which is within the reach of many, if not of all.

It is well-known that people having well developed and highly trained powers of clairvoyance, can see around men what are called their auras. These auras, it is also well known are, so to say, the outlying parts of the emotional and mental organs or bodies, as they are sometimes called. That is to say, when the clairvoyant sees the aura of a person with the mental vision he sees the mind of the person observed, and he sees it extended in space, as larger than his physical body. But what does the man himself see or know of his mind? He, if he be not a clairvoyant too, knows and thinks of his mind as a small and tiny something situated somewhere, or nowhere, or even everywhere, in his body. Here is a case where the man identifies himself or his innermost nature, the Self, with the mind, or, to coin a phrase, subjectifies the mind and knows it as a point. But if he be clairvoyant and can objectify the mind he will see it as extended in space as larger than the physical body and smaller than something else, say the mind of another person.

Apply this idea to the Self, and it will be seen how It is the smallest, the mathematical point, when subjectified, and how It is the largest, the universe, when objectified.

These few hints, among many others which might also be given, might help the questioner in understanding a problem which is certainly not an easy one.

A. E. J.—*The "physical plane" being, in my mind, associated with the "waking state," the "astral plane" with the "dreaming state," and so forth, it seems to me natural to say that, whilst awake, I am thinking on the physical plane. If this be incorrect, as I am assured, I should like to have some explanation, in order to clear up in my mind the relations of the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep with the Seven Principles and the physical, astral, and other "planes."*

A. A. W.—The materials for a complete answer to this question will be found in Manual No. VII., *Man and His Bodies*, especially in the last chapter, "The Man." Mr. Leadbeater's little work on *Dreams* also contains much which should help to clear up the querist's difficulty. I fancy that the puzzle mainly arises from a misconception, not infrequent, of the nature of the various "planes" so often spoken of in Theosophical works. These are not to be thought of as so many separate

countries or worlds, out of one of which we travel to another. Just as our own physical, astral and mental bodies interpenetrate one another and are co-existent, save as the finer may be somewhat larger than the coarser, so the physical, astral and mental "planes" co-exist; and the passing from one to another simply means that the ego becomes conscious of a new set of vibrations. An analogy from the senses may perhaps help us. A man who had only the one sense of *hearing* would only be conscious of the limited gamut of vibrations which cause the impression of sound. Sound would be to him his world, or plane. Now close his *ears* and open his *eyes*; what happens? He will cease to sense the sound-vibrations; his world, will, as it were, vanish from him, and in its place a new world, that of light-vibrations, will open upon him. This change he would naturally express as passing from the sound-plane to the light-plane. But if you allow him *both* to see and hear, he will not think of saying that he sees upon the sound-plane.

The passage from the physical to the astral and from that to the mental is similar to this. In our ordinary waking condition the physical world outside us makes impressions on our physical organs which are passed on to the brain; it is the *astral* body which *feels* them—on its own plane; and the lower *mental*, which *reasons* upon them. But it is always the ego, above all these, who thinks and understands; and passes down his orders to the physical brain, which is his sole means of action (often a very imperfect one) on the physical world, remaining himself on his own *mental* plane always. When we speak, as we often do, of our consciousness being on the physical plane, it would be more correct to say that in the waking state it *reaches down* to the physical plane; whilst in sleep we are no longer conscious of the physical, because the astral has temporarily left its grosser companion and does not transmit impressions made upon it to the ego. At the present state of development of the ordinary man this makes a complete wall between the two states, and we speak of passing from one to the other; hereafter we shall come to carry our consciousness freely between the two, as the ordinary man can see and hear both together. But we must keep in mind that even now the ego is fully conscious in sleep of the impressions *directly* made upon his astral body, so far as that is capable of receiving such.

The distinction between the Dreaming State and that of Deep Sleep or Trance is that in the first the Higher Ego is not far away from the sleeping body—as it is described to us, "hovering over it," and recalled to it by the most trifling disturbance; whilst in the second the better-

developed ego is able to function consciously and freely in the astral or even higher bodies, and may leave the physical body far away and for a long time.

I hope this brief explanation may help to make it clear to the querist why we object to the statement that we think upon the physical plane; whilst by no means condemning his association of the waking state with that plane. It is simply that the Thinker is *never* on the physical plane at all; but at the times we call waking he is able to put down a sort of tentacle or "feeler" into it, in order to gain information of what is going on there and to take his share of action upon it.

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QUESTION 77.

H. A. V.—*Is the Hebrew alphabet an inheritance from the Atlanteans? Did they give its letters the same value, be it as mother, double, or simple letters, be it as numerals? Are there any passages in the Old Testament as originally worded by the Atlanteans?*

G. R. S. M.—"Atlantean" is a term that covers a multitude of sins, and no doubt also some virtues. The name, however, is, in my opinion, of absolutely no scientific value, for (with the exception of a few barbarous remnants of "third-race" folk) it simply means Non-Aryan. Hebrew is (I was going to say indubitably) Non-Aryan; but I do not know whether this is not too sweeping an assertion; for a friend of mine in a Swedish university is engaged upon a scientific Hebrew grammar treated on the lines of Aryan philology. Hebrew is a dialectic variant of Chaldæan, and is therefore presumably Non-Aryan. But there is reason to think that there was a strong Aryan mixture in Babylonia. We have still to learn much concerning the Aryan-Semitic race, and why the Jew has played so prominent a part among fifth-race peoples.

The Chaldæans are said to have been the inventors of the number-letter system. There may be a few scraps of such Chaldæan number-lettering in the oldest deposits of the Jewish Old Covenant scriptures, but I am unable to say which they are, as my Hebrew is of the most elementary.

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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, 3, Langham Place, 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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. X.

LONDON, SEPTEMBER 1, 1900.

NO. 2.

Edited by OTWAY CUFFE.

## THE PRESIDENT-FOUNDER.

AFTER visiting several centres and branches in the South and West of England, Colonel Olcott paid a short visit to Paris, returning to London on August 10th. The President-Founder left for India, *via* Southampton, on August 13th.

## ACTIVITIES.

### Executive Notice.

The Executive Committee have appointed Captain Boggiani and Mrs. Cooper-Oakley to act as temporary Organising Secretaries in Italy pending the formation of an Italian Section.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary.*

## Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to August 20th: C. B. W., 5s.; M. W., £1; E. M. M., £2; E. F., £5; C. C., 10s.; T. B. B., £1 1s.; E. de M. M., 16s.; O. C., £3 3s.; W. H. G., 15s.; A. F. P., £6; M. A. C. T., £1. Total, £21 10s.

## The Passee Bequest.

From the proceeds of Lamolie House, Grenada, bequeathed by the late Mr. Thomas E. Passee to the Trustees of the Society in Europe, the sum of £200 has been received by the Treasurer.

## Re-opening of the Library.

The Library and members' rooms at 28, Albemarle Street will be re-opened from the 1st of September.

## Lectures by Mrs. Besant.

Mrs. Besant delivers two public lectures on Sunday evenings, August 26th and September 2nd, in the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Restaurant, Piccadilly. The subjects are:—August 26th, "Whence come Religions?" and September 2nd, "Peace amid Wars." The lectures begin at 7 p.m., seats 2/- and 1/. Tickets can be obtained at St. James's Restaurant, and from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 3, Langham Place, W.

## Class at Headquarters.

Mrs. Alan Leo's elementary class for the study of Theosophy will be resumed on Thursday, September 20th. The class meets weekly at 4.30 p.m., at 28, Albemarle Street, W.

## North of England Federation.

The twenty-sixth quarterly Conference was held at Harrogate, on Saturday, August 11th, 1900, under the presidency of Mrs. Besant, who congratulated the members upon the Federation having completed its seventh year of existence, the meeting then being held commencing the eighth.

Mr. W. H. Thomas then opened a discussion on "The Use and Abuse of Criticism." After several of the members present had spoken, a second discussion was commenced by Mrs.

Corbett, on "Society and Solitude as a means of training Character." Mr. Leadbeater, Miss Shaw, Mr. Hodgson Smith, Miss Ward, and others took part in the discussions, which were closed by Mrs. Besant.

The members of the Conference then adjourned to the Winter Gardens, where they were photographed. On re-assembling an exceedingly helpful address was delivered by Mrs. Besant on "Spiritual Evolution."

In connection with the Federation meetings, Mrs. Besant also lectured in Harrogate to members on Friday, August 12th, and on Sunday, the 13th, to two largely attended public meetings. On Monday, Mrs. Besant visited Middlesbrough, where she met the lodge members and afterwards lectured to a large public meeting in the Temperance Hall. Public lectures at Leeds and Bradford concluded a very successful tour.

W. H. THOMAS.

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#### Blavatsky Lodge.

The Lodge has held one meeting only, the last before closing for its six weeks' vacation. On this occasion, July 26th, members met to hear an address from their President on the "Work of the Lodge," and to suggest and discuss methods of work during the coming winter.

Mrs. Besant, in a most impressive speech, reminded the Lodge of its special duty, owing to its age and the large number of its members, of serving as a living centre for the distribution of the light and teaching it has had so much opportunity for receiving. The President referred to the troubled condition of things all over the world, and urged the extreme importance, in the face of this, of making redoubled efforts to give to as many as possible the wider and therefore calmer and truer views of life and of all its passing tragedies that so many of us think the teachings of Theosophy alone are able to supply. Various suggestions as to methods of work were made by members at the close of Mrs. Besant's speech, after which she added a few powerful words on the supreme necessity for tolerance on the part of all who would call themselves by the name Theosophist.

The Lodge resumes its regular Thursday lectures on September 20th, and a course of Sunday evening lectures for the benefit chiefly of those who are not yet members of the Society is in preparation.

S. MAUD SHARPE.

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#### Theosophical Lending Library.

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

Terms of subscription; three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theo-

sophical Lending Library, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W.

LILIAN LLOYD,  
Librarian.

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#### Lotus Circle.

As many children are away the Lotus Circle will not meet until the middle of September.

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#### Lecture List.

**BIRMINGHAM LODGE.** Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Sept. 2nd, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, B. Old; Sept. 9th, *Class Study: Reincarnation*; Sept. 16th, *Who were the Atlanteans*, Miss J. Keeley; Sept. 23rd, *Class Study: The Law of Causation*; Sept. 30th, *Experience*, W. Ames. For information apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

**BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE.** Meetings in the Yorkshire Penny Bank Buildings, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of *Karma*.

**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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

**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. Cattanch, 67, Brunswick Street.

**EXETER CENTRE.** Meetings at 19, Bedford Circus, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

**GLASGOW CENTRE.** Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on the second Thursday of each month.

**HAMBURG LODGE.** Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

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

**HARROGATE LODGE.** Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, Clarence Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Sept. 2nd, *The Athanasian Creed*, Mrs. Corbett; Sept. 9th, *Some Neglected Christian Teachings*, W. H. Thomas; Sept. 16th, *The Message of Theosophy*, Members; Sept. 23rd, *Despair or Hope*, Baker Hudson; Sept. 30th, *The Eternal Father*, H. Ernest Nichol. Lodge meetings on Fridays at

7.30 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of "Some Problems of Life."

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 every Monday at 8 p.m., at 97, Westbourne Avenue.

LEEDS CENTRE. Meetings on the first Monday in each month at 3, Roseville Road, at 7.30 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Enquiries may be addressed to Mrs. Lees, at above address.

LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE. Meetings held on Mondays, at 46, Hawthorn Mount, Chapel Allerton. Enquiries may be addressed to W. H. Bean, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Pomona" Vegetarian Restaurant, Kurprinzstrasse, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings are held on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C., for the study of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Public meetings are suspended during the summer. Class on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 28, Albemarle Street, W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: September 6th and 13th, no meetings; September 20th, *The Sacred Sermon of Hermes the Thrice-Greatest*, G. R. S. Mead; September 27th, *Reincarnation or Immortality*, A. A. Wells. These meetings are open only to members of the Lodge.

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

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Students' Class on alternate Thursdays.

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, at 8.30 p.m.; and at 86, Savernake Road, Gospel Oak, on Wednesdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m. at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W. Meetings resumed towards the end of September.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 31, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 7, Ryedale

Terrace, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m. Subject for study, *Four Great Religions*.

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.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. No meetings in September.

ROME LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at 6 p.m., at 72, Via S. Niccolo da Tolentino.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.

## ENQUIRER.

### QUESTION 78.

W. W.—*I am interested in early Christian mysticism, and especially in the work that Mr. Mead is doing on the subject, but I find it very difficult to obtain any information in standard works of reference. Would Mr. Mead kindly indicate the best works in English for a beginner, as unfortunately I can read neither French nor German?*

G. R. S. M.—If W. W. will wait until October 1st, he will have at his disposal my best efforts on his behalf, and on behalf of those many thinking people who are intensely interested in the question of Christian origins, but who find great difficulty in procuring a guide in this bewildering maze. On October 1st will be published (by the Theosophical Publishing Society, 3, Langham Place, W.), a work of some 650 pages under the title *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, with the subtitle "Some Short Sketches among the Gnostics, mainly of the First Two Centuries, a Contribution to the Study of Christian Origins based on the most recently recovered Materials." To this will be appended the fullest bibliography of the subjects which has yet been attempted.

As I have written this work more immediately for the benefit of my colleagues and fellow-students in the Society, though with the further intention of helping all those who love the Light of the Christ, I may be, perhaps, permitted to so far trespass on the space of THE VĀHAN as to reproduce the substance of my preface, so that the many students in the Society who are interested in the great religion of the West may have some notion of the ground covered.

Some years ago I published in magazine form a series of short sketches, entitled "Among the Gnostics of the First Two Centuries," drawn from the polemical writings of the Church Fathers. I have since then been asked repeatedly to rescue them from the oblivion of the back numbers of a Review and republish them in book form. This I was for long unwilling to do, because I had planned a large work to comprise a number of volumes, and to be called *Round the Cradle of Christendom*, the materials of which I was collecting and gradually publishing in magazine articles, with the intention of finally gathering them together, revising and printing them in book form.

This, however, would have meant the work of many years, work that might never be completed (for no man can count on the future) and which would, therefore, have remained in the form of an apparently disconnected mass of articles without plan or purpose. I have, therefore, decided to publish a pioneer sketch—a programme as it were—the outlines of which I hope to fill in with more detailed work in a series of volumes, small or large as the importance of the various subjects demands.

The second part of the three divisions of the forthcoming volume, then, will consist for the most part of matter already published; it has, however, been throughout carefully revised. For the rest, I have endeavoured to give the reader a bird's-eye view of the whole field of early Gnosticism. I have, therefore, added to the above-mentioned articles the main materials to be derived from the Uncanonical Acts and the Coptic Gnostic works, and have prefaced the whole with a general Introduction dealing mainly with the background of the Gnosis. To all of this I have appended a conclusion and bibliographical indications to help the student. The treatment of the subject is, therefore, new, in that no one has previously attempted to bring the whole of these materials together.

These sketches are not, however, primarily intended for the student, but are written for the general reader. I have throughout endeavoured my best to keep the interests of the latter always in view, though I hope at the same time to have given the student the assurance that the best authorities have invariably been consulted. I have, therefore, on the one hand, explained many things with which the scholar is generally supposed to be already familiar, and, on the other, have strenuously resisted the temptation to learned annotation, to which the subject readily lends itself in every paragraph, but which would swell the volume to ten times its present size. I have, then, written so that the man of one language only may read from the first to the last page, without being forced to regret his ignorance of other tongues, for I believe that the subject is of profoundly human interest, and not one of merely academical importance. It is true that the difficulty of the subject is at times so great, that even with the best will in the world I have been unable to make the matter clear; but this is also true of every other writer in the field. The nature of the sketches, however, is such that if one paragraph deals with a subject which is beyond our comprehension, another is simple enough for all to understand; so that when the general reader comes to a difficult passage he need not lose courage, thinking that greater difficulty is to follow, for it frequently happens that just the opposite is the case.

Above all things I would have it understood that whatever views I may express in these forthcoming pages, they are all purely tentative; my main object has been to hand on what the earliest Christian philosophers and teachers wrote and

thought. They seem to me to have written many beautiful things, and I, for my part, have learned through them to sense the work of the Great Master in a totally new light.

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QUESTION 79.

*E. B. G.—Can one leave behind some disagreeable karma, such as drunkenness, murder, etc., for several incarnations and follow a line of elevating thought and work, and then, perhaps in a life that is reasonably perfect, be either a drunkard or a murderer, or is it true that what is no temptation in this life we may consider as being really overcome?*

A. P. S.—In regard to the working of karma there is practically no authoritative teaching in possession of Theosophical students beyond that general view of the subject embodied in the earliest books. One can see that good reasons may justify the reserve of the high occult authorities in this matter. Exact knowledge as to how the law works in the details of physical life would suggest selfish efforts to secure agreeable conditions rather than the nobler striving for spiritual growth that should engage the attention of candidates for occult teaching. All such questions, therefore, as the one before us, may be best discussed from the point of view of pure reason rather than from that of any fragmentary information received. As a question thus appealing to general intelligence, the problem put forward is well worth attention.

First, however, there is a strange confusion of ideas in the phrase, "disagreeable karma such as drunkenness, murder, etc." Do not let us lose sight of the enormous gulf that separates bad habits of a self-regarding nature from crimes that involve other persons in suffering. Drunkenness is so bad a habit, and so apt to give rise to acts which cause suffering to others, that one does not want to apologise for it exactly. And of course it cannot but act as a terrible impediment to spiritual progress. But its karma, tending to its extinction as a habit in physical incarnation, is not likely to be very terrible, and still less likely to be long postponed. The karma of the kind liable to long postponement is evidently that which can only be worked out with reference to some particular person. For such arrangements Nature must wait till both persons are in incarnation together. There might, for example, be a murder that would be of so simple a character karmically, that it would be disposed of by an inversion of the parts played in another life. The victim in the one case might be the murderer in the second act of the drama, and the first murderer the victim. But that would be rather an elementary case, though it suggests the possibility that a person with the karma of a committed murder hanging over him might meanwhile live a "reasonably perfect" life.

Dividing the more or less evil tendencies of a

nature into those which merely provoke bad habits of a self-regarding kind, and those (much worse) tendencies which cause suffering to others, the first will obviously be operative life after life until they are overcome, and when no temptation in that direction is felt any more they may be regarded as overcome. The karma, however, of specifically evil deeds affecting others may be held over perhaps for many lives until the conditions arise in which it can be accurately worked out.

I. H.—With regard to the first part of this question, I call to mind some statements made by Mrs. Besant in a lecture to the Blavatsky Lodge. I gathered on that occasion that evil actions which seemed to be at variance with the character of the actor, might represent causes generated in past lives; they might indicate the past thoughts and desires of a man who had morally and intellectually outgrown that past. Such thoughts, which were only not revealed in the past as actions from lack of opportunity, might produce their results in later lives when such opportunity arose, unless a strongly neutralising and definite stream of thought had been directed, in order to counteract past thinking. Where such past thinking had not been neutralised, and therefore produced its result, the action might have the effect of breaking certain fetters for the soul which had grown greater than its deeds; by the pain following its action it would pay its debt and be free.

In attempting an answer to the last clause of the question I am merely advancing a theory of my own. It seems to me that one might decide whether one had overcome a temptation by observing one's mental attitude towards the tempted. Where there is absolutely no sympathy felt for the sinner I cannot think the sin has been overcome; if it had been so, I believe the position of one to whom it is still a temptation would be understood. I do not presume to say that, as consciousness greatly expands, it may not be possible to understand by quite other means. If this be so, I conclude that it might be possible to remain unsympathetic in some directions, even though a comparatively high point of evolution might have been reached; it would only be a question of further development in order to bring about sympathetic comprehension. Of this I know nothing, and I may be entirely wrong. I believe it to be possible deliberately to think (perhaps I ought to say feel, yet it seems to be a slightly more deliberate process than is pure feeling, although the mind seems to have check upon, and can observe the process) oneself into an attitude of mind apparently quite foreign to one's natural tendencies; with the result that the mental horizon seems to be considerably widened. Since this is so, it would seem that at a higher stage of evolution there must be an extension of this process, so that it would not be needful to commit all sins in order to understand them, or to pass through all experience in order to have a many-sided nature, capable of responding to all phases of life. But I believe one would only be

safe in saying one had outgrown a tendency when the personal disinclination was linked to comprehension of the actions and sensations of one who was still attracted towards that line of action. At the same time I cannot see that the mingled lack of attraction and lack of sympathy would mean that such and such a sin would be finally committed; there might, I think, be no past karma which would lead to such an effect; and I suppose that no karma might be generated in the present or in the future to lead to such a result. If I am right, then I suppose that sympathetic understanding might be obtained along the lines I have suggested. But I may be speaking "as a fool."

E. L.—It is possible, we have been told, that a man can leave behind him temporarily some bad piece of karma and continue his evolution in the manner suggested. Thus karma accumulated is very often held over—or brought forward—apart from the original plan, according to what the great Lords of Karma see fit. The fact that we do not know enough to judge either ourselves or others correctly makes it impossible for us to be sure that our not being tempted in some one way to wrong doing means having overcome it.

But one suggestion seems as a guide here, and it is that when we can view a vice in another leniently, compassionately and not harshly, we may take it as showing that we *have* grown beyond that stage. Only the man who has recently suffered from the same limitation *himself* is harsh and unforgiving.

W. F. K.—"The rafters and the roof-tree" can hardly be held to be fully broken down in any direction so long as temptation remains. I take it that when a man has so far overcome the tendency to any evil action, when he has full opportunity, no risk of detection, and apparently strong inducement, we may hold that he has outlived his karma in that direction, and that it will not trouble him again. If, on the other hand, we find a man who yields to his own faults easily and abuses his neighbours for similar faults which he has not happened to have had the opportunity or temptation to commit, then we may reasonably doubt if he has really exhausted his own karma in that direction either. But the adjustment of karma is not for us; and many a man seems to be born, or placed, quite out of his element. But for this, there may be reasons which we cannot follow. For example, if a man belongs spiritually to some particular century, and has to take his incarnation at a time when it is passing through some phase of national karma which he has not deserved to share, I take it he may be born into some other country for that incarnation, where he will be saved from undeserved calamity at the expense of living for a time in a more or less congenial environment. And so of other analogous causes.

A. H. W.—The writer thinks that a "temptation" which has been freely offered, and has failed to attract in any life, must have been already

overcome. The charm of alcohol seems universal to the less evolved, and when it fails to please it must have been experienced and worn out. The question of murder is individual, for that a "reasonably perfect" person should desire to slay another, involves having greatly suffered through that other. Many lives may pass before the two egos meet again; but the individual in question would have sufficient mental balance to control his impulse. However, any of us, far from reasonable perfection as we are, may meet our dearest foe down the procession of the ages, and endure a flood of hate and fear let loose in our very soul. So terrible a possibility can be met only in one way; by always keeping before the mind the idea of the one Self in all that lives and suffers; by training ourselves to remember that were we in another's place, we should act just as he does, no matter how; by never forgetting that what seems wrong to us, is right for him, because he is younger, or older, than ourself. A perfect tolerance, a tongue that has lost the power to wound, a charity that thinks no evil, these are the rock on which to build; then should an ancient enemy appear, we shall surely let him go, even should love not do its perfect work, and find in him, at length, a friend.

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QUESTION 80.

*S. H. B.—It seems evident that confinement to one sub-plane of the astral after death will very much restrict our ability to help others who may know less than we do; is there no way in which we can avoid or transcend this limitation?*

C. W. L.—This restriction is not in any way a necessary evil, but is the work of that manifestation of the man's lower nature which has sometimes been called the desire-elemental (see the new enlarged edition of *The Astral Plane*, page 40) and is produced by it entirely without any reference to, or indeed any knowledge on its part of, the evolution of the man as a whole.

The ordinary man, knowing nothing whatever about all this, accepts these arrangements of the desire-elemental as a part of the new and strange conditions which he finds surrounding him, and supposes himself to be seeing the whole of the *post-mortem* world, when in reality he has only an extremely partial view of one of its sub-planes. But there is no reason whatever why the student of occultism, who understands the situation, should tamely submit himself to the sway of this elemental after death any more than he did during life. He will of course decline to permit the case-hardening which would confine him to a single sub-plane, and will insist upon keeping open his communications with the higher astral levels as well.

Thus he will be in practically the same position as he was when he passed into the astral world in sleep during earth-life, and therefore will be able to move about much more freely, and make himself much more useful, than if he allowed himself to be the slave of the lower desires. So once again we see the exceeding advantage of having accu-

rate knowledge beforehand with regard to these after-death conditions.

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QUESTION 81.

*E. B. G.—I am somewhat puzzled in regard to our individual duty in the development of the psychic powers latent in each of us. Is it enough to study but not try to arouse these powers, letting them awaken in natural evolution? If we used the same reasoning in other things there would be but little development for many of us.*

C. W. L.—It is undoubtedly safer for the majority of people to devote themselves solely to the development of their moral character, and to wait for psychic powers until they come in the natural course. Most of us find that we have quite enough to do in trying to raise ourselves to the level indicated in such books as Mrs. Besant's *In the Outer Court* or *The Path of Discipleship*, and it is there stated that at a certain stage upon the Path these psychic powers must inevitably come if they have not been previously developed.

At the same time there can be no possible harm in any member devoting himself to meditation, concentration or contemplation to the fullest possible extent, and these exercises very frequently cause the unfolding of higher faculties in those for whom their development is reasonably near. This is indeed the only safe way in which any effort in that direction can be made, as any attempts to induce them by control of breath or other similar methods are distinctly unsafe for most people unless undertaken under the direct guidance of a Master.

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QUESTION 82.

*W. F. K.—Is there any truth in the old superstition (?) that if you save a man from drowning, he is sure to kill you sooner or later? It is unfortunately a matter of common experience that those who have done most to benefit either mankind or individuals, have often been most exposed to proportionate ingratitude. Often, too, the saying of Wolsey, "If I had served my God as I have served my king, he would not have abandoned me to my enemies in my old age," seems to be rather a beautiful sentiment than visibly confirmed by facts. "He saved others; himself He cannot save." What is the occult explanation of all this?*

E. L.—I am not acquainted with the superstition referred to by W. F. K., but I should say, Theosophically speaking, it was contradicted by the teaching that when we contract such a debt with another as the saving of his life, or indeed any kármic debt of the kind, it would be more likely that the rescued person would benefit us in some way later, than repay us with injury.

But human ingratitude is unfortunately only too common, owing largely I think to the fact that people are often ignorant that they *are* benefited, as in the case of a great Teacher appearing among

men, where the power that accompanies Him, while quickening the latent virtue in them, also quickens elements of an opposite nature. Ingratitude would be one of the most common forms this reactive force would take. But we must remember that to look for gratitude, or resent its absence, shows that we are working for reward as yet.

The sentence quoted in conclusion would refer, it seems to me, to that law by which those who aspire to be world saviours cannot use their Divine and occult powers on their own behalf. You may choose to remain among those who will be saved, or you may become a saviour, but you cannot tread both paths.

Only the will of the Initiate keeps Him bound to the Cross. He renounces Himself. He might save Himself the unspeakable heartache, the long drawn-out agony; but only by sacrificing the humanity he has vowed to liberate.

S. M. S.—“Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” I have quoted this most emphatic statement made by the Christ, because it will be familiar to so many, and because it seems completely to answer the words quoted in the last part of W. F. K.’s question.

It is not easy to say how the superstition referred to has grown up or whether there is any truth in it, but it doubtless has a foundation in the fact that human nature has at all times shown a tendency to return, if not evil, at least suspicion for benefits conferred. And one possible explanation of this is not at all occult, but a very human and obvious one. There is still so much of selfishness left in most of us that we find it very hard to believe that another can act in a really disinterested way, and therefore are inclined to suspect that there is always some motive of self-interest behind the apparently generous action.

On the other hand, the capacity for sustained gratitude requires far more strength and development of character than is often supposed, and, failing to realise this, we are sometimes over-harsh where we do not find it, expecting more of people than they have it in their power to give. It is easy for most of us to be grateful for a day, or for a few weeks, but to keep up a persistent gratitude for years or even for a life-time, in spite of difficulty and in the absence perhaps of anything that we may be conscious of to fan it into greater warmth—this is a thing of which very few of us are capable, just because it demands in a rather high degree the development of many qualities which alone make it possible and of which it is the outcome.

But to return to the words quoted by W. F. K. at the close of the question. If there is one thing more plainly shown than another throughout the whole story of the ministry of the Christ, it is that whatever the extent of His wonderful power He never made use of it to benefit or save Himself; moreover, the whole of His teaching, so far as we know it, would seem to render such an exercise of power impossible to any who at all understood the inner meaning of the lessons he gave. And

this seems to be the hall-mark of those who are approaching the “kingdom of heaven,” that they do gradually but literally become as “little children,” with all the helplessness and absolute dependence upon the good-will of those about them, so far as they themselves are concerned, of the little child.

The phrase “Smaller than small and greater than great,” as applied to the Self, may be taken as a symbol of infinite adaptability to every need, even though otherwise its meaning be too far above our understanding; and the man who is growing towards the Self, and showing on the hidden side ever-increasing and more wonderful strength and beauty, on the side which is turned earthwards seems to offer as proof of these his power to become the servant of all, and even as the very least of those among whom he labours.

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of Angels?” are the recorded words of the Christ at the moment of His betrayal. Yes, “But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be,” and how then should the work that He came to do have been perfectly accomplished? Only as He completely identified Himself with humanity in all its weakness and ignorance, and absence of conscious comfort and illumination from the “Father,” only so could He have set a perfect example to those about Him of what their lives might be, and have shewn the way which in the end would lead them into peace. And the beauty and the infinite pathos of such a life lie in this, that had He loved it more than those He was trying then to teach, more than the generations yet unborn for whom He was, as it were, to strike the key-note, He could at any moment have stood forth as the revealed “Son of God,” displaying before the eyes of the astonished multitudes who crowded round Him perpetually seeking after a “sign,” all the blinding glory of which the wonders that He did for the healing of the sick and sorrowful were but a pale reflection.

I know that many may very easily and justifiably take exception to all this on the ground that events did not take place as recorded in the Gospels, and that the words handed down as those of the Master are probably not the words really used by Him. All this may be true, and still it does not seem to matter very much. The more important point for us to consider is not the verbal accuracy, but whether the teachings, as we have them, do or do not reflect the Christ-spirit as we have begun to learn to understand it. And if we think they do, then we may surely safely take them, and humbly hope that one day we may be found walking by them.

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#### QUESTION 83.

*H. W.—It is, I understand, the Theosophical teaching that the psychic faculties are dormant in everyone. We are told with reference to our moral nature and our minds that we should endeavour to build up and*

*cultivate them but that our latent psychic faculties should be left, as it were, to take care of themselves until such time as they naturally manifest. Why should this be so?*

B. K.—There are several reasons which may be brought forward in answer, but perhaps it will be sufficient for the moment if one or two of the more important are here cited.

First then, people are advised to build up and cultivate their intellectual and (above all) their moral natures, because without a well-developed intellect the psychic, just like the physical faculties would be of little or no service to their possessor. Rather they would on the contrary almost inevitably expose him to most serious dangers. The same applies to the moral nature, for we see only too many people around us whom karma has put in possession of great powers and opportunities but who use them for the gratification of their own selfishness and to the injury of others, instead of for helpful and noble purposes. Only in the case of the psychic faculties the probability of misuse is far greater and the temptations far more subtle and searching.

Again—and this seems to me by far the most cogent reason—the purpose and goal of man's life is the development of his immortal spiritual nature. Now the accomplishment of this involves, as a necessary step, a high degree of intellectual as well as of moral development, but does *not* require any development of the so-called “psychic faculties.” For it must be remembered that what most people, and probably the questioner among them, mean by “developing psychic faculties,” is really the *bringing through* of the consciousness of the astral plane into the waking brain consciousness. This however depends almost wholly upon the structure and condition of the etheric part of the physical body, and hence its presence or absence in any given physical life is chiefly a matter of karma, and even if developed by special practice, may again be lost when the body itself disintegrates at death.

Strictly speaking, the psychic faculties proper, *i.e.*, the powers of the astral body, grow and develop naturally and inevitably as the whole man himself grows and progresses, and that mainly—in a case of healthy growth—as a direct result of his growing intellectual and moral activities.

Such faculties, *i.e.*, the powers of work on the astral plane, therefore are inseparable accompaniments and results of the efforts made towards real spiritual progress, and these pass on and grow from life to life. While as to the bringing through into waking consciousness of astral and higher experiences, such bringing through is best left for the time when the Master sees it wise and right for his pupil to be called upon to face the far, far greater strain and the manifold difficulties which such “bringing through” involves.

#### QUESTION 84.

H. W.—*When a normally clairaudient medium hears the “direct voice,” what is heard from the Theosophical point of view—not a decaying astral surely?*

C. W. L.—I have myself frequently heard the direct voice at spiritualistic séances, and in most cases no clairaudience is needed for that purpose, since the voice is clearly physical. In such a case there must obviously be a partial materialization, probably tangible though not visible, in order that vibrations of the atmospheric air may be produced. Where the sounds are purely astral, and real clairaudience is needed, they are simply similar vibrations of astral matter set up by astral entities, and there is no difficulty in understanding them.

#### QUESTION 85.

H. W.—*At séances infants often come to their relatives and appear as if grown up to full stature. If the ego reincarnates at once, how is this?*

C. W. L.—One often reads of cases in which infants dying young have continued to manifest at séances and have described themselves as growing; in some cases, it is stated, they have even shown themselves in materialized form as fully grown persons. We do not know in Theosophy of any conditions under which such growth can really take place, and I should be inclined to believe that in the majority of such cases some other entity was personating the departed child.

#### QUESTION 86.

H. W.—*In what are called materializations it is stated that the form made is composed of substance taken from the etheric double. Why then does the medium lose in physical weight and size?*

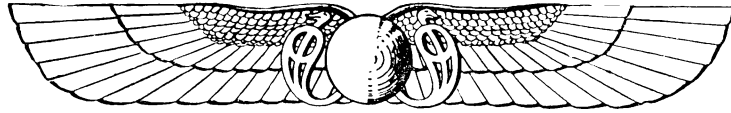
C. W. L.—In materialization a great deal of physical matter is frequently taken from the body of the medium as well as merely etheric matter. I have myself seen cases in which both the weight and the size of the medium's body were obviously diminished. I fancy that this is almost always the case when several materialized figures show themselves at once. (See Manual No. V., p. 117.)

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, 3, Langham Place, 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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. X.

LONDON, OCTOBER 1, 1900.

NO. 3.

Edited by OTWAY CUFFE.

### EXECUTIVE NOTICE.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee, held on September 5th, the General Secretary notified the Committee that owing to the fact that for the future he would be living out of London and out of reach of the Headquarters, he felt himself compelled to place the resignation of his office of General Secretary in their hands, and to request the Committee to appoint a new General Secretary.

The Committee, having considered the matter, decided to accept the resignation of Mr. Cuffe, and appointed Dr. Arthur A. Wells General Secretary of the European Section, the appointment to date from October 15th proximo.

The Committee also passed the following resolution:

“The Committee desire in connection with this announcement to express their very high sense of the services which have been rendered by Mr. Cuffe during his tenure of office. They could not desire any more satisfactory arrangement for the future than that which Dr. Wells has fortunately consented to fall in with, but nothing but the necessities of the case would have induced the Committee to agree to any change.”

*By order,*  
OTWAY CUFFE,  
*General Secretary.*

In view of the above Executive Notice I desire to say a word or two for the information of the members of the Section. With regard to the reasons which have compelled me to take so serious a step there is but little I can add to what appears in the notice.

The reason assigned is the sole and only cause which led to my action—for personal and private reasons it has become necessary for me to move my home from London, where for some years past I have lived, to Ireland.

Under these circumstances it is impossible for me to continue to exercise the functions of your General Secretary—in order efficiently to perform the duties it is absolutely necessary to be within easy reach of Headquarters. As this will not be possible for me in the future, I have been compelled to ask your Executive Committee to receive my resignation.

As my successor, the choice of the Committee has fallen on Dr. Arthur A. Wells, and I am rejoiced that Dr. Wells is willing to assume the duties, for I am convinced that the responsibilities of the office could not have been assumed by anyone better fitted to sustain them.

For the past few months Dr. Wells has been kindly helping me in the office, so in no sense does he come new to the work. I need hardly say that nothing short of absolute necessity would have caused me to surrender the charge with which the Section has honoured me for the past two and a half years, and I trust that no one will for a moment imagine that because I am thus compelled to bring to an end my official connection with the work, my attitude towards the Society and towards Theosophy has changed in the very least degree.

May I, in concluding these very personal remarks, take the opportunity of endeavouring to express to each one of those members of the Section with whom I have been brought into contact in the course of my duties, my most sincere and profound thanks for the very real sympathy, kindness and help which I have invariably experienced from them, and for their ever-ready response to any appeal for assistance; for all this and much more, I shall ever feel a deep debt of gratitude to the members of the Society, and ever

bear with me a cheering memory of their sympathy and brotherhood.

OTWAY CUFFE.

Rai Bahadur Lala Baij Nath, B.A., Meerut, 1899.

A. J. WILLSON,  
Librarian.

### CHANGE OF EDITORSHIP.

On and after the date of this issue Dr. Arthur A. Wells assumes the duties of Editor of THE VĀHAN.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Renewal of Leeds Lodge.

The Leeds Lodge, which resigned its Charter last year, has been re-formed and a fresh Charter issued, dated September 19th, 1900. The members applying for the new Charter are: A. R. Orage, W. H. Bean, Mrs. Orage, Miss M. A. Nelson, Mrs. Lees, Miss A. K. Kennedy, and H. W. Hunter.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
General Secretary.

#### New Branch.

September 21st, 1900. Charter issued this day to Edwin Hill, F. B. Bond, E. R. Blackett, M. S. Johnson, Mrs. Hill, Miss J. M. Chivers, Miss E. Beane, and Mrs. Blackett, to form the Bath Branch of the Theosophical Society.

OTWAY CUFFE,  
General Secretary.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to September 20th: M. S., 6s.; P. T., £2 2s.; J. A., 5s.; J. McC., £1; G. C. B., £1 1s.; E. F., 10s.; B. M. Y., £1 1s.; M. A. B., 12s.; E. W., £15; B. P. M., 5s. Total, £22 2s.

#### Section Reference Library.

The following books have been presented and are now acknowledged with thanks:—*Studies in John the Scot (Erigena)*, Alice Gardner, London, 1900; *Le Son dans la Nature*, Edmond Bailly, Paris, 1900; *Christo e Budda, e altri iddii dell'Oriente*, Raffaele Mariano, Vol. I., Firenze, 1900; *Le Sentier du Disciple*, traduit de l'Anglais par H. D., Paris, 1900; *Theosophische Handboekjes*, No. 7; *De Mensch en zijn Lichamen*, door Annie Besant, Dutch translation, Amsterdam, 1900; *The Alchemy of Happiness, an exposition of the Islamic Theosophy*, K. F. Mirza, Lahore, 1894; *Dendereh*, 1898, W. M. Flinders Petrie, D.C.L. (seventeenth Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund), London, 1900; *Modern Astrology*, Vol. VII.; *Neo-Christian Epistles, A Vindication of Christianity*, B. S. Drury, London, 1900; *The Heart of Job, A Message to the World*, Dr. W. C. Gibbons, Chicago, 1900; *The Mission of Evil: a problem reconsidered*, the Rev. G. W. Allen, London, 1900; *Hinduism: Ancient and Modern*,

#### Lectures by Mr. Mead.

During the autumn two courses of lectures, entitled "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten," will be given on the Origins of Christianity by Mr. G. R. S. Mead, on Tuesday afternoons, from 5 to 6, in the Lecture Room, 28, Albemarle Street, W.

A COURSE:—Oct. 9th, "Mystic Judaism: the Essenes"; Oct. 16th, "The Contemplative Life: the Therapeuts"; Oct. 23rd, "The Poor Men: the Ebionites"; Oct. 30th, "The Gnostics: the Earliest Christian Philosophers."

B COURSE:—Nov. 13th, "Forgotten Stories of Jesus"; Nov. 20th, "The Earliest 'Higher Criticism'"; Oct. 27th, "Evolution according to the Gnosis"; Dec. 4th, "The Hymn of the Robe of Glory."

Course Tickets for either Course, 5s. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 3, Langham Place, W. Admission to each lecture, 2s.

#### Mr. C. W. Leadbeater.

Mr. C. W. Leadbeater is just starting upon a four months' tour among the Branches of our American Section. He is to visit New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver, and many intermediate cities. He requests his very numerous correspondents both in the United Kingdom and in the various Continental and Colonial Sections, to be kind enough to note that, until the end of January next, his address will be care of Alexander Fullerton, Esq., 46, Fifth Avenue, New York, U.S.A.

#### Mr. C. Jinarâjadâsa.

Mr. C. Jinarâjadâsa, who recently took his degree in the Oriental Languages Tripos at Cambridge, left England for Ceylon on September 26th, in order to devote himself to working for Buddhism in his native country, under the auspices of the Colombo Branch of our Society. The hearty good wishes of the many warm friends whom he has made during his ten years' stay in Europe will accompany him in his new work.

#### Blavatsky Lodge.

The Lodge re-opened on September 20th with a lecture from Mr. Mead. It will be observed that a new departure has been made in the form of a proposed monthly conversazione, whereby it is hoped that members will be enabled to discuss future plans, subjects of common interest, etc., and thus be welded more closely together in their work. A course of Sunday evening lectures has

been arranged during the months of October, November and December; visitors who wish to attend these meetings can do so by applying for a ticket to the Secretary of the Lodge.

These lectures are primarily intended to give inquirers, who know little or nothing of Theosophy, a general idea of the leading Theosophical propositions. Members of the Society are of course entitled to attend them if they wish to do so, and will be welcomed by the Lodge; at the same time, should any question of limited space arise, it is hoped that members will be disposed to yield their rights to enquirers who are less fortunate than themselves in opportunities of attaining Theosophical knowledge.

S. M. S.

### Leeds Lodge.

The two Leeds centres have now united their forces and re-become a Lodge. Public meetings and Lodge meetings (to which enquirers are admitted) are being held on alternate Monday evenings. Mrs. Besant gave a public address on August 14th, and Mr. Leadbeater was kind enough to start for us the series of fortnightly lectures. So far this series has been exceedingly well-attended. Quite a number of Debating and Mutual Improvement Societies have accepted offers of lectures on Theosophical subjects for the coming winter.

W. H. BEAN,  
Secretary.

### Theosophical Lending Library.

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

Terms of subscription; three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W.

LILLIAN LLOYD,  
Librarian.

### Lotus Circle.

The children meet at 2.30 p.m. on Sundays at 28, Albemarle Street, W.

A. J. W.

### Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Oct. 7th, Annual General Meeting; Oct. 14th, "Karma"; Oct. 21st, . . . . . G. Tubbs; Oct. 28th, "The Law of Sacrifice." Mr. T. H. Duffell will continue his lectures on the study of Eastern Philosophy on Saturdays, at 8.15 p.m., at the above address. For information apply

to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings in the Yorkshire Penny Bank Buildings, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of *Karma*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. Meetings on alternate Sundays at 3.30 p.m., and on alternate Mondays at 8 p.m., 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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

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 19, Bedford Circus, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 5 p.m., for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

HAMBURG LODGE. Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

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

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, Clarence Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Oct. 7th, *A New Commandment*, W. Bell; Oct. 14th, *What Must I Do to be Saved?* Miss Shaw; Oct. 21st, *Sowing and Reaping*, C. N. Goode; Oct. 28th, *The New Gospel*, Hodgson Smith. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of "Some Problems of Life."

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 every Monday at 8 p.m., at 97, Westbourne Avenue.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarian Restaurant, Boar Lane, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.: Oct. 1st, *Why am I a Theosophist?* W. H. Thomas; Oct. 15th, *Death in the Light of Theosophy*, Hodgson Smith; Oct. 29th, *Prayer*, Miss Shaw. Branch meetings on alternate Mondays. Enquiries to be addressed to Mr. W. H. Beard, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Pomona" Vegetarian Restaurant, Kurprinzstrasse, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings are held on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C., for the study of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Public meetings are suspended during the summer. Class on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 28 Albemarle Street, W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: Oct. 4th, Annual Business Meeting; Oct. 11th, *From the Sermons of Hermes the Thrice-Greatest*, G. R. S. Mead; Oct. 18th, *Conversazione*; Oct. 25th, "*Lemuria*," a *Submerged Continent (recent scientific evidence)*, I., J. Stirling. On Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Oct. 7th, *The Theosophical Society as a Spiritual Movement*, Hon. Otway Cuffe; Oct. 14th, *The Making of Man: the Sub-human Stages*; Oct. 21st, *The Making of Man: the Lower Bodies*; Oct. 28th, *The Making of Man: the Higher Bodies*. The Thursday evening meetings are open only to members of the Lodge.

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

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "Glen Usk," Farquharson Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Students' Class on alternate Thursdays.

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 13, Tyndale Place, Upper Street, N., on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.; and at 86, Savernake Road, Gospel Oak, on Wednesdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WANDSWORTH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Eccles Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., on Wednesdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m. at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W.: Oct. 5th, *Other-World Visions of some Irish Seers*, Mrs. Hooper; Oct. 12th, *Life Ledgers of stray Mystics*, Miss A. L. B. Hardcastle; Oct. 19th, *Evolution from a Craniological Standpoint (Illustrated)*, G. Dyne; Oct. 26th, *Some of our Responsibilities*, Miss E. M. Mallet.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 31, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 7, Ryedale Terrace, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m. Subject for study, *Four Great Religions*.

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.

ROME LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at 6 p.m., at 72, Via S. Niccolo da Tolentino.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.

## ENQUIRER.

QUESTION 79.

(Continued.)

E. B. G.—*Can one leave behind some disagreeable karma, such as drunkenness, murder, etc., for several incarnations and follow a line of elevating thought and work, and then, perhaps in a life that is reasonably perfect, be either a drunkard or a murderer, or is it true that what is no temptation in this life we may consider as being really overcome?*

A. A. W.—Here the thought is not easy to follow, though the general intention of the question is clear. I think a word must have been dropped in the latter half, and that instead of speaking as the querist actually does of "being a drunkard or a murderer in a life that is reasonably perfect" (which sounds strange) he must have said or meant to say "that is *otherwise* reasonably perfect." To be a drunkard or a murderer, certainly reduces the perfection of a life below anything which can fairly be described as reasonable—even I must admit *that!* But, as I say, it is clear that what is in E. B. G.'s mind is an apprehension which is serious enough, and must often have occurred to our readers. That, after several lives well-spent and profitable for the true Self, suddenly some old, forgotten sin may turn up in its resulting karma, and by some outrageous outbreak of a condition we hoped we were safely past, spoil our record with a crime we are ashamed of, as well as horrified at, is a thought of terror. The hope given us in the *Voice of the Silence* is too precious to give up. "And if he falls, e'en then he does not fall in vain; the enemies he slew in the last battle will not return to life in the next birth that will be his."

And yet—! St. Francis of Sales reminds his nuns that there is a great difference between the absence of a vice and the possession of the contrary virtue. To take comfort in my last quotation we must be sure that we *have* slain our enemy. In a beautiful story published some months back in *The Theosophical Review* the hero is, as the author supposes, saved from committing a crime by falling dead from heart-disease before he can carry out his intention. But certainly *this* was not slaying his enemy—we can have no question that in his next birth the enemy *would* return to life for his punishment; and in this Catholic Theology is one with the Wisdom. What seems to me the right answer to the question I give, as so often before, with much hesitation and under correction. I think we must learn *not* to be horrified or disturbed if such a thing *should* befall us. It is *not* a thing to be horrified at, strange as the statement may seem. Let me explain.

The image of progress on a path is one so universally used and so generally useful that we often forget it is an image only. Here it misleads us. The truer but less convenient one is of widening ourselves out from a centre in *all* directions,

not forward only, so that we may be far advanced in certain directions, and at the same time behind the average in others. Hence, when we find a soul which while leading a life in most respects "reasonably perfect" is yet flecked with kârmic weakness, going so far even as to fall into heinous crime, we are wrong (I think) in treating this as a fall from the height it has attained, as if all its progress must be along one single line. The height and the depth are *both* there. When a good man falls it is, usually, not his spiritual progress, but his "pride of virtue" which suffers, and *that* is a thing which must perish before he can attain.

What is meant by a temptation being finally overcome, so that there is, no fear of its returning to life again, is, of course, that the Higher Ego has attained such control of its lower vehicles as that it is able at once to inhibit (as scientists would say) mind and brain from feeling the slightest attraction towards it. The simple statement is enough to show how few of us are likely to have attained this condition. I think it would be very foolish for us to assume that we have really overcome everything which is no temptation in this life; and also even more foolish to be too much cast down if events show us our mistake. I have used the expression of "spoiling our record," but this record does not, to the Master's eye, lie in a series of nominally sinless lives, but in the unquenchable fire of aspiration (the "iron will" of *The Voice of the Silence*) which burns through every hindrance laid in our way by our own past or present foolishness. So long as that fire burns, the passing good or evil of any earth life is of very trifling consequence to the Powers. "He that can receive it, let him receive it."

A. B. C.—We have been informed by those who *can* trace the workings of karma that there is a possibility of a man leaving disagreeable karma several incarnations behind, and having to meet it at a later stage of evolution, when the particular kind of action to which it would give rise would be completely out of harmony with his general conduct, and, most of all, with his thoughts and aspirations.

Such a possibility appears to be the explanation of some of the strange lapses in conduct which have startled most of us who have lived long enough to have had a fairly wide experience of human nature.

It has been explained most clearly and fully that out of the very mixed kinds of karma—good and evil—which all of us have generated, the great Lords of Karma select for each incarnation such part as it may be possible for a man to work out in one life, and it is obvious, in view of the enormous number and complication of the conditions, that it must often be impossible for a man's karma to work out in unbroken sequence in every department of his character. What happens then is that the kârmic deities may decide that some particular piece of bad karma is held over, possibly till the opportunity comes to

work it off in connection with other entities with whom it may have been generated. Meantime his general character has been evolving, and when, perhaps, in some life the sudden temptation comes and he falls, inexplicably as it appears to the ordinary view, it is really only in obedience to the inalterable law that makes a man act *as he has thought*. For in looking at these problems we are too apt to forget that our life is *all one*; we regard it only from the standpoint of the present, and forget, though karma does not, that our thinking in past lives has made possible the actions we perform to-day. If, therefore, to take an easy illustration, a man has allowed himself in some past life to cherish a thought of revenge and intense anger against another until he has reached what has been well called "saturation point," when only opportunity was needed for the thought to crystallise into action, and then some circumstance, death possibly, has prevented the actual carrying of the thought into action, it may be that in another life, when his general character has been improved, the opportunity long waited for in the past suddenly rushes upon him—a provocation—a sudden rush of blinding anger *before he has time to think*, a blow struck, and there you have all the mystery of murder committed in most unexpected quarter, and perhaps no one more surprised than the murderer himself, for please note the italicised words, the so-called inevitable action is one committed on impulse, always as the result of past thinking; whenever there is time for reflection the action is evitable and resistance may be made. It may not be successful, but on the other hand it may, and no one has a right to assume that his past karma is going to be too strong for him, and cease to resist and struggle on that account. That would indeed be a fatal error. These cases *may* occur, so much we must say in answer to the question, but they are not universal, and we must never forget that at each moment of our lives we are introducing *fresh* causes which may modify very materially the karma of the future, or even in the worst assumption, enable us so to meet it that it may become an upward moving factor in our evolution.

The further point, as to whether something "which is no temptation in this life" may be considered as being really overcome, depends of course upon the nature of the temptation referred to. Roughly speaking, I should say that those more immediately connected with the body—such as drunkenness, which is specially mentioned—might possibly come into a future life as part of the kârmic environment under the conditions given above, but all good qualities built into the soul and all the strength garnered there, can never be lost—what is gained there is gained for ever, so that again we must repeat that the future lies in our own hands. One ought, however, to enter a demurrer against the expression "reasonably perfect;" it is a contradiction in terms; my answer has been given under the assumption that what the querent means is "reasonably well-conducted."

## QUESTION 87.

P. T.—As regards the Lunar Pitris :

- (a) Did the second class appear on earth in the second round or the third? There seems to be a contradiction here between Mrs. Besant's Ancient Wisdom and the very admirable London Lodge Transaction on the subject.
- (b) "Those who entered became Arhats." Are we to infer from this that some of the first-class lunar Pitris were already in the stage of discipleship when they first entered upon this world, and are these they who are now at the Asekha level?
- (c) Was it the solar or the lunar Pitris who became the reincarnating egos of animal men, and which of them cast off the Chhâyas?
- (d) Is the "projection of the spark" anything more in reality than the quickening of the evolution of manas in the entity concerned?
- (e) Is not this whole question as stated in The Secret Doctrine exceedingly confused?

C. W. L.—None of us are in a position to describe fully the mysteries of these early days of evolution, and even what we can see we cannot express in words on the physical plane. But I will endeavour to throw out a few suggestions which may perhaps be of use to the questioner.

(a) As a general rule it is well to remember that the chapter in *The Ancient Wisdom* upon this subject is the latest publication, and consequently embodies further researches which were not included in the London Lodge Transaction.

The second-class Pitris seem to have appeared on globe D in the third round—not, I think, in the second.

(b) I do not think that we should be right in supposing that any of the first-class lunar Pitris were evolved to a stage anywhere near that of discipleship at the time of their entering upon this world. We must remember that the majority of them had only just come up out of the animal kingdom in the moon, and although it is no doubt true also that some of them were failures from among the lunar humanity, yet we must observe that one who (as it is put in the books) fails in the fifth round must be at a comparatively low stage of his evolution.

It is not stated how long those first-class Pitris have taken in becoming Arhats; most assuredly those who stand at the Asekha level now were not Arhats then, nor for millions of years afterwards. For example, it is known that one at least who is a Master now was a good man in ordinary life as lately as six thousand years ago.

(c) The Lords of the Flame from Venus did not incarnate in the bodies of animal men at all. Those who incarnated made for themselves bodies by Kriyashakti—bodies which, though exactly like ours in appearance, were not subject to decay or change. This would have been an achievement far beyond the powers of the first-class lunar Pitri. It is true that some of these latter seem to have cast off Chhâyas, but these were after all mere moulds of etheric matter.

The Sons of Wisdom who descended into incarnation did not turn out some other entity from the bodies which they took, nor did they seize upon a body which was already occupied. They were simply born from the already-existing entities, and would no doubt appear to them to be exceedingly advanced and precocious children. To speak of them as becoming man's reincarnating ego is perhaps somewhat misleading, but the questioner of course understands that it is only that third outpouring direct from the First Logos which makes the entity really a man at all, and that that ego once formed is never displaced by any other.

(d) I think the querent is right in saying that the projection of the spark of mind is in reality the quickening of the evolution of manas in the entity concerned. It would be wrong to think of something thrown into the composition of the man from outside, excepting of course the third outpouring of which we have spoken. The principal effect of the presence of the higher entities among the young and undeveloped race would be to bring about in rapidly increasing numbers the individualization of those who were gradually drawing near to the point at which this became possible.

(e) The whole question as stated in *The Secret Doctrine* may perhaps appear to us to be very confused, but it is certain that that is only because of the very scanty information which we at present possess on the subject, and because so much of the action connected with it took place upon higher planes, and cannot be clearly explained to physical comprehension. Only those who have themselves looked back at the records of these earlier processes can have any idea of the difficulty of describing them, or can justly appreciate the wonderful achievement of Madame Blavatsky in giving us such a picture as we now possess of the stupendous work which in those ages was being done for man.

## QUESTION 88.

W. E. D.—What is the meaning of the phrase "a high priest after the order of Melchizedec?" And how is that Melchizedec referred to as having no father or mother?

G. R. S. M.—This is an exceedingly interesting question, and I am sorry that it has been forwarded to me at a time when I cannot get at my books of reference. Still, even with their help, I doubt whether any real light can be thrown on the problem, for it is just one of those thousand and one puzzles in Jewish and Christian tradition of which we have no solution. The reason why the Melchizedec tradition is of special interest to me is that there was a Gnostic school called the Melchizedecians, of which we know nothing beyond the name; now we might be content to put up with our ignorance on this point, and regard it as a matter of small moment, were it not that the name Melchizedec comes into great prominence in the Coptic Gnostic works. In not

only the so-called *Pistis Sophia* treatise and the *Extracts from the Books of the Saviour* (preserved in the Askew Codex) but also in *The Book of the Great Logos according to the Mystery* (of the Bruce Codex). Melchizedec is the name of one of the Great Receivers of the Light. That is to say, it is to him that is assigned the function of gathering in the light-sparks (higher egos) and carrying them into the Treasure of Light. He is the *supernal* psychopomp and psychagogue; that is to say, the guide and conductor not of souls, but of spirits. He is always associated with Gabriel in this task, and his mystery-name is given as Zorokothora.

Now these two great powers or "lights" stand respectively for the *rulers* of the sun and moon. Melchizedec is, therefore, to be equated, not with the sun, but with the sun-god, the representative of the Logos; he is the "Legate" of the Supreme. When I say that his mystery-name is given as Zorokothora, I mean that in these precious Coptic versions of original Greek Gnostic treatises, we find one if not more systems of cypher or cryptic names and sentences, which are nowhere explained, and of which, I believe, the key was only given by word of mouth.

Now Melchizedec is a Semitic name. Melchi = Malek (Heb.) or king. Melchizedec is then King Zedec.

In this connection it is curious to notice that in the ancient Phœnician system of cosmogony, compiled by Sanchouniathon from the ancient records of Tyre, and translated into Greek by Philo Byblus, there is mention of King Sydic, who has seven sons, who form the company of the Great Gods. King Sydic or Zedec is clearly here the mythological personification of the sun-god, in the ancient Semitic tradition. He is the representative of the Self-born, the Parentless, of Him who has no father and no mother.

The high-priest of the sun would naturally bear the name and be honoured by the attributes of the god; and the Melchizedecs would therefore be the "priests of the most high God," and their order would be the order of Melchizedec.

These priests would in all probability be initiates of the mysteries of King Sydic and the Seven, and indeed the Samothracian mysteries of the Kabiri are said to have been in close connection with this ancient Semitic mystery-tradition.

I have now thrown down on paper a few points of interest and suggested a few links.

We know that the Gnostics were intimately acquainted with the various mystery-traditions of their time; we are further informed that one of their schools was distinctly named the Melchizedecians. In all probability they did not so name themselves, but were so called by their orthodox opponents because they made much of Melchizedec in their mystery-tradition. We have further seen how the lately-recovered Coptic Gnostic works throw further light on the subject.

Further, the outer canonical documents of the New Covenant bear distinct traces of this inner teaching—the Melchizedec tradition being con-

flated with the Christ tradition, a most natural blending.

As for the Old Covenant documents, they preserve the Melchizedec myth in the way we might expect; the Jewish writers took over the old Semitic tradition and worked it into their tribal legends for their own purposes. They did not understand the Melchizedec mystery-legend, but they knew how highly it was regarded and so invoked its authority in favour of their own unknown past.

The points of interest to Theosophists who are students of the origins are: Was the old Melchizedec-tradition preserved? Had it anything to do with the Hyksos mystery-tradition? If so, had it still remained as *one* of the secret traditions in Egypt? Did Valentinus and his predecessors know it? Was Jesus in reality, among other things, a "priest after the order of Melchizedec" in a historic as well as in a mystic sense?

Perhaps W. E. D. had little idea that he was raising such a hornet's nest in posing an apparently so simple question, but New Testament research is a dangerous and painful pursuit for any but those who have bidden orthodoxy a long farewell.

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QUESTION 89.

*E. B. G.*—It is stated in the manual on The Devachanic Plane that the information there given is based upon the investigations of members. Were these investigations made by clairvoyance while in a trance-condition, and how is such clairvoyance to be developed?

*C. W. L.*—The investigations upon which the information given in *The Devachanic Plane* was based were made by several of those among our members who possess the higher faculties, working in collaboration. From one point of view the term clairvoyance might be applied to all those higher faculties, although in the ordinary sense in which that word is used it implies only a very small modicum of astral sight, and certainly nothing which belongs to the higher mental plane.

If the questioner has read our later Theosophical literature he will be aware that as man evolves he gradually develops these higher faculties, usually in a certain definite order. While his consciousness is confined to the physical plane during waking life, he will have at his disposal the astral faculties during sleep. But when he has so far evolved himself along this particular line as to be able to use the astral sight along with the physical while still awake, he will then find the mental world opening to him when he leaves his body in sleep.

A further stage is that in which he has the faculties of the mental, astral and physical planes all at his command simultaneously in the waking condition; and when that is the case he would be able during sleep to function upon the buddhic plane.

The investigations referred to were made by members who had attained this last condition, so that there was no need for them to enter into trance or to leave their bodies in order to see all the different subdivisions of the mental plane, and to describe what they saw, so far as mere physical words can portray that which belongs to so much higher a level.

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QUESTION 90.

G. W. S.—*Clairvoyantes and those able to withdraw the consciousness from the physical, and who thus visit "other worlds than ours," give descriptions of inhabitants and conditions seen and heard in those spheres. This can only mean that senses (i.e., sight, hearing, etc.), go with the ego, or belong to the ego, per se. Is this so?*

A. B. C.—It has very frequently been explained in theosophical literature, by those qualified to speak from first-hand knowledge, that all observations made on another plane of consciousness are made by means of the vehicle of the ego appropriate to the plane in question. Thus the astral body, in which the ego functions on the astral plane, has organs which may be roughly said to correspond to our sense organs on the physical plane, and they respond to the vibrations of the life of that plane in such wise as to convey the impression of hearing, seeing, etc., to the ego, or perhaps it would be still more accurate to say give rise to the impressions we call hearing and seeing, etc., down here; for the fact is that all our comprehension of other planes is limited by our experience in this, and our investigators tell us they are continually hampered by the difficulty of expressing the facts of other planes in the symbols belonging to this one. In this they are not alone, as the history of mysticism in all ages and all climes abundantly testifies. They are, then, obliged to use the terms seeing and hearing, but that certainly does *not* mean that the senses, *as we know them*, "go with the ego." We are told that the "senses," *i.e.*, powers of observation, are much fuller and more complete on the astral plane, and still more so on the mental planes, while the powers of the ego in still higher regions—say the Nirvāṇic plane—mean practical omniscience so far as this universe (solar system) is concerned. What the ego, then, does "take with him," what does "belong to him *per se*," is the faculty of consciousness, but the vehicles (sense-organs, if our questioner likes it better) are different for every plane, so different, indeed, as regards the higher planes, that the term "senses" would be a complete misnomer.

E. L.—None of the senses in such a case would be physical. It would depend upon what plane the clairvoyant was conscious on, what particular

form of these he exercised, as there are astral and devachanic sight for instance. It is said that the physical senses have their counterparts on each plane, such of course becoming finer and finer in proportion. I should say that in the ego one would get an impression of one sense combining all the different manifestations that we know; sight, hearing, etc., are only the various reflections of one Force.

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QUESTION 91.

C. C.—*I wish to give myself wholly to work for others, but cannot see this to be possible, since I have to work for my family. Can I therefore do astral work instead?*

C. W. L.—Surely in working for his family the questioner is working for others already, and he may be sure that as soon as it is desirable that his activities should have a wider field the way will open up before him. As to the possibilities of working upon the astral plane, he may read for himself in the concluding chapters of *Invisible Helpers* what are the qualifications that are necessary for this undertaking, and also how far it is possible for everyone to help to a certain extent, even before he is definitely awakened upon the astral plane.

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QUESTION 92.

E. B. G.—*How do you explain p. 351, Vol. I., of Isis Unveiled in the light of the present teaching on reincarnation? And which presentment of the doctrine is most accurate?*

C. W. L.—As to the remarks made in *Isis Unveiled* about the doctrine of reincarnation, we are at liberty to suppose, I think, either that at the period when she wrote that book Madame Blavatsky herself was not yet aware of the exact teaching of the inner Schools upon this point, or that she was then precluded from stating fully what she did know. In any case there is no shadow of doubt as to the truth of the doctrine itself, for many of us have had it proved to us over and over again by direct vision in the most unmistakable manner, and we have also the unqualified testimony of the Masters of Wisdom themselves upon this subject.

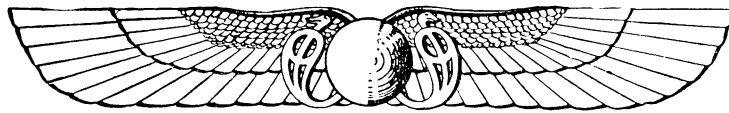
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The subscription to THE VĀHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 3, Langham Place, W. 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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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.—ARTHUR A. WELLS, *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, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. X.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 1, 1900.

NO. 4.

Edited by ARTHUR A. WELLS.

Mrs. Hooper; Dec. 3rd, Mr. Moore; Dec. 10th, Miss Ward.

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The following donations have been received to October 20th: B. O., £1; S. B., £1; E. M. H., £2 15s.; C. E., £21; A. H., £2; A. C., £1; M. C., 2s. 6d.; H. and K. D., 5s.; H. J. S., 5s.; G. M., £5 5s.; E. A., £5; J. R. A. £2 5s.; L. M. M., £4 4s.; Anon., 10s.; E. E. F., 5s.; T. J., 15s.; B. P. M., 5s. Total, £47 16s. 6d.

#### Section Reference Library.

The following books have been presented to the Library and are now acknowledged with thanks: *La Filosofía Esotérica de la India*, J. C. Chatterji, version Castellana, con notas, por José Plana y Dorca. Barcelona, 1899; *The Hidden Way across the Threshold*, J. C. Street, London, 1889. *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten. Some Short Sketches among the Gnostics, mainly of the first two centuries; a contribution to the study of Christian Origins, based on the most recently recovered materials*, G. R. S. Mead, London and Benares, 1900, has also been acquired.

A. J. WILLSON,  
*Librarian.*

#### Afternoon Meetings at Headquarters.

Afternoon meetings will be held at Headquarters, No. 28, Albemarle Street, on the six Monday afternoons, beginning on Nov. 5th and ending Dec. 10th, from 3 to 5 p.m., for discussions and questions on Theosophy. Open to all members of the Theosophical Society and their friends.

The names of those who will answer questions are: Nov. 5th, Mr. Sinnett; Nov. 12th, Hon. Otway Cuffe; Nov. 19th, Dr. Wells; Nov. 26th,

#### Debating Class.

A practice Debating Class is held on alternate Saturday afternoons, at 3.15, at 28, Albemarle Street, the Saturdays in November being the 3rd and the 17th of the month.

Any members of the Society who desire to practise speaking, are cordially invited to attend.

E. M. MALLET,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

#### Evening Class at Headquarters.

An evening class is being formed to meet once a week at 28, Albemarle Street, for the systematic study of Theosophical subjects. Any members desiring to join this class are requested kindly to send their names to the General Secretary, 28, Albemarle Street, W.

#### Lectures by Mr. Mead.

The second of Mr. Mead's two courses of lectures, entitled "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten," will be delivered at 28, Albemarle Street, W., on Tuesday afternoons from 5 to 6: Nov. 13th, "Forgotten Stories of Jesus"; Nov. 20th, "The Earliest 'Higher Criticism'"; Nov. 27th, "Evolution according to the Gnosis"; Dec. 4th, "The Hymn of the Robe of Glory."

Course Tickets, 5s. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 3, Langham Place, W. Admission to each lecture, 2s.

#### North of England Federation.

The next meeting will be held at Harrogate, on Saturday, November 3rd, under the Presidency of

Dr. Arthur A. Wells, who will lecture on November 4th, at 7 p.m., on "Theosophy and Dogma."

All members of the Society are cordially invited to attend.

W. H. THOMAS,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

### Blavatsky Lodge.

On September 27th the lecturer was Dr. Wells. On October 4th the Annual Business Meeting was held; there was a fair attendance of Lodge members. The officials of the Lodge for the ensuing year were elected; the Council remains unchanged, save that Mr. Cuffe, owing to his change of residence, was obliged to retire; Mrs. Hooper was elected to fill the vacant place on the Council. It was decided to throw the Thursday evening meetings open to all members of the Society, at least for the next few months. The increase in Lodge membership during the past year is sixty. On the 11th of October Mr. Mead delivered the first of a series of three lectures upon the Sermons of Hermes the Thrice-Greatest. On the 18th of October the Lodge held the first of the series of Conversaciones which, it is hoped, will be largely attended by members of the Society, as their object is to help the members to become acquainted with each other, and to weld the Society into a compact and united body of people working and striving for a common purpose.

The Sunday evening lectures have begun. The first was delivered by Mr. Cuffe; the second by Miss Ward. The latter was the first of a series of three lectures; the questions showed that the lecture aroused much interest.

S. M. S.

### Liverpool Branch.

The Liverpool Lodge opened a Lecture Room at 10, Colquitt Street, on Tuesday, October 16th, at 3 p.m. In the absence of the President, who was unfortunately ill, the Vice-President, Dr. Pitt-Taylor, took the chair. Countess Wachtmeister and others addressed the members and friends present.

In the evening the Countess gave a very interesting lecture to a crowded audience on the subject of "A Conscious Universe," in which she showed that the whole of nature was conscious, from the smallest atom to the most highly developed human being.

Several questions were asked by those present and answered by the Countess.

On Wednesday evening there was a meeting at which Mrs. Jean B. Gillison presided, and the Countess again answered enquirers. Afterwards Mr. W. H. Thomas read a paper on "Some neglected teachings of Christianity."

J. B. GILLISON,  
*Hon. Sec.*

### Birmingham Lodge.

A lecture, "Psychic and Astral Development," was given by Countess Wachtmeister, on Friday evening, November 12th, at the Temperance Institute, Birmingham.

"The Work of a Theosophic Lodge" formed the subject of the Countess's address to the members of the Lodge on the following afternoon; and on Sunday evening at the Pitman's Restaurant, a lecture, "A Conscious Universe," was given to an attentive and appreciative audience.

H. M. C.

### Athene Branch, Bradford.

The annual business meeting was held on October 1st. The following officers were elected: President, Mr. H. Saville; Treasurer, Mr. E. Dexter; Auditor, Mr. G. Bligh; Secretary, Miss R. H. Atkins.

R. H. A.

### Theosophical Lending Library.

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

Terms of subscription: three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W.

LILIAN LLOYD,  
*Librarian.*

### Lotus Circle.

The children meet at 2.30 p.m. on Sundays at 28, Albemarle Street, W.

A. J. W.

### Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: Nov. 4th, *Elementals*, A. Roberts; Nov. 11th, *Man's Ascent*; Nov. 18th, *The State of the Public Intellect*, B. Hodgson; Nov. 25th, *Building a Cosmos*. Class for study of the *Bhagavad Gîtâ*, conducted by Mr. J. H. Duffell, on Saturdays, at 8.15 p.m., at the above address. For information apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings in the Yorkshire Penny Bank Buildings, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of "Some Problems of Life," except on Nov. 19th, when Miss Shaw will lecture on *The Building of Character*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. Meetings on alternate Sun-

days at 3.30 p.m., and on alternate Mondays at 8 p.m., 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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: *Dreams and Dream-Problems*, G. W. Straton. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattanach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 19, Bedford Circus, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 5 p.m., for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

HAMBURG LODGE. Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

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

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, Clarence Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Nov. 4th, *Theosophy and Dogma*, Dr. A. A. Wells; Nov. 11th, *Self-Reliance*, Miss Shaw; Nov. 18th, *Reincarnation*, Hodgson Smith; Nov. 25th, *Duty*, by members. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m.; in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of "Some Problems of Life."

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at "Vidya," Canterbury Road, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Nov. 7th, *Capacity of Substances to receive Occult Impressions*; Nov. 21st, *Advantages and Dangers of Psychic Senses*; Nov. 14th and 28th, Reading and Discussion. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings every Sunday at 7 p.m., at 97, Westbourne Avenue.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarian Restaurant, Boar Lane, on Mondays, at 8 p.m. Branch meetings on alternate Mondays. Enquiries to be addressed to Mr. W. H. Bean, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Pomona" Vegetarian Restaurant, Kurprinzstrasse, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., at 18, Colquitt Street: Nov. 7th, . . . Dr. A. A. Wells; Nov. 21st, *Karma*, Mme. de Steiger; Nov. 14th and 28th, Class for study. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings are held on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C., for the study of *Clairvoyance*.

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Meetings at the Central Free Library, Lavender Hill, S.W., on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Nov. 4th, *The Unity of Religions*, P. Tovey; Nov. 11th, *The Doctrines of Re-*

*birth and Karma*, P. Tovey; Nov. 18th, *The Growth of the Soul*, P. Tovey; Nov. 25th, *The Higher Life*, P. Tovey. Class on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 28, Albemarle Street, W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: Nov. 1st, *Saint Teresa and Giordano Bruno*, Miss Mallet; Nov. 8th, *In God Alone is Good and elsewhere nowhere*, G. R. S. Mead; Nov. 15th, *Conversazione*; Nov. 22nd, *Toleration*, Dr. Wells; Nov. 29th, . . . M. U. Moore. On Sundays, at 7 p.m. (open to visitors): Nov. 4th, *Some Forgotten Sayings of the Christ*, G. R. S. Mead; Nov. 11th, *The Letier that Killeth*, Mrs. Sharpe; Nov. 18th, *One Force, One Life*, M. U. Moore; Nov. 25th, *Christianity and Theosophy*, Mrs. Mallet.

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

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "West View," 12, Oakfield Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Nov. 6th, *The Mirror of the Mind*, A. H. Ward; Nov. 13th, *Peace amid Wars*; Nov. 20th, . . . Miss Arundale; Nov. 27th, *Theosophy the Reconciler*, L. S. Jast. Students' Class on alternate Thursdays. Hon. Sec., F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m.: Nov. 5th, *Behind the Veil*, R. King; Nov. 12th, . . . A. H. Ward; Nov. 19th, . . . Nov. 26th, Addresses by Members.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 13, Tyndale Place, Upper Street, N., on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.; and at 86, Savernake Road, Gospel Oak, on Saturdays, 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 on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m., at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W.: Nov. 2nd, *Life Ledgers of Stray Mystics*, Miss A. L. B. Hardcastle; Nov. 9th, *The Purpose of the Theosophical Society*, Mrs. Sharpe; Nov. 16th, *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral! Which?* (with lantern illustrations), Miss Pope; Nov. 23rd, . . . ; Nov. 30th, *Spinoza*, S. F. Weguelin-Smith.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 31, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 7, Ryedale Terrace, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m. Subject for study, *Four Great Religions*.

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.

ROME LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at 6 p.m., at 72, Via S. Niccolo da Tolentino.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge

Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.

TAVISTOCK CENTRE. Meetings on Tuesdays at 8.30 p.m., at 5, Broadpark Terrace, Whitechurch.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

IN his reply to Question 79, in the September VĀHAN, A. P. S. makes statements which seem to me to require further elucidation.

He says: "The karma of the kind liable to long postponement is evidently that which can only be worked out with reference to some particular person. For such arrangements Nature must wait till both parties are in incarnation together. There might . . . be a murder that would be . . . disposed of by an inversion of the parts played in another life. The victim in the one case might be the murderer in the second act of the drama, and the first murderer the victim."

This seems to me equal to saying that two wrongs might make one right.

My own idea is, that, instead of being indebted to each other, we are karmically indebted *only to the Law*. This is the reason why we are not allowed to take the law into our own hands, but must bring the offending party before the impartial judge.

Being debtors only to the "Law" we may regard the Lords of Karma as receiving officers. If A does wrong to B They set it down in A's ledger, as a debt due from him to Them; in B's book They set it down as so much due from Them to him. If C comes along and does B a kind action They credit C with having paid that amount to Them, and credit Themselves as having paid it to B. But surely it would have been all the same to B if that same action had been done to E or F. As long as B is wanting help and gets it, it is of no consequence to him whether the Lords of Karma send it through a man, a woman, a child, or a dog.

This view of the subject enables me, when I recognise my debt, to begin *at once* to pay it off. Perhaps, for instance, I did not show due respect to my father. Have I to wait 1,500 or more years before I can pay that debt off? Decidedly not. Recognising it as a debt due to "fatherhood" rather than to a "father," I begin at once to pay special deference, respect and attention to every old man (or woman) I come in contact with. Under this system, then, I can make infinitely greater progress than under the "inversion" system, and for that reason it is the more cheerful, and therefore the more likely to be true.

The same holds good with respect to any man I meet in the street, who appeals to me for help. Regarding it as a call from the Lords of Karma, I tender the help asked for, without enquiring or caring whether I am personally indebted to that man or not.

Says the *Gītā*: "Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou offerest . . . offer it as unto Me."

J. M.

A. P. S.—There is a feeling in this letter with which I sympathise, but the writer has not quite correctly appreciated my point. The murder karmically dealt with by an inversion of the parts was described in my former note as a very elementary case, and was merely imagined to show how sometimes karma might be held over. In such a case the two wrongs would *not* have made a right. The penalty of the first murderer would have been incurred, but the second would get into trouble later on. The bad karma in such a case could only be extinguished if the original victim, having the opportunity of vengeance, returned good for evil (however unconsciously). Then the first evil doer would still have to incur suffering, but this necessity accomplished, the whole transaction (or account) would be closed.

Often, no doubt, the relations of the good or evil doer are with the Law generally, rather than with individuals, but the evident tendency of the Law is to maintain the individual relationship in the working out of karma as long as that is reasonably possible. In the case of the bad son whose repentance leads him to develop respect for age, etc., that is so much fresh good karma engendered. If in another life he meets the father to whom he behaved badly, the subsequently acquired habit will naturally lead to specially amiable behaviour, and so the old bad karma is individually adjusted in the most satisfactory way. Should it never have been repented of, it might have led—as in the rough case I imagined—to an inversion of the parts, and then the oscillation of suffering would have gone on for a bit longer.

### ENQUIRER.

#### QUESTION 93.

C. F. G.—*From my reading I had obtained the idea that Theosophy taught that every ego was striving for the final extinction of its own self-consciousness; but an expression I have lately read that "the Logos gathers up the experiences of all the egos into His consciousness" conveys to my mind a very different idea. Which is the correct one?*

A. P. S.—Nothing could be more remote from true Theosophical teaching than that which C. F. G. describes as the first he obtained. The final extinction of self-consciousness is, I believe, an illusory purpose entertained by some Eastern ascetics who misunderstand spiritual science altogether, and probably their misconceptions spring from a too literal acceptance of some phrases used in Buddhist scripture. It is only by degrees that Theosophical students have realised that the Eastern idea of "Moksha" represents this perverted aspiration. We understand indeed that a terribly protracted, though not final, extinction of consciousness is a deplorable result to be actually achieved by certain protracted misdirections of energy, and the subject is not without interest but firstly be it clearly understood that the true purpose of human evolution is to maintain,

strengthen and exalt self-consciousness till it expands to something like God-like heights; never to repress or extinguish it for one instant. The sublimity of the later stages of this process does indeed render some forms of human speech embarrassing when we attempt to forecast the ascent of self-consciousness to higher levels of being. Anyone who realises the A B C of Theosophical teaching will see, to begin with, that our early personalities are not much worth remembering. The current one always seems very important, but later on it fades into insignificance as the individuality, the true spiritual ego, grows in dignity. Now as long as a human being is merely human—and his humanity extends up into very high levels indeed, including that on which the Masters of Wisdom are standing—the individuality undoubtedly persists. But our “mind’s eye” is an instrument of very long range, and since we venture to speculate sometimes about the ultimate mergence of the human individuality in the Logos, we are *then* dealing with conditions in which the individuality itself is transcended. There is not much profit in speculation that endeavours to reach so far, but it may save people who will concern themselves with problems of eternity and infinitude from some false conceptions, if it be borne in mind that when occult writers talk of “Man” as ultimately attaining God-like levels, the meaning of the phrase is *not* that each individual man becomes an individual God. The truer idea may be gathered from reflecting on the obvious meaning of the term sometimes employed in reference to stupendous beings approximating to the condition of the Logos. Each is sometimes said to be not one, but “a host,” and it will be a host of human individualities by the confluence or mergence of which the newly developed Logoi to emerge from the activities of our system as a whole will be engendered. But all attempts to put such thoughts into explicit language must necessarily be unsatisfactory.

As for the Eastern idea of Moksha, it will now be more clearly seen where the error comes in. The man who succeeds, by unnaturally dissociating himself from all the attractions of life, in quenching the force that should bring him back into incarnation, simply paralyses his own spiritual growth. As far as one can make out, he may possibly paralyse it for a whole world period, perhaps for a manvantara, and the result will be that he will have to accomplish his neglected progress in presence of those who were once his contemporaries, but who will then have enormously outstripped him in the race.

A. A. W.—The idea that we teach the extinction of our own self-consciousness on attaining Nirvāna, is simply the popular error we have continually to meet. We use such expressions as re-absorption, the gathering up of our separate consciousness into that of the Logos, and the like, just because we don’t mean extinction, any more than Buddha did in *his* teaching on the same subject. But the truth of the matter is one which

the physical brain is quite incompetent to picture to us in any form of words. The view that the individual self-consciousness is widened out into unity and union with all others, thus forming the consciousness of the Logos; and yet that this individuality is *not* extinguished, but reappears at the end of the Great Pralaya, when the new universe dawns, one and yet at the same time the All, is one which may easily be made (intentionally or otherwise) to seem impossible or absurd. We are here dealing with realities far beyond any words of ours, and no logical manipulation of the words we are compelled to use can give any additional understanding of the case. All we can say is, “When you get high enough, you will see for yourself; and until then you must hope and trust. No human Self can ever be extinguished through all the ages.”

G. L. S.—The ego is striving for an expansion, not an extinction, of consciousness. If the consciousness of the ego be conceived as distinct from and independent of that of the Logos, then the idea of ultimate union with the Logos certainly looks very like the extinction or annihilation of the ego. But this notion of separateness and independence is philosophically untenable and therefore founded on error. That there will be an extinction and an annihilation is quite true; but what is to be extinguished and annihilated is not existence, but illusion and misconception. It should ever be remembered that we do not live, move and have our being in ourselves, but in the Logos, and it follows from this that the consciousness which we fondly imagine to be our own and to proceed from ourselves, is not our own, but a ray from the Logos, however faint that ray may be. The phrase “self-consciousness” indicates a limitation of the consciousness of the Logos, not a separate and independent consciousness outside of Him—just as the walls of a room filled with daylight indicate a limitation of the light of the sun in the heavens, and not the presence of a separate independent sun somewhere inside the apartment. The extinction of self-consciousness, therefore, means the extinction of a limitation, the breaking down of a boundary wall, not the annihilation of an entity. The light in the room is identical with the sun, and not with the walls of the chamber. So long as it identifies itself with those walls there is misconception and consequent dismay at the thought of its apparent annihilation when those walls crumble away. It is not the form, or the vesture, or the “self,” but the Universal Spirit, which will eventually be found to be the only reality; but owing to the limitations and conditions which necessarily appertain to the present stage of man’s evolution, he is unable, except very dimly, to realise his identity with the Logos. Being deceived by appearances, he mistakes illusion for reality. To cite a familiar illustration, he is like a man who, owing to obscurity of the light, mistakes a rope for a serpent. Such a man’s strivings to realise the truth do indeed, as it were, end in the

extinction of the serpent; but after all it is only the misconception which is extinguished. The serpent never was there at any time. In this sense alone is there an extinction of "own self-consciousness," *viz.*, the extinction of an illusion which recognises a separate consciousness where there is none. For that which has existence there need be no fear. "For the aught no naughtness can there be."

R. B.—Our effort ought not, and cannot, be directed towards the final extinction of self-consciousness, but towards the raising of the evanescent personality into, or a melting of the same with, the individuality, our over-soul. A still higher stage of evolution places before us the entrance into Nirvāna, and the mystic death that leads to this has often been misunderstood to be a destruction of the individuality. This misunderstanding is not to be blamed in ordinary men, who know nothing of the spiritual, and are conscious in themselves of nothing beyond manas.

Just as when a crystal of salt is dissolved in water it betokens no disappearance of the salt, but, on the contrary, the whole solution is penetrated by it and made saline, so the entrance into Nirvāna is no extinction, no sinking of the human consciousness into nothing, but a raising of the individual consciousness into the all-consciousness. The aim of all evolution is just this conscious mystic re-union with the all-spirit, wherefore it is right to say that the Logos takes all of the experience gained by the ego into himself.

G. R. S. M.—The final extinction of one's own self-consciousness, taken in its crudest sense, would be the apotheosis of suicide, and I do not think that "Theosophy" has ever taught such a doctrine. The idea adumbrated is rather the transcending of the limitation of personal self-consciousness, and the expansion of consciousness into that of the true individuality which embraces all personal self-consciousnesses—*viz.*, the Logos. The two conceptions would thus be two facets of the same truth, and adumbrations of some still more sublime concept which at present we are not sufficiently evolved to understand.

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QUESTION 94.

N. D. K.—*No satisfactory reason has ever been given for the enormously long period assigned to devachanic life. Considering the immense rapidity with which thought must move on its own plane it does not seem possible that the results of even a long and fruitful earth-life could fill even one year of devachan, so that surely the heaven-life must be very much shorter than is generally supposed. Can any information be given as to this?*

C. W. L.—The idea as to the duration of devachan expressed in the question does not seem to be borne out by the cases so far observed. It is quite true that thought moves very rapidly on its own plane, but there is such an infinity of it to

move that there is no possibility of its speedy exhaustion.

We hardly get a full and correct view of the conditions of a person in the heaven-world if we think of him as going over and over again the enjoyments or thoughts of his earth-life. One would rather say that this mental plane is itself a kind of reflection of the Divine Mind—a storehouse from which the person enjoying devachan is able to draw according to the power of his own thoughts and aspirations generated during the earth-life and the astral life. It is not so much his own thought and aspiration which takes so long in its expression, as the magnificent fulness of the response which this application of his draws down from the infinity of the Divine Mind.

So that even out of what seems to us quite an ordinary life this long period of devachanic bliss is produced, whereas in the case of some great saint or holy one who for some reason still takes his devachan instead of renouncing it, the period becomes enormously longer. It may be remembered that Madame Blavatsky stated that the devachan of Plato would last for ten thousand years at least, and that the exoteric Buddhist books speak of a period of 124,000 years of devachan as following upon one of the earth-lives of the Bodhisattwa, taken under the title of the Great King of Glory.

The questioner may be assured that to all those who investigate this mental plane, the wonder is not that it should take fifteen hundred years to exhaust the share of it which one man is able to grasp, but rather that anything short of infinity should be sufficient to express a bliss so wide-spreading and so many-sided.

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QUESTION 95.

P. T. N.—*Was it to satisfy some old karma that Jesus died a violent death, whether on a cross of wood or by some other means?*

G. R. S. M.—It is quite evident that no one can reply to this question except he have, not only the power of reading the past, but also the right to enquire into and further make public the hidden past of one whom the Western world regards as the greatest of mankind. It is, therefore, not to be expected that any answer should be given to such a question. The time is yet far distant, in my opinion, when any such questions can be answered with profit to the generality of mankind. As things are, the vast majority would regard any attempt at an answer as the presumption of a blasphemer or the babbling of a lunatic, while the minority (with very few exceptions) would have to believe blindly the testimony of some seer or teacher in whom they had confidence.

The student of the origins of Christianity is not anxious as to such details, so numerous are the far more general problems which have to be solved before such details come up for discussion. But perhaps the question of P. T. N. implies one

of these more general problems, and suggests the distinction between the dogmatic theory of the salvation of mankind by the crucifixion of the Christ, and the purely historic fact of the death of Jesus.

It is an undoubted fact that the historicising of the mystic crucifixion—whereby the cosmos is redeemed in the great world-drama, and the individual soul reunited to its Source in the cyclic pilgrimage of every child of man—has bred such confusion, by the materialising of spiritual things, that many thousand Christians, who in other respects are devoted followers of the Christ, are morally and intellectually unable to accept this dogma. They cannot believe that the death of a single man, as orthodoxly taught, can save the world; the whole series of dogmas which have grown up round this view of the atonement, is repudiated by them as unmoral and a blasphemy against the idea of the Good Father of the Christ. They seek for a new interpretation of the ancient formula, but curiously enough have not yet searched for it among the fragments that remain of the writings of the original fashioners of the dogma in the early days. There they would be able to find sufficient evidence of its initial conception and development, and be saved many a heart-burn.

As to the purely historical and external side of the question, it is exceedingly probable that Jesus was put to death on a charge of "blasphemy" by his orthodox Jewish opponents. It was not a personal matter, but an impersonal question of orthodoxy. To an orthodox Jew, Jesus was a blasphemer. If he taught the doctrine "I and the Father are one"—that, to an orthodox Jew, was rank blasphemy, and the punishment, according to his ancestral Law, was death!

If this view of the matter is correct, the problem of karma is no longer a personal one, but one far more complicated, even from the external point of view. If, in addition to this, we further consider that there is said to have been a great inner mystery connected with the external founder of the Christian Faith, who is wise enough to explain the details of the great economy, of which the Master was the minister?

The power of looking up the records of ordinary happenings falls short here; these mysteries, I believe, pertain to the secrets of real initiation, and that, too, not of the earliest degrees. There is a "so far shalt thou go and no farther," for every degree, and the details of the great economy, the great "plan of salvation" in the real sense, whereby the Servants of the Lord and of the Law work out the Divine Will, are not known to the Servants' servants.

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QUESTION 96.

L. W.—*Manas is to be fully developed only in the fifth round; will then the struggle for morality, virtue and holiness be less hard than it is now that manas is*

*only partially and abnormally developed? Will the balance between the higher and lower manas cause a more equal condition between the good and evil in man?*

*Does the fact of the development of the lower manas make the attainment of spiritual qualities more or less hard for man?*

*Intellectuality often, as we see, means a more elaborate wickedness.*

A. A. W.—The querist's difficulty seems to me to arise from his not having entirely freed himself from the popular mixing up of "higher and lower" with "good and evil". If he keeps it clearly in his mind that the lower manas is not, in its own nature, in any way more "evil" or less "good" than the higher, he will avoid many puzzles. The old Christian—and pre-Christian—blunder that spirit is good and matter evil, has yet too much influence on our thinking and our habitual use of language. Each stage of our development has its own powers, with the possibility of using them either for good—that is to say, to help ourselves and others onwards, or for evil—to hold back. The more the manas is developed, the greater are our powers, for good and evil alike; the fight is on a grander scale, corresponding to our own higher condition. There is nothing in the mere development to make the struggle easier;—perhaps the contrary. But what *is* the struggle?

Let us start from the beginning. The animal lives blamelessly according to his desire-nature, which is all he has. Whatever he does to gratify its desires is good for him at that stage. It *would* be evil for one who had mind. Now when the first gleams of mind dawn—that mind which is to draw him up *beyond* the desire-nature—the desires are at their fullest strength, and the imminent risk is that the new mind may be drawn aside to help them to fuller gratification, as we see and feel so constantly at our own stage of the Great Fight. Then he is brought under the influence of Man (who is, indeed, for the time, his god) and in his service he learns that there are higher duties than the mere gratification of his sense-appetites, and is taught (often by very painful lessons) the rudiments of self-control, of obedience, of unselfishness—the qualities which are hereafter to be the characteristics of the future man. In this domesticated state the creature's *faults* are simply reversions to the old habits and pleasures, once harmless, but now the deliberate falling back to a lower state—in short, *sinus*, calling for punishment.

Now we must understand that this, which is quite clear in the animal, is precisely our own position in relation to the step we ourselves are leaving behind us; that, be the degree we have attained higher or lower, *evil* for us is the using our new power for the continuance of the old pleasures now behind and beneath us, *good* the "forgetting what is behind and reaching forth to that which is before." If we choose to misuse our new powers, our higher intellectuality will of course, as the querist says, mean only more elaborate wickedness. Our hope of final success

in the struggle, repeated again and again on each plane of development as we rise to it, is not the growth of our *powers*, but the growth of our *Selves*. It is by steady, persistent fighting that *we*—our wills, our higher Selves—grow; into every new life we come back stronger and better men, to wage a nobler warfare than ever before. We must not *wish* the struggle to be less hard; of the final victory we are assured. And of another thing we may be assured: the gifts we seek from the Powers, of insight, of advance beyond our fellows, are only given to those who fight on, undismayed by fall after fall. As in Bunyan's vision, we have cried to the Man at the Gate to "set our names down," but *that* is useless unless we draw our swords and cut our way through the opposing hosts. Antæus-like, each time we are beaten to the earth we shall rise the stronger for it, and (sooner or later) entrance will be *gained*—never *given*! The Kingdom of Heaven can only be taken by force!

E. L.—Why should manas necessarily be connected with "morality," "virtue," and "holiness"? These attributes seem to me to be related to the development of an even higher principle, and as the querist rightly remarks, intellectuality often means more elaborate wickedness. Humanity will certainly have progressed further in the next round, and since the foreshadowing of the evolutionary period ahead dawns in the one immediately preceding, I should say that the struggle would be less, since the lower aspect of manas would presumably have then merged in the higher, and it is *that* which causes the bitterness of the struggle at present, on the plane where we are told the most prolonged conflicts take place. Certainly as the whole nature becomes gradually balanced—and *balance* is the secret of it all—the man is nearing the stage spoken of as "Initiation." But it should be remembered that "good" and "evil," in more or less subtle aspects, persist for a long time, that time depending on the rate at which progress is made.

G. R. S. M.—*Quien sabe?*—when the fifth round *ex hypothesi* is so far distant and manas refuses to be convinced by the prophet's pronouncements merely. If, however, it be true that there are those actually living who have already dynamically passed this point of evolution, which the generality will only reach in millions of years to come, then their experience should help us towards a partial answer; but even then, the conditions would not be the same, for at present it is the case of a very few struggling in a far less evolved environment, while then it is supposed that it will be the many who will be struggling in greatly improved surroundings. "Spiritual wickedness in high places" is spoken of by the wise, and duality seems to be the law of all manifestation, growth and progress.

The "development of the lower manas" is here used in two distinct senses: for the purely animal nature the "development of the lower manas" is of course progress—by it, it evolves; for the

higher soul, however, the incarnating self, the development (in the sense of the increase) of the *lower manas* (*i.e.*, the downward tendencies of the manas) is a bar to self-realisation. As a matter of fact it is the same entity energising in a certain order of matter; he has to change the matter of his mind-body or vesture from chaos or discord into cosmos or order. If he allows it (the manas) to fall into sympathetic vibration with the (to it) chaotic elements of the animal soul, he not only becomes involved in the lower animal nature, but intensifies its power over himself by the now increased rapidity of its vibrations owing to the blending with it of mental stuff. The "life" of the mental matter acts in the "forms" of the animal matter, to use terms that are now familiar. We can look at the problem from without—from the point of view of the "vehicle," or from within—from the point of view of the unit-consciousness; but the best way is to keep both points of view in mind, and try to see it from a still more advanced view-point, where "the above is as the below, the below as the above, and the male with the female, neither male nor female."

Intellectuality and spirituality are terms of great indefiniteness. Each is good and bad, according to times and seasons, in the cyclic journey of the incarnate self. Wisdom is a question of balance and yet of extremes, and the intensest wisdom postulates the balance of the greatest extremes. A bourgeois goodness that is the product of the average morality of the social environment, against which the ego is too feeble to rebel, is more often the offspring of moral cowardice than the manifestation of "spirituality." The first step forward for such a weak-kneed entity (in order that he may have extremes to balance) may often be the doing of something contrary to the opinion of his social environment.

Intellectuality (manas) may sometimes lead to "more elaborate wickedness," but it is equally certain that without it there will be no "more elaborate" goodness. The secret of wisdom is in balance, and that includes a thorough understanding of the animal nature, and the transmuting of its forms from those of its lower manifestations into the ideal of the "animal itself," the one form of the Divine Life. Intellectuality is an emanation of the Divine Mind and spirituality an emanation of the Divine Life. Each is necessary to the manifestation of the Divine Man, and it is the balance of these aspects in Him which constitutes Him the eternally wise Man-Woman of the Cosmos—our Divine Father and our Divine Mother—our source and our goal. The Divine Son is the first-born offspring of these—the Divine Wisdom incarnate.

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, 3, Langham Place, 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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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.—ARTHUR A. WELLS, *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, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. X.

LONDON, DECEMBER 1, 1900.

NO. 5.

Edited by ARTHUR A. WELLS.

Mrs. Besant's Address.

### ANNIVERSARY MEETING AT BENARES.

The Anniversary Meeting of the Society will be held this year at Benares, on December 27th, 28th and 29th. The Executive Committee have requested Mrs. Besant to represent the European Section at the meeting.

Mrs. Besant writes:

"Would you kindly say in next VĀHAN that my address is:

Mrs. Annie Besant,  
Benares City,  
India.

Neither more nor less! If 'City' is left out the letter is delayed a post. If Theosophical Society is put in the letter is delivered at the Sectional Quarters."

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to Nov. 20th: L. S., £5; H. S. G., £1; F. M. M. R., £1; E. H., 10s.; G. L. S., 10s.; M. M., 10s.; C. M., £12; E. A. B., £6; A. J. V. R., £4 15s.; E. W., £1 1s.; C. A., 10s. 6d.; E. M. G., £1; S. C., £1; A. H. S., £5; G. S. H., £2 2s.; W. T., 5s.; H. B. H., 5s.; W. K., £11 10s.; A. F. P., £6; W. H. T., £5. Total £64 18s. 6d.

#### Section Library.

The following books have been received during the month and are now acknowledged with thanks: *A Collection of Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions*, published under the auspices of His Highness the Maharaja of Bhavagar; *The Science of the Emotions*, Bhagaván Dás, M.A., London and Benares, 1900; *Old Diary Leaves*, Henry Steel Olcott, Second Series, 1878-83, London, 1900.

A. J. WILLSON,  
*Librarian.*

#### Mr. Leadbeater.

Those who are interested in Mr. Leadbeater's tour will be glad to have the latest news from him. He writes from Buffalo:

30th October, 1900.

"As to ourselves, we are both flourishing, and have had an exceedingly interesting and very pleasant tour so far. Nothing could exceed the kindness with which we have been received everywhere, and I am inclined to think that even if no more work were done than has already been accomplished, the time and trouble given to the journey would be more than repaid. I have lectured to a good many public meetings in various places, and have always had good audiences, who seemed intelligent, attentive and sympathetic, while the members of the branches have been enthusiastic in their welcome, and I hope have really gained something in the realisation of the truths which we have to teach.

"To-day I have taken a holiday for the first time, and we have been to visit Niagara Falls, which are twenty-two miles from here. I am sure that you must have read all about them long ago, so I won't bore you with any description, but will only say that no account of them which I have

ever seen gives any idea of what the stupendous reality is like.

"I am going on from here to Toronto, in Canada, then to Toledo, in Ohio, and after that to Chicago, where I shall stay for four weeks. All letters for me, however, had better be adressed to Mr. Fullerton's care, as he will always know exactly where I am at any given date."

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#### North of England Federation.

The twenty-seventh Quarterly Conference was held at Harrogate on Saturday, November 3rd, under the Presidency of Dr. Arthur A. Wells. Delegates and members were present from the Manchester, Harrogate, Middlesbrough, Athene (Bradford), Sheffield and Leeds Lodges, and the York, Hull and Bradford Centres.

The reports of activities in the various northern towns were of a very encouraging nature, and testified to the increasing interest that is being taken in Theosophy. The public meetings had been better attended than heretofore, and there were signs of much healthy activity in Lodge work. A welcome addition to the membership of the Federation was announced, the Edinburgh Lodge having been unanimously elected by the Council.

The subjects selected for general discussion—(1) "The Ethics of Thought-Influence," and (2) "Can we afford to neglect Metaphysics?"—were respectively introduced by Mrs. Corbett (Harrogate) and Mr. Orage (Leeds). A very interesting and animated discussion followed each, in which many of the members present took part.

At 5 p.m. the Conference adjourned, and the members proceeded to the Winter Gardens, where they were entertained to tea by the Harrogate Lodge.

On re-assembling, Dr. Wells delivered a most valuable and instructive lecture on "Toleration," at the conclusion of which he was accorded a most hearty vote of thanks for his presence and kindly assistance.

In connection with his visit to the North, Dr. Wells visited and lectured to good audiences at Hull, Middlesbrough, Bradford, Harrogate, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and Birmingham. Needless to say wherever he went he was greeted with a hearty North-country welcome, and from each he took with him a pressing invitation to return again soon.

The next meeting of the Federation will be held at Harrogate on February 2nd. Mr. G. R. S. Mead has kindly consented to preside.

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

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#### Blavatsky Lodge.

On Oct. 25th, the Lodge had the pleasure of listening to a lecturer new to our members, though not new to the public. This was Mr. James Stirling, who read an exceedingly interesting and learned

paper on the scientific evidence of the former existence of the Continent of Lemuria. Mr. Stirling's professional knowledge as a geologist enabled him to speak with authority on the subject.

On Nov. 1st, Miss Ethel Mallet (also a lecturer new to the Blavatsky Lodge, though well known at other of our London Lodges) read an interesting paper on Saint Teresa and Giordano Bruno.

On Nov. 8th Mr. Mead read and commented upon one of his translations of the Hermes treatises; he raised some very difficult and subtle points for the discussion and consideration of the Lodge; he has rarely given us a more interesting lecture.

On the 15th the second of the social meetings arranged for the Lodge took place. The attendance was larger than on the first occasion, and it was felt, by many at least, that the new departure bade fair to be a success, and to accomplish the desired end.

The Sunday evening meetings continue to be well attended; the lecturers have been Miss Ward, Mr. Mead, Mrs. Sharpe and Mr. Moore.

S. M. S.

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#### Manchester Lodge.

Considerable activity is being manifested in Theosophic circles in this city. The Manchester Lodge is enjoying a steady accession of new members, while many others not yet formally associated with us are evincing a very considerable interest in the Theosophic interpretation of life. The Lodge had the advantage of a visit from Countess Wachtmeister in the middle of October. On the 18th, a well-attended drawing-room meeting was held in Plymouth Grove, at the house of Mr. W. Harrison, the Treasurer of the Vegetarian Society, when the Countess gave an address on "Vegetarianism in the light of Theosophy." Next day another drawing-room meeting was held, at the house of Mrs. Leo H. Grindon, President of the Ladies' Literary Society, at which the Countess Wachtmeister addressed the members on "Prayer," and—at the special request of the guests assembled—gave some reminiscences of H. P. B. On the evening of the 21st (Sunday), the Countess delivered a public lecture on "Psychic Astral Development" to a crowded audience in the Arbitration Chamber, 78, King Street. And lastly, on November 8th, the Lodge was favoured with a visit by the General Secretary, Dr. Wells, who met members and friends at 24, Eccles Old Road, the address of the President.

A. LARMUTH,  
*Hon. Sec.*

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#### Liverpool Branch.

On October 24th the first of a series of classes for the systematic study of Theosophical teachings was held.

On October 31st there was a very interesting discussion, which was opened by Mr. Zeper, who gave many points for consideration on Practical Theosophy.

On November 7th the Lodge had the pleasure of listening to a lecture by Dr. Arthur A. Wells on Theosophy and Dogma, which interested all who heard it.

On November 10th an "At Home" was given in the Lodge Room by Mrs. Jean B. Gillison, when the members had an opportunity of meeting socially. A series of these will be given by different members, by which means it is hoped that the members will become better acquainted with each other and united for the common weal.

JEAN B. GILLISON,  
Hon. Secretary.

#### Middlesbrough Lodge.

The winter session was opened on September 20th, when the first of the usual course of public lectures was delivered by Miss Shaw, who spoke on the subject of "One Life or Many?" On October 18th Mr. Thomas discoursed on "Some Neglected Christian Teachings." As an experiment, it was decided that Mr. Hudson's paper on "Man and his Angels" should be read on the evening of Sunday, November 11th, and the large and interested audience which gathered on that occasion decided the Lodge to continue the Sunday lectures fortnightly, until the end of the year.

Lodge study will be continued fortnightly from November 15th.

W. H. T.

#### Brighton Lodge.

On November 18th an excellent meeting of the Brighton Lodge was held at No. 6, Old Steine, when Mrs. Sharpe kindly attended from London, and gave an address on "The Purpose of the Theosophical Society," which was greatly appreciated.

A. K.

#### Class at Earl's Court.

Miss Wolff van Sandau has started a class for Theosophical study at 16, Nevern Road, Earl's Court, S.W., which meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays in each month. The present subject of study is Mrs. Besant's *Seven Principles of Man*.

#### Theosophical Lending Library.

The following books have been added to the Library: *As a Watch in the Night*, Mrs. Campbell Praed; *The Autobiography of Madame Guyon*, trans. by Thomas T. Allen; *Avatâras*, Annie Besant; *Bordevland*, Vols. 1, 3, and 4; *Carmina Gadelica*,

Alexander Carmichael; *Christian Mysticism*, W. R. Inge; *Esoteric Science in Human History*, Thomas Lake Harris; *Folk-Tales of Bengal*, Rev. Lal. B. Day; *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, G. R. S. Mead; *Ghostly Visitors*, "Spectre-Stricken"; *The Kalevala*, trans. by John M. Crawford; *The Living Races of Mankind*; *La Lumière sur le Sentier*; *Masonry and Mediæval Mysticism*, Isabel Cooper-Oakley; *The Memory of Past Births*, Charles Johnston; *Papias and his Contemporaries*, Edward H. Hall; *The Proofs of Theosophy*, Alexander Fullerton; *La Sagesse Antique*, Vol. 1, Annie Besant; *The Soul of a Christian*, Frank Granger; *Studies in John the Scot*, Alice Gardner; *The Troubadours at Home*, Justin H. Smith; *The Unknown*, Camille Flammarion; *Voices in the Night*, Flora Annie Steel.

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

Terms of subscription: three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra.

Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 2.30 to 6 o'clock.

Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W.

LILIAN LLOYD,  
Librarian.

#### Lotus Circle.

The children meet at 2.30 p.m. on Sundays at 28, Albemarle Street, W.

A. J. W.

#### Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: Dec. 2nd, *Devotion*, J. H. Duffell; Dec. 16th, *Man's Body*, F. J. Hooper; Dec. 30th, *Unity*, T. H. Duffell. Dec. 9th and 23rd, Class study. Class for study of the *Bhagavad Gîtâ*, conducted by Mr. J. H. Duffell, on Saturdays, at 8.15 p.m., at the above address. For information apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings in the Yorkshire Penny Bank Buildings, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of "Some Problems of Life," except on Nov. 19th, when Miss Shaw will lecture on *The Building of Character*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. Meetings on alternate Sundays at 3.30 p.m., and on alternate Mondays at 8 p.m., 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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: Dec. 18th, *Hindu Morality from the Mahābhārata*, Dr. Thirlwall. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattanach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 19, Bedford Circus, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 5 p.m., for study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

HAMBURG LODGE. Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

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

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, Clarence Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Dec. 2nd, *Some Neglected Christian Teachings, II.*, W. H. Thomas; Dec. 9th, *How to acquire a Strong Will*, Mrs. Corbett; Dec. 16th, *Reincarnation*, A. R. Orage; Dec. 23rd, *The World-Healer*, Miss M. Smith; Dec. 30th, *The Wheel of Change*, Mrs. Bell. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of "Some Problems of Life."

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: December 5th, *Evolution of Consciousness*; Dec. 12th, Reading and Discussion; Dec. 19th, *Devotion*. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings every Sunday at 7 p.m., at 97, Westbourne Avenue.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarian Restaurant, Boar Lane, on Mondays, at 8 p.m. Branch meetings on alternate Mondays. Enquiries to be addressed to Mr. W. H. Bean, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Pomona" Vegetarian Restaurant, Kurprinzstrasse, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., at 18, Colquitt Street: Dec. 5th, *The Positive Nature of Evil*, Mme. de Steiger; Dec. 12th, Class for Study; Dec. 19th, *Devotion*, J. H. Duffell. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings are held on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C., for the study of *Clairvoyance*.

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Meetings at the Central Free Library, Lavender Hill, S.W., on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Dec. 2nd, *The Song Celestial*, Miss Ward; Dec. 9th, *God, Nature, Man*, F. Horne; Dec. 16th, *The Use of the Imagination*, Mrs. Hooper; Dec. 23rd, *Human and Divine*, A. J. Faulding; Dec. 30th, *A Common-Sense View of Reincarnation*, G. Dyne. Class on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 28,

Albemarle Street, W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: Dec. 6th, "*Lemuria*": *a Submerged Continent (recent scientific evidence)*, II., James Stirling; Dec. 13th, *The Wisdom of the Mind*, G. R. S. Mead; Dec. 20th, *Conversazione*; Dec. 27th, No Lecture. On Sundays, at 7 p.m. (open to visitors): Dec. 2nd, *The God of the Savage*, Captain Lauder; Dec. 9th, *The Use of Imagination*, Mrs. Hooper; Dec. 16th, *Self-Knowledge*, Mrs. Leo; Dec. 23rd, *Theosophy and Dogma*, Dr. Wells; Dec. 30th, *The Spirit that giveth Life*, Mrs. Sharpe.

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

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "West View," 12, Oakfield Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Dec. 4th, *The Bond of Brotherhood*, Mrs. Leo; Dec. 11th, *The Purpose of the Theosophical Society*, Mrs. Sharpe; Dec. 18th, . . . . . A. J. Faulding. Students' Class on alternate Thursdays. Hon. Sec., F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m.: Dec. 3rd, *The Spirit of the Hour*, Alan Leo; Dec. 10th, *The Joy of Service*, Mrs. Leo; Dec. 17th, *Conversazione*.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 13, Tyndale Place, Upper Street, N., on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.; and at 86, Savernake Road, Gospel Oak, on Saturdays, 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 on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m., at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W.: Dec. 7th, *From Osiris to Christ*, Capt. W. B. Lauder; Dec. 14th, *The Mystic Cross*, G. R. S. Mead; Dec. 21st, Members' Evening.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 31, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 7, Ryedale Terrace, on alternate Sunday evenings: Dec. 9th, *The Good Law*, W. H. Thomas; Dec. 23rd, *Christmas*, Baker Hudson. Meetings for study on alternate Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m. Subject for study, *Four Great Religions*.

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.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8 p.m., at the Oddfellows' Hall, Morley Street, and on Wednesdays (students' class) at 8 p.m., at Dr. Mariette's, Ford Park House, Mutley.

ROME LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at 6 p.m., at 72, Via S. Niccolo da Tolentino.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.

TAVISTOCK CENTRE. Meetings on Tuesdays at 8.30 p.m., at 5, Broadpark Terrace, Whitchurch.

## ENQUIRER.

## QUESTION 97.

G. P.—Mrs. Besant, in her article on the Christ (*Theosophical Review*, August, 1899, p. 519), speaks of the sun as “born in the sign of Virgo” and as “passing into the sign of Virgo on the 24th December.” Now I find the winter solstice, not in the sign of Virgo, but of Sagittarius. Two thousand years ago the solstice coincided with Capricornus, and therefore her statement somewhat confuses me, and I should be glad if THE VĀHAN could throw some light on it.

A. B.—The phrase “born in the sign of Virgo” is misleading. The constellation was rising just above the horizon, it is stated, at midnight, 24th to 25th December. The zodiacal sign at the birth of Jesus was either Capricornus or Aries, I forget which, and I have no books with me for verification; the zodiacal sign gives the sacred animal connected with the Saviour born in it, and is not significant as to the mother, varying, as it does, as the sun passes round the zodiac. I ought not to have used the technical phrase “born in the sign of,” since that always implies the zodiacal sign. I am obliged to G. P. for drawing my attention to it, and will change the wording in my forthcoming book.

## QUESTION 98.

F. H. B.—In the *Story of Atlantis*, p. 2, the Kelts and Germans are spoken of as the fourth and fifth sub-races, but it is said that “five only have so far come into existence,” and that the sixth and seventh will be developed in North and South America. No mention is made of the great Slavic race, numbering more than 100 millions of Aryans. Is not the Slav the sixth sub-race, and following the Teutonic race as Teutons followed Kelts? Does it not in some qualities already rank above both the Celtic and Germanic sub-races?

W. S.-E.—In answer to this question it may be definitely stated that the Slavs are *not* the sixth sub-race. This race is now in process of development on the Continent of North America.

Beyond this it is impossible to speak with complete assurance, for no authoritative statement that I am aware of has been made on the subject. I believe, however, that the origin of the Slavs may be traced to a mixture of the Celtic and Iranian sub-races, and the strongly marked characteristics of the Slav race would seem to justify this conclusion. There is, too, a future before them, for the Russian people, who are their chief representative, form a “family race” which has not yet reached its zenith.

## QUESTION 99.

H. L.—With reference to the lecture of Mr. Mead on the Hermetic subject: “In God alone is Good and elsewhere nowhere,” I venture to say that this state-

ment implies two things: either that there is no evil at all, or that there is evil everywhere.

In God alone is Good.

God is everywhere.

Therefore Good is everywhere.

But where there is Good there cannot be Evil (taking now Evil and Good as opposites), hence there is no Evil at all.

This is the point of view of the optimist, the pessimist would say:

Good is everywhere.

Evil is the hidden side of Good.

Therefore Evil is everywhere.

Should we not rather say that God is beyond both?

He is not Good; He is not Evil; He is not revengeful; He is not merciful.

This conclusion is, I suppose, the hint which Mr. Mead gave us, saying we should go out into the cold and not shrink from it. It may look somewhat like atheism, yet it is none.

G. R. S. M.—As I pointed out in my lecture, the sermon that “in God alone is Good and elsewhere nowhere” is one of such beauty, and makes so strong an appeal to our love of the Beautiful and Good, that most of us are content to bask in its sunshine and cease to enquire further. I, however, further pointed out that this sermon was addressed to one of the outer circles of pupils, and was not the teaching of the innermost groups, who had to face the terrible mystery of evil and not turn their backs upon it. I said that the term Good was beautiful as applied to God, but insufficient. Good is one of the terms of a pair of opposites, and That which is beyond all names not only transcends but also includes all pairs. The mystery of so-called “evil” has never been really revealed; the dark face of the Deity has never been unveiled as yet for the many. I, therefore, warned my hearers against being deceived into thinking that they had arrived at a solution of the ultimate mystery which is in the hand of God alone, and which is the supreme Reason of reasons, known only to the Logos, and to those who have become one with Him. God is *all* and *none* of these things; and “all” includes Good and Evil, and “none” forbids our naming Him by either title. This is a “cold” outlook for the many; but for the few it is so transcendent a vision that they are dumb in utter helplessness to voice the faintest echo of that Ineffable.

## QUESTION 100.

E. S.—Do the dead bodies of solar systems go to the making of nebulae from which new systems are evolved? And if so, how is the distribution of the matter in space effected?

A. P. S.—Much more advanced knowledge than can belong to anyone likely to answer questions in the VĀHAN would be required for the complete elucidation of this stupendous process. Very roughly we have been led to believe that the matter of which planets consist is disintegrated when their life period is over, just as the matter of which

a human body consists, undergoes that process. But just as no new body is built up of the actual matter that has formerly constituted a dead one, so no new planet is formed from the matter of an old one. This is dispersed through the ocean of matter, and from that the new world is derived. Whether a dead planet is reduced to its ultimate atoms by the disintegrating process, or merely to small masses which would then be regarded astronomically as a meteor stream, is a question on which I am not inclined to think any of us have as yet definite information. The only authoritative information that we have received that seems to bear upon the problem, relates to the beginnings of the Solar System. Then the Creative Powers concerned appear to have gathered the matter required for the work from the surrounding ocean of space in the shape of etheric atoms. Their aggregation engendered the original nebula. This points to the probability that at the end of the life of the whole system the matter of which it consists will return to the etheric state. But intervening processes which have to do with the building up and destruction of worlds during the continuance of the system as a whole may involve a less exhaustive treatment of matter. The meteor stream looks very like a natural device subservient to the formation of new worlds as they are wanted. Such streams are probably much more numerous than is as yet surmised by ordinary astronomy. Perturbations in their course might quite conceivably lead to the clashing together of two or more such streams and thus to the development of a new nebula (by the heat engendered), and thus to the formation of a new planet. As for the nature of the catastrophe which breaks up a previously existing planet into a meteor stream, we know too little to venture a confident opinion. But reasoning suggests that inasmuch as the manifestation of physical matter as such is apparently due to the operation of Will—active on some very exalted plane—the relaxation of that Will would lead to the automatic relapse of the matter in question into the primary atomic condition. The reduction of a planet to the condition of a meteor stream would, along the lines of that hypothesis, be a partial relaxation of the Creative Will as regards that particular mass of matter, associated of course with some positive cause of the cataclysmic order.

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QUESTION 101.

*I. B.—We read in "Spiritual Darkness" that disciples having no more karma of their own, bear a part of the heavy karma of the world? Does this mean that through those disciples part of our karma is taken away?*

M. E. G.—J. B.'s question is full of interest, and as I understand the subject may be answered somewhat as follows: The collective karma of the world is at any single moment of time a given quantity, and in this field of collective karma man works out his individual karma, in the earlier

stages automatically as far as he is himself concerned. But the time comes when, having seen and acknowledged the justice of the Law, he not only gladly accepts his own burden, but claims from the Great Ones the right to pay off in full his kârmic debt, not that he may be free from burden, but free to carry the burdens of others—no unit can escape his individual karma, but there is a vast difference between bearing it with the tottering steps of childhood, or the strength of manhood. It is for the strong then to bear the burden for those who are not full grown. The possibility of paying off our own kârmic debt is open to all, and stepping from out the ranks of humanity offer ourselves freely to the service of bearing the burden of the world. In this lies the secret of vicarious suffering, willing scapegoats for the moment's need.

A. A. W.—The answer to this question takes us into regions of which but few have a right to speak, and of these I am certainly not one. If one might, however, hazard a conjecture, it would be somewhat of this sort. We are told that when this world of ours came into existence as the successor of the moon it brought over a heavy burden of karma which still weighs upon it. If this be so, it clearly follows that this cannot be *our* karma in the ordinary sense of the words—the result of our actions since we were individualised and endowed with the Divine spark of mind. Nor would or could any Power take any portion of *this* karma from us. But the statement gives us a very faint glimpse of something which is assuredly the truth that lies behind the doctrine of Original Sin, utterly perverse as that doctrine is in its present materialised shape. Just as the worship of the Divine Mother, its meaning having been forgotten, has crystallised round the entirely inadequate figure of the human mother of the Master, Jesus—so, the sense of a mysterious Fate, laid upon the world before ever there were men to know or feel it, has been "rationalised" by the ignorance of theologians into a sin committed by the first man, and in some unimaginable way to be borne by all his descendants. In both cases it is easy for a "Free-thinker" to show the absurdity of the popular belief; but to demolish the foolish *explanation* does not touch the mysterious truth beneath it. We have not "sinned in Adam"; neither he nor we have ever "fallen" at all; but there *is* a burden we all have to bear—a World-Sorrow above and beyond men's own contribution to its miseries; and this it is which the souls who are past their own expiation may help to lift. What that true "original sin" is, or how it came about, who of us can expect to see for many lives to come, if ever? The only suggestion I can make is that it seems to offer a glimpse of such a solidarity (to use a French phrase) of humanity as is not confined to the highest we can *now* recognise as *ourselves*. It may be that at some height we have retained (and shall for ever retain) a conscious existence which, to the vision of the Divine mind,

is, in potency or in act, continuous over all changes of Manvantaras. It *may* be that as one single physical life is to the infinite advance (as we call it) to which we learn in our deepest meditations to aspire, so this very advance in its turn may be but a brief episode in a higher life still, in which we ourselves blossom forth from the All and are indrawn, and come forth again even as the Universe, by the Great Law of Its being, which is ours also. At some vast distance beneath this lie the generating causes of every kind of karma which can possibly befall us, individual or otherwise.

I. H.—I should have said that the efforts of the ego should be for the extinction of the “sense of separateness,” which is, we are told, a delusion. There is, we are taught, but one Consciousness in the Universe, that of the Logos. It is for us to fit ourselves during many lives consciously to realise this, consciously to form a part of His Life. We are told that the Buddhist consciousness when the man is working on that plane destroys the sense of separation; because the consciousness is not centred, as heretofore, in the separated form, but in the universal life. It seems to me, we need to try to realise that “the experiences of all the egos” *are* the experience of the Logos; that there is but one Experiencer and one Worker. When the forms which have been used to express Him in manifestation vanish, the Consciousness remains with all the experience gained in the now vanished forms garnered within it.

A. B. C.—Two priceless guides to the Path of Discipleship have been given to the world in connection with the Theosophical movement—*Light on the Path* and *The Voice of the Silence*. From the first of these Mrs. Besant quotes the sentence in her article on “Spiritual Darkness,” which has given rise to the question under consideration, but in both of these works J. B. will find that immense stress is laid on the need for more protectors and saviours for struggling humanity as forming the chief incentive to effort for individual evolution. The idea, therefore, is by no means a new one in theosophical literature, but Mrs. Besant has put the question in a fuller light and indicated somewhat of the way in which it is scientifically possible for a disciple to bear part of the heavy karma of the world. The difficulty which is evidently present to J. B.’s mind is—How to reconcile such a possibility with non-belief in vicarious atonement, as commonly understood, and with the inflexibility of the Law of Karma as Theosophy teaches it?

Personally, I do not think the difficulty need exist in the mind of the careful student, and I would suggest that a re-perusal of Mrs. Besant’s article would itself answer the question which J. B. propounds. Nowhere in the article is there any suggestion of the mitigation of individual karma—“our karma,” as J. B. phrases it. The efforts alike of the advancing disciple and the Christ triumph-

ant are directed to the breaking up of injurious compounds, harmonising of disruptive forces, and replacing them with rhythmical vibrations. In other words they are directed to cosmic processes and not to personal entanglements. Most students are aware that in the process of evolution there is a polarisation of force into positive and negative (good and evil from one point of view) absolutely necessary if growth is to be possible at all. Nature abounds with illustrations of the truth of this statement on the physical plane, and the physical we believe to be but a reflection of the inner planes in which our consciousness also works. The inevitable result of the working of opposing forces is a pendulum-like swaying from pole to pole, an oscillation betwixt extremes, as the one or the other force is for the moment stronger. Now if we also remember that all manifestation of force on any plane is the work of conscious intelligences, we shall begin to understand that the results we call good or evil are in every case brought about by the intervention of *will*. Throughout the solar universe rules one Great Will—one Force—but in so far as it is an evolving universe that will is polarised and shows itself in positive and negative forces on every plane; and positive and negative in the two lower worlds which form the chief theatre for our present stage of evolution often translate themselves as good and evil. We next have to recognise that in the invisible worlds, where human will is also working, conscious intelligences are at work to produce harmonious or inharmonious movements—harmonious when they make for evolution, inharmonious when they make against it, and the energies of these great hosts of intelligences are constantly reinforced by the growing strength of human will, which *may* be directed on the one side or the other—the good or the evil—but which—alas for humanity!—has mostly through the long ages past given strength to the forces of evil by liberating on the astral plane vast stores of “envy, malice and all uncharitableness.” *This* is the “heavy karma of the world,” a collective, cosmic karma, if one may so express it, as distinct from the karma of any individual. This is the karma which it is possible for the evolving disciple to learn how to lighten, and Mrs. Besant has told us that he does it “by gradually learning to draw into himself inharmonious and disruptive forces, so that they exhaust themselves in him, often tearing and rending him in the process, and are then sent forth harmonised and rhythmical, forces for building up instead of forces that destroy.” The disciple then becomes a transmuter of energy of a higher kind, much as a dynamo transforms heat into electricity down here. It is thus that he learns to stand as a “stone in the Guardian Wall” that protects humanity, as a whole, from the too violent reaction of the negative force. In other words, he becomes a conscious co-worker with the forces making for evolution. In one sense every right living, right thinking man is working in the same direction, and, as one of our poets has phrased it:

“ No life  
Can be pure in its purpose and strong in its strife,  
And all life not be purer and stronger thereby,”

But by his greater knowledge and devotion the disciple is able to effect much greater results. In short, he learns to deal with cosmic forces, and thus to modify the environment of lesser men; but this is an entirely different thing from interference with individual karma or anything approaching vicarious atonement in the usual meaning of the term. Yet it may well be that this is the occult truth which was the living germ out of which grew originally the whole superstructure of rotten timber that overshadows a large part of Christendom to-day.

E. A. B.—I have heard it said that a stronger soul may occasionally bear some karma of a weaker one for a time, until the latter gains the needed strength to bear its own. I speak without knowledge, but should suppose this to mean *not* that such karma was “taken away,” but that its owner was helped through a stage of weakness which might have overpowered him. Possibly something of the same kind occurs on the larger scale of the world’s karma. In our own small way, the loving sympathy we can give to one in deep sorrow does not take it away, but it does help him in the bearing of it.

E. L.—There are similar statements made elsewhere regarding this “remission of sins,” as in the Christian teaching, and that of the *Gītā* where Śrī Kṛiṣṇa Himself promises to “liberate from all sins.” I do not think this doctrine has ever been much dwelt on, but I have always regarded it as enshrining a profound and beautiful occult truth not yet graspable by us, otherwise we should doubtless have heard more of it. I think that one of its meanings may be traced in a statement made in lectures from time to time to the effect that disciples are entrusted with certain teachings to give to the world, and that these teachings always provoke a reaction, coming, of course, from the forces working against evolution. The *best* and the *worst* sides of human nature are then played on and quickened, and the reaction falls most heavily on the one who gives out the knowledge. He chooses to be responsible. That is part of his sacrifice. He bears the wrong-doing, the revolt, of the lower human nature, as the sacrificial victim, the responsibility, of course, being carried all the way up, and not stopping at him. But that revolt has exhausted much that the revolters would have had to work off in ordinary evolution, or we might say it quickens this working out of any karma they may generate in their assault on the Teacher, therefore brings them nearer the Goal. Thus does he bear a part of the karma of the world, thus does he liberate men. And even so with us, albeit in a far humbler sense, when we recognise that our difficulties in-

crease, our sorrows become keener, once we have really chosen to lead the Higher Life. For it is not *our* own individual difficulty, *our* personal pain that we have to master, it is that of all others who suffer in that particular way, which we are gradually drawing unto ourselves. And each time we conquer with this end in view, it means that we have performed *our* tiny act of liberation, and are bearing *our* infinitesimal fragment of the great karma. This is the preparation for the discipleship of which J. B. speaks.

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QUESTION 102.

I. G.—*What is meant in “The Key” of Hermes Trismegistus (§ 12), where the Universe is spoken of as “not subject unto death,” and therefore “not evil”; while man is spoken of as evil because he is subject to death? Now, if “death” is but “chemical change,” surely the Universe is equally subject to that with man; and if so, why is man “second” after it?*

G. R. S. M.—The answer to this question is not a difficult one. The universe or cosmos is the body of the Heavenly Man, the Logos. This cosmos is æonian or “everlasting” in comparison with everybody in it. It is true that all its parts are in continual change; but *as a whole* it remains unchanged and therefore “everlasting,” and therefore is not subject to the “death” which rules the fate of its parts. In the Hermetic philosophy the cosmos is called the Son of God; the whole cosmos is the child of deity, His alone-begotten Son, whose body alone we behold. In our present-day attempts to understand the mysteries of cosmogenesis we limit ourselves to the speculation of the genesis of our solar system, but by cosmos the Hermetic philosophers meant the sum of all solar systems, and this they could with propriety call everlasting.

Man, on the contrary, is poured into many bodies, and therefore suffers many changes; whereas the Heavenly Man pervades *one* body only, and therefore suffers no change. The Heavenly Man is Good; therefore is man evil, for he is not Good, seeing that he is not God. Man, however, has the potentiality of Good, but as long as that potentiality falls short of actuality, he falls short of Good, and is therefore second and not first.

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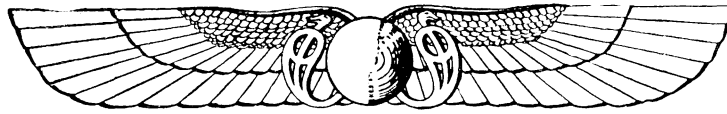
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*All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.*



# 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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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.—ARTHUR A. WELLS, *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, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. X.

LONDON, JANUARY 1, 1901.

NO. 6.

Edited by ARTHUR A. WELLS.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### New Branch.

December 6th, 1900. Charter issued this day to Neil Black, James Wilson, A. Wallace, J. Russell, Miss J. Stodhart, Mrs. Mackie, J. Handyside, J. F. McKechnie, A. Duke, Mrs. Handyside, J. P. Allen and B. L. Samuel to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society at Glasgow, to be known as the Glasgow Branch.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary.*

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to Dec. 20th: M. A. W., 10s.; B. P. M., 10s.; O. G. O., £1; F. L. J. Z., £2; W. M. G., 5s.; G. R. S. M., £2 2s.; K. and H. D., 7s.; W. J. L., £4 10s.; N. G., £5 5s.; A. v. H., £12 12s.; G. H., £1 1s.; A. McD., £5; F. W. S., £1 5s.; B. P. M., 5s.; C. E. B., 15s. Total, £37 7s.

#### Section Reference Library.

The following books have been placed in the Library during the month:—*Rules for Daily Life*, A. Siva Row, Madras, 1900; *The Anatomy of Misery, Plain Lectures on Economics*, John C. Kenworthy, London, 1900; *Notre Corps et ses Destinées*, Frank Thomas, Genève, 1900.

A. J. WILLSON,  
*Librarian.*

#### Class at Headquarters.

A class for study of the principles of Theosophy is being formed under the charge of Mr. G. Dyne,

and will meet on Wednesday evenings at 8 p.m., at 28, Albemarle Street, beginning on January 16th. Any member of the Society wishing to join the class should communicate with Mr. Dyne at the above address.

#### Mr. Mead's Lectures.

During February and March Mr. Mead will give a series of eight lectures on the Origins of Christianity in continuation of his Autumn course. He will lecture on "The Gnosis according to its Friends" and will deal with the contents of the "Pistis Sophia," the "Books of the Saviour," the "Book of the Great Logos," the "Untitled Apocalypse," the "Gospel of Mary" and the "Wisdom of Jesus." The lectures will be given in the Lecture Room, 28, Albemarle Street, on Tuesday afternoons, at 5 p.m. A syllabus will be shortly issued.

#### Afternoon Meetings at Headquarters.

The six meetings held on Mondays in November and December were very successful, and the interest shown in the subjects to which the questions referred, as well as the good attendances, proved that these opportunities for learning were not unappreciated.

They will be resumed on Mondays in February and March.

#### Blavatsky Lodge.

The Council of the Blavatsky Lodge have decided that each member of the Lodge shall be entitled to invite one friend to the *Conversazione* on January 17th. Those who desire to do so must kindly forward, not later than January 12th, the name of their proposed guest to the Secretary of the Lodge, who will send an invitation card to any member who thus applies for one.

The lecture on November 22nd was delivered by Dr. Wells; his subject was "Toleration," and his treatment of it gave much and valuable food for thought upon a question of vital importance to all, whether members of the Society or no. On November 29th, Mr. Moore gave a very interesting lecture on "One Force, One Life." On December 6th Mr. Stirling was to have lectured on Lemuria, but the press of his engagements prevented the preparation of his intended lecture. He therefore substituted another upon "A Piece of Blue Stone," which proved to be of great interest and was much appreciated. On December 13th, Mr. Mead gave the Lodge the benefit of one of his translations of the profoundly interesting Sermons of Hermes, the title of the translation being "The Wisdom of the Mind." At the conclusion Mr. Worsdell drew the attention of the Lodge to the remarkable similarity of the conclusions reached both by the ancient seer of the inner planes, and the modern scientific student of the physical world, Professor Haeckel.

The Sunday evening lectures continue to be well attended. The lecturers have been Captain Lauder, Mrs. Hooper, and Mrs. Sharpe, who, at short notice, took the place of Mrs. Leo, who was prevented by illness from delivering her proposed lecture.

S. M. S.

#### City of Liverpool Lodge.

On Nov. 21st, an interesting discussion on "Karma," was opened by Madame de Steiger. On Nov. 25th, an introductory lecture on the "Study of Eastern Philosophy" was given by Mr. J. H. Duffell. On Nov. 28th and Dec. 12th, Mrs. Jean B. Gillison held her class for study of Theosophical teachings. On Dec. 5th, much interest was aroused by Madame de Steiger's paper on "The Positive Nature of Evil," and so many difficult points raised that the subject is to be taken up again later on. On Dec. 8th, an "At Home" was given by Mrs. J. H. Duffell, at which two short addresses were given by Mr. J. H. Duffell on "Monism," and by Dr. Pitt-Taylor on "Consciousness." On Dec. 19th, Mr. J. H. Duffell closed the lectures for the year, by giving an interesting paper on "Devotion," in which he gave much emphasis to the "Attainment of Union with the Divine."

J. B. G.

#### Class at Earl's Court.

The class at 16, Nevern Road, Earl's Court, S.W., is held on the second and fourth Tuesdays in each month, and *not* on Wednesdays as stated in our last issue. Subject for study, Mrs. Besant's *Seven Principles of Man*.

#### Theosophical Lending Library.

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

Terms of subscription: three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra.

Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 2.30 to 6 o'clock.

Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W.

LILIAN LLOYD,  
Librarian.

#### Lotus Circle.

The children meet at 2.30 p.m. on Sundays at 28, Albemarle Street, W.

A. J. W.

#### Lecture List.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: Jan. 6th, *Marcion*, J. A. Fallowes; Jan. 27th, . . . . . B. Hodgson; Jan. 13th and 20th, Class study. Class for study of the *Bhagavad Gita*, conducted by Mr. J. H. Duffell, Jan. 13th, 7.30 p.m., at the above address. For information apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings in the Yorkshire Penny Bank Buildings, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of "Some Problems of Life," except on Jan. 30th, when Mrs. Corbett will lecture on *The Athanasian Creed*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. Meetings on alternate Sundays at 3.30 p.m., and on alternate Mondays at 8 p.m., 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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: Jan. 22nd, *Oracles*, Mrs. Cuthbertson. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattnach, 67, Brunswick Street.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 19, Bedford Circus, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

GLASGOW CENTRE. Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on the fourth Tuesday in each month.

HAMBURG LODGE. Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

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

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at the Swedish Gymnasium, Grand Opera Buildings, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Jan. 6th, *Into a Larger Room*, Mrs. Bell; Jan. 13th, *What is Mysticism?* A. R. Orage; Jan. 20th, *Fate*, Mrs. Corbett; Jan. 27th, *Ideals*, by members. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: Jan. 2nd, 16th, and 30th, Reading and discussion; Jan. 9th, *Egyptian Psychology*; Jan. 23rd, *Christian Travaesties*. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings every Sunday at 7 p.m., at 97, Westbourne Avenue.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarian Restaurant, Boar Lane, on Mondays, at 8 p.m. Branch meetings on alternate Mondays. Enquiries to be addressed to Mr. W. H. Bean, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Pomona" Vegetarian Restaurant, Kurprinzstrasse, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., at 18, Colquitt Street: Jan. 9th, *Desire, its Meaning and Importance*, F. S. Pitt-Taylor; Jan. 23rd, *Philosophy*, M. E. P. Zeper; Jan. 16th and 30th, Class for Study. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings are held on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Meetings at the Central Free Library, Lavender Hill, S.W., on Sundays at 7 p.m. Jan. 6th, *The Christ that is to be*, Mrs. Despard; Jan. 13th, *Man's Hidden Powers*, R. King; Jan. 20th, *Histories of the Soul*, Mrs. Hooper; Jan. 27th, *The Place of Selfishness in Evolution* (with lantern illustrations), A. Galt. Class on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 28, Albemarle Street, W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m. (open to members of the Society): Jan. 3rd and 10th, No Lectures; Jan. 17th, *Conversazione*; Jan. 24th, I. *The First Object of the Society*, G. R. S. Mead; Jan. 31st, *The Way of the Spirit*, Miss Arundale.

On Sundays, at 7 p.m. (open to visitors): Jan. 6th, No Lecture; Jan. 13th, *Religion, its Childhood, Youth and Manhood*, G. R. S. Mead; Jan. 20th, *Reincarnation*, Miss E. Ward; Jan. 27th, *The Vehicles of Consciousness*, A. H. Ward.

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

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "West View," 12, Oakfield Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Jan. 1st, *Conversazione*; Jan. 8th, *The Christ that is to be*, Mrs. Despard; Jan. 15th, *Dreams*, R. King; Jan. 22nd, *The Higher Christianity*, A. A. Wells; Jan. 29th, *Ideals*, A. J. Faulding. Students' Class on alternate Thurs-

days. Hon. Sec., F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

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 13, Tyndale Place, Upper Street, N., on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.; and at 86, Savernake Road, Gospel Oak, on Saturdays, 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 on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m., at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W.: Jan. 11th, *Use of the Imagination*, Mrs. Hooper; Jan. 18th, *As Above so Below*, G. Dyne; Jan. 25th, *The Book of Job*, Rev. W. Charter Piggott. Syllabus on application to the Secretary.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 31, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 7, Ryedale Terrace, on alternate Sunday evenings. Meetings for study on alternate Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m. Subject for study, *Four Great Religions*.

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.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8 p.m., at the Oddfellows' Hall, Morley Street, and on Wednesdays (students' class) at 8 p.m., at Dr. Mariette's, Ford Park House, Mutley.

ROME LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at 6 p.m., at 72, Via S. Niccolo da Tolentino.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m.

TAVISTOCK CENTRE. Meetings on Tuesdays at 8.30 p.m., at 5, Broadpark Terrace, Whitchurch.

## ENQUIRER.

QUESTION 93.

(Continued from p. 30.)

C. F. G.—From my reading I had obtained the idea that Theosophy taught that every ego was striving for the final extinction of its own self-consciousness; but an expression I have lately read that "the Logos gathers up the experiences of all the egos into His consciousness" conveys to my mind a very different idea. Which is the correct one?

L.—Theosophy teaches that every ego is striving for the *expansion*, not the extinction, of its self-consciousness. A careful study of the text-books will show that the only extinction required is that of selfish desire, the wish of the personality to grasp for itself, which up to a certain stage of evolution is a necessity; that stage once passed, the wish should be to give, not to grasp, and in that giving the ego grows and widens through ever vaster

fields of work and experience, until the final bliss of "union with God" is consciously attained.

E. L.—Theosophy certainly does *not* teach that every ego strives for the final extinction of its own self-consciousness. But this is a common and not unnatural error due to a superficial grasp—if one can call it *grasp*—of a difficult conception. The all-consciousness of the Logos appears non-consciousness to us at our *present* stage of development. Only one who had entered into union with Him could appreciate the fact, sometimes rendered in the following words, "Nirvāna *is*." The phrase quoted by C. F. G. is, I take it, another way of expressing the same idea, *i.e.*, that in some indefinable sense each individuality persists, even while gathered up into the One, and may we not say that such persistence could only be guaranteed by its own ultimate recognition of that fact? In the earlier days of Theosophy in this land certain of its teachings, especially the deeper ones, were somewhat loosely stated. This accounts for much confusion. Assuredly the latter conclusion would be the more correct one.

A. H. W.—The writer understands that all the reincarnating egos are those evolving centres of consciousness into which the One originally willed to multiply, during a long stage of their great pilgrimage. Each ego is self-conscious to the extent of recognising itself as having had many earth lives, and as going to have many more.

But even this wide consciousness can be transcended, first by the ego realising itself as one with all the other egos, and consciously sharing all their experiences as well as its own; and finally by its consciousness widening out to that of the Logos, and so remembering all the experiences which the Great Mind brought over from that Scheme of Evolution in which He Himself was evolved. At this stage the ego will realise that it has been the Logos all along, if one may venture to try to formulate so great a mystery. Thus the individual ego-consciousness may be said to become extinct in a certain sense, though the expression is unfortunate, inasmuch as it is really vastly widened. So our personal consciousness would be vastly increased if we could remember all our past incarnations, and foresee all our future ones.

Our present life and all its experiences would then be like a month in fifty years of one earth life. But that the ego-consciousness ever really becomes extinct cannot be true if, as the writer understands, the one thing which differentiates one of the new centres from the others in the One Consciousness, is the memory of its long past. So the memory of our past life and all its experiences is the cause of our personal identity now.

From the point of view of the Logos, all the egos during their evolution are so many centres of experience in His Vast Mind, and He is conscious in the person of each ego and its personality. Every vibration which each individual causes on any plane remains impressed on the corresponding

ether, and forms the "Ākâshic record," the memory of the Great Mind. Thus does the Logos gather up the experiences of all the egos into His Consciousness, for the Ākâsh is the substance of His mind.

As the physical vibrations of the human voice can be impressed on the cylinder of a phonograph and be preserved for countless ages, if the cylinder be properly protected, so will their etheric energy persist in the functionless ether as long as that part of the physical manifestation of the Logos endures. So the corresponding vibrations on the astral and mental planes will endure until these planes fade out with the de-manifestation of the One. Even then the vibrations will not be lost, but by a process of abstraction their essence will pass from plane to plane, till all the vibrations of the solar system are reduced to one ultimate essential, symbolised as the "Word." This, re-uttered at the Dawning of the New Day, will re-manifest as a New Universe when the "Night of Brahmā" is spent.

A. B. C.—C. F. G. does not give any idea of the range of literature whence he has derived the impression that "Theosophy taught that every ego was striving for the final extinction of its own self-consciousness," one can only, therefore, conclude that he has been feeding on the questionable hash which is purveyed by the average newspaper man or the theological pamphleteer whose usual line of reasoning runs: Theosophy is a kind of Buddhism; Buddhists believe in annihilation, *ergo* Theosophy preaches extinction. Both premises being wrong the conclusion falls to the ground; the pamphleteer goes on his way rejoicing, but the unwary trip over the *débris*.

My own reading of the literature issued by theosophists of acknowledged reputation tends to the exactly opposite conclusion from that of C. F. G. The *expansion*, and not the *extinction*, of self-consciousness, I understand to be the goal of our evolution. The whole purpose of a solar universe, we have been told, is to bring into being self-existent centres of consciousness, like unto the Source and Parent from whence they issue as *unconscious* germs. The whole upward arc of the evolutionary cycle is one continual unfolding of powers latent in the ego, and expansion of consciousness from plane to plane, until, at the Nirvānic level, a consciousness is reached which is *one* with that of the Logos; a centre has been formed which is so strong that it can hold its identity and yet include, and be included in, the consciousness of all other centres. A difficult conception for those whose consciousness as yet includes the merest fragment of the lowest planes, but so we are taught by those who "know," and the expression quoted by C. F. G. carries no contradiction to such teaching.

C. F. G. might ponder over Arnold's beautiful lines:

"Foregoing self, the Universe grows 'I':  
If any teach NIRVANA is to cease,  
Say unto such they lie.

“ If any teach NIRVANA is to live,  
 Say unto such they err ; not knowing this,  
 Nor what light shines beyond their broken lamps,  
 Nor lifeless, timeless bliss.”

E. A. B.—Theosophy cannot be truly said to teach that every ego is “ striving for the final extinction of its own self-consciousness.” The sense of *separateness* is indeed to be got rid of ; but the very purpose of this mighty evolution is the continuous *expansion* of consciousness, until it may finally become one with that of the Logos, maintaining its own centre throughout, so that at some future “ Day ” of manifestation it may come forth again as itself the Life of some new System.

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QUESTION 101.

(Continued from p. 40.)

J. B.—We read in “ *Spiritual Darkness* ” that disciples having no more karma of their own, bear a part of the heavy karma of the world. Does this mean that through those disciples part of our karma is taken away?

J. van M.—At the first glance the sentence that one might be able “ to bear a part of the heavy karma of the world,” seems to contain a statement contradicting the strict and rigorous justice of karmic law.

The solution of the problem seems to me as follows:

If the evolution of the soul is the purpose of life, and if this evolution is effected by experience, then the whole universe may be compared to a vast school in which an unending series of classes—each varying in degree of perfection of teaching, teacher and pupils alike, but all resembling each other closely in the nature and essence of the instruction imparted.

If now one of the pupils should assimilate all the teaching which is given during the present curriculum before its end, the teacher may be able to use him as an assistant for the lower and mechanical parts of his instruction (as for instance would be the case in chemistry and physics). This would constitute a real alleviation of the heavy karma of that class with respect to their mastering the difficult subject expounded, but an alleviation that by no means interfered with the individual karma of any pupil as far as regards to his personal exertions and capacities. Every pupil has still to apply himself fully and earnestly to the difficult task of assimilating knowledge, and his result in this direction will depend wholly on himself. But, on the other hand, the teacher is able to give more attention and to devote more time to the more essential part of his teaching, thereby presenting truth in a more perfect form than before; so that, as soon as any other pupil later on masters the truth as now shown forth to him, he will assimilate it more fully and deeply than was possible before the teacher was assisted in his presentment of that truth by the one disciple who outstripped his fellows.

This, *mutatis mutandis*, it seems to me, may be applied to the universe as well and goes even towards an explanation of the much ridiculed idea of vicarious atonement; only beware, *omnis comparatio claudicat!*—when carried too far.

But that is another story, though if the querent be of mathematical inclinations he may prefer the following formula, that sums up the whole answer within short compass:

Every cycle (whether in time or space, two- or three-dimensional) being limited, any force starting in it, is bound sometime to strike its limits and thence to rebound to the centre. Q. E. D.

R. B.—No disciple who is without karma of his own can free us from our individual karma. What he does do can only be understood when we consider how it is connected with the karma of the family, nation or humanity—that is, of a collective unit. In everything done, or left undone, the individual who acts is not alone responsible, but also his family, nation and humanity bear their corresponding parts, in guilt as in merit. The more or less intimate and lasting connection, and conscious and unconscious mutual intercourse between an individual and his family, nation, humanity, produce a powerful influence upon them. For example, if any one attains to a high grade of adeptship, he is able so to attain, not by his own power alone, but also through the influences on the part of the families and nations to which he in his various incarnations has belonged, as well as to the whole of humanity.

When, then, the disciple, after balancing his individual karma, tries to soften that of the various collective units connected with him, he only pays back what he has received, and thus helps all those concerned, in proportion to the burden upon them of their collective karma.

Consider, then, that all beings are intimately connected by all that has taken place, whether in the bosom of the Absolute during Pralaya, or in the manifested worlds during the æons, and by exchanging influences have reciprocally conditioned their mutual unfolding; that, therefore, the guilt or merit of each action, or the inaction, of any one person in particular is actually divided amongst all beings in a way that cannot be computed by any human arithmetic.

G. R. S. M.—This is a most interesting problem; it opens up the whole question of “ vicarious atonement ” and the “ forgiveness of sins.” There is a point reached in the evolution of the philosophic spirit and in the effort to free the mind and heart from dogmatic limitations and personal preferences, where all dogmas can be tolerated and yet held to be insufficient. The dogmas of “ karma ” and of “ vicarious atonement ” are a pair of opposites. To the many they are mutually exclusive; one only can be right, the other must therefore be wrong. One is orthodox; the other is heresy; and the more strongly we believe in one, the more damnably heretical appears the other. But in the quiet of the

adytum, in the silence of the heart, are they so mutually exclusive; are they not twins; are they not two faces of a single truth? The many think the Truth is manifested in one way only, and can never learn the great cosmic lesson, that She is manifest in *all* ways, and yet never really seen. Truth is the something else than what we can grasp, the beyond, the goal, the ever-desirable. The wise man will find "karma" in "vicarious atonement," and "vicarious atonement" in "karma," good in evil, and evil in good, light in darkness, and darkness in light. "Not this; not this" will be his eternal cry as he seeks for God. And if this be so, is it not foolish to think when we are looking at a problem simply from another standpoint that we have solved it? It is true that we have seen more of it from *outside*: but to solve it we must consciously become it. And in this becoming, and in this alone, will the spirit of its being illumine us; and that Light is in life alone and not in the creeds, "Theosophic" or otherwise.

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QUESTION 103.

*D. Y. T.—What ought one to desire in reference to the treatment of savage races in regions of the world untouched by civilisation?*

A. P. S.—It goes without saying that no answer to such a question as this can carry with it any occult authority. The problem belongs to the order of those in reference to which theosophical students may endeavour to apply theosophical principles, but in doing this will assuredly arrive at different conclusions. The foremost reflection that bears upon the matter from my point of view is this:—Savage races cannot have any great evolution, any future. They are all remnants of bygone races that have had their day in the past. The races destined to progress in the future will certainly be evolved from those that represent the fifth root race, to which no savages on any part of the earth's surface belong. True, the majority of the earth's population at present are of the fourth race and some of these may be destined to a period of improvement by reason of being late offshoot races, relatively recent growths from the parent stem; but even in their case the main current of future evolution will not flow along that channel. And as for races that are unequivocally savage, like those of the African interior, there is clearly no question of any future at all. They are going on by reason of the backward state of a large number of egos, fit as yet for no higher incarnation than they afford.

From that standpoint we see at once that the aim to be kept in mind by people of superior advancement who deal with them, should be in harmony with the facts. It is ridiculous to approach a negro race with the idea that by civilising it you are going to lay the foundation of a future generation of that same order of people, who shall be intellectually or morally of the European pattern. The race as such is unimprovable. You can no more employ the physical heredity of

a decaying race to engender a superior race, than you can make an old man into a young one. What might be done, perhaps, would be so to influence the egos actually in incarnation in the savage race you are dealing with, that they shall not again come into such incarnations, but be qualified to pass on into higher races. Quite possibly, however, nature is doing that without any human assistance. We cannot very well trace the advantage an ego may derive from having spent a life as a negro in Africa, but it is to be presumed that even that, being a strictly natural process, does somehow afford an opportunity for progress or for the very minute tendency to progress required at that stage. Anyhow, the honest conclusion to which one is forced by a broad view of the subject, is that the best thing that can happen to a savage race is, that it should die out.

Does this mean that one should help the process by any of the rude methods too often employed by white men in their intercourse with savage races, certainly without any philanthropic purpose in view? I do not by any means go so far as to say that. In the wonderful working of divine designs it may have happened sometimes that the cruel extermination of savages by white conquerors has been all for the good of the exterminated savages, but none the less would it be all for the bad of the too willing instruments of Providence. Evil to him through whom evil cometh. There is a world of deep meaning in that phrase. When white races are thrown into contact with savage races, their duty undeniably is to treat those savage races as kindly as circumstances will allow. If their savageness takes homicidal and other objectionable forms, these tendencies should be corrected by punishments as severe as may be required to effect the purpose in view, but the main idea should be so to govern them, that their natural disappearance off the face of the earth should proceed as quietly and painlessly as the conditions will permit.

From these reflections one other will clearly arise, the importance of which is very great. The whole missionary enterprise as directed to the decaying savage races of the kind we have been considering, is based upon a total disregard of the evolutionary facts involved. Apart from all questions as to the primitive character of the average missionary's theology, the attempt to Christianise and civilise entirely savage races can have no other result than might attend an effort to make the rivers of their country run up-hill. From first to last it is based upon ignorance of the principles governing the progress of mankind.

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QUESTION 104.

*E. A. G.—I should be most grateful if you would give me the titles of books containing information as to the old temple lore of Egypt and Chaldaea, recent discoveries at Nippur—as theosophically viewed—and as to who were the "Masters" of the Ancient Wisdom: was Melchizedec one?*

G. R. S. M.—There is a book written by

Iamblichus, about the last quarter of the third century A.D., which deals precisely with the subject of the old temple lore of Egypt and Chaldæa. Iamblichus was not only one of the Platonic successors, but also a high initiate into this ancient temple-lore, and wrote his treatise as an authoritative statement from a duly qualified exponent of the ancient mysteries. This treatise was translated into English, at the beginning of the century, by Thomas Taylor, and a second edition was printed by the Theosophical Publishing Society in 1895 (price 7s. 6d.). The treatise bears no title but it has always been known as *Concerning the Mysteries, or On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians*. It is, however, by no means an easy book to understand; in fact, it requires a new translation and an exhaustive commentary.

The account of the most recent discoveries at Nippûr made by the American Exploration Society has not yet appeared; and seeing that a library of at least 10,000 cylinder and tile documents has been unearthed, it is not to be expected that an account can be hastily prepared. The report will, of course, be on the lines of rigid science and scholarship, as it ought to be. Theosophic considerations come in at a very much later stage, and only then if the documents deal with theosophical subjects.

The Masters of Wisdom are the great teachers of religion, and the wisest rulers of humanity. Among the greatest may be mentioned Kṛiṣṇa, Gautama the Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus the Christ. There were and are many others of varying degrees of Masterhood. Every ancient tradition of religion and every mythology of folk lore preserves the memory of some of them. I have treated of Melchizedec in this connection in a recent number of THE VĀHAN.

Beside the volume of Iamblichus, there is of course a vast list of books on Chaldæa and Egypt. From the question, however, I conclude that E. A. G. wishes to confine the list to those books written from a theosophical point of view. I have taken this to be the case, and so have given the title of a book written by a Theosophist of the past. I might also suggest that E. A. B. should read the numerous articles I have written on "Hermes the Thrice-greatest" in *The Theosophical Review* during the last two years, and also the articles of Mr. Leadbeater on "Ancient Chaldæa." The late Marsham Adams' two volumes, *The House of the Hidden Places* and *The Book of the Master*, are also written with much insight.

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QUESTION 105.

A. S. G.—*Do spirituality and progress in psychical powers, such as astral sight, always go together? Is it a sign of non-advancement, if ignorance of the astral plane continues, notwithstanding the existence of other interior experiences and although we grow more spiritual in thought and feeling?*

W. S.-E.—This is a question that can be answered without much difficulty.

Spirituality and progress in psychical powers do *not* necessarily go together, nor does ignorance of the astral plane constitute a sign of non-advancement. To build up character, to become less selfish and more spiritual in thought, feeling and action is the one thing of importance. All the psychic faculties will follow in due time; indeed the development of occult powers without a corresponding progress in spirituality is more likely to be a curse than a blessing, not only to their possessor, but to all who come in close contact with him. The natural development of the psychic nature is like the opening of a rose to the sunshine, while its premature forcing is like the tearing open of a bud before its petals are ready to unfold.

Far too much stress has been laid on this cultivation of psychic powers, and the Society has not yet entirely freed itself from the mistaken view.

If the teachings of the Society are, as we hope, to influence more and more the world's thinking through the coming century, they will dwell more on the steady building up of the character to the fullness of the stature of the ideal put before us, than on *any* attainment of psychic power or astral vision.

L.—Spirituality and psychic powers do not always go together; they belong to entirely different planes, and though the psychic may be spiritual he is not so of necessity, while the spiritually developed man has, up to a certain stage of progress on the path of holiness, frequently no psychic faculties at all.

Many pupils are trained to-day completely shut off from the astral plane, while their higher development is all the time going steadily forward.

The power to grasp transcendental ideas, to comprehend the meaning of life, to do our duties at all times and at whatever cost, and above and beyond all this, a wide toleration, an intense sympathy with our fellow man—these are the signs by which we may realise that we are advancing towards the higher life.

E. A. B.—Fortunately for most of us at present, we learn that spirituality and progress in psychical powers do *not* by any means necessarily go together; and as the former is infinitely the more important, we may be content to wait for the latter until such time as these powers are really needed for our work, when we may reasonably hope that they will be naturally developed. Until then, their premature development would probably be found to be a hindrance rather than a help to true progress or power of real work.

E. L.—No. A man is not necessarily spiritual because psychic; in fact, as a rule, less likely to be spiritual than the non-psychic. Indeed, ignorance of the astral plane in the sense the questioner means is for most of us a blessing. Could we "see," we should often be hindered and distracted from our daily duties here. The existence of "other interior experiences" is a gain to be valued far above astral powers, valuable as these are in their

proper place and when wielded by a master of them. It is no sign of non-advancement, therefore, not to be psychic. Progress will probably take place more rapidly, and to grow more spiritual in thought and feeling means that many dangers common to psychics will be avoided.

It may be said that sometimes astral powers are not developed till after Initiation has taken place.

But does A. S. G. remember that we may be very fairly awake on the astral plane during sleep, and yet not bring back the remembrance?

A. A. W.—The question has been frequently and fully answered; but the answer can hardly be too often repeated. The attainment of psychic powers has, in itself, no relation whatever to growth in spirituality. The possession of such powers is, generally speaking, the result of efforts made in previous lives, not of aspirations, however lofty, in the present. We may say, generally, that psychic powers, of a lower kind, were natural at a stage below where we stand. Such are found to this day amongst savages in nearly every part of the world; and they seem to be endemic, as one may say, wherever (as in Brittany, Ireland, Wales, and the Highlands of Scotland) any part of the old Atlantean continent has survived. To have lost the capability of those is a mark of advance—though upon the downward arc of the spiral. Now, having passed the culmination of the long descent into matter which ended with the middle of our own race, we look forward to a new and higher kind of psychic development in the future. But the growth of the spiritual life is a steady rise, quite independent of the changes of constitution which have made the body for most of us, at the present time, unable to manifest it. The few exceptions who are able completely to link their physical to their astral consciousness are thereby provided with a means of doing much service to humanity, for whose use they are responsible; but they are not thereby themselves raised to greater height of spirituality. Their gift is for others rather than for their own profit, and is one we should do well *not* to aspire to till we are stronger and wiser, for its possibilities for evil are as great as those for good.

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QUESTION 106.

C. F. G.—*If the First Cause is omnipotent, all-wise and all-good, why is not the Being below Him and immediately derived from Him all-wise and all-good, and so on down the whole chain, to the ego? If there is no "evil" in the whole, there can be none in the part.*

A. A. W.—In this case there is no need to go so high as the Causeless Cause. The Logos whose thought contains the whole of our universe from its first inception to its final consummation, sees thus past, present, and future in one eternal Now; all that on our plane is Becoming as pure

Existence. He is the Being usually thought of and by Christians called God, and to His vision there is no evil, either in the whole or its parts. There is nothing new in this statement; I could give endless quotations from Christian writers to this effect. He, and He only, knows. His own plan for our evolution and sees it even now finally worked out to its full completion, as it will be at the end of the millions of years of *our* time, which to Him "are one day." The whole life of the universe is His life, and nothing can, in the end, go any way but as He has ordained from the beginning. What *we* call the struggle between good and evil is simply the meeting of the opposing forces by which that evolution is carried out, and without which progress is impossible. For us, the "evil" of modern Christian theology, which successfully *opposes* God and draw souls to eternal destruction, does not exist, never has existed, never will, and we must leave those who believe in it to discover its origin. We say, as a Christian saint has said "He has all power, all wisdom and all love—how then *can* anything be amiss?"

Evil, as *pain and sorrow*, is another matter altogether. Pain is the only means by which the dawning consciousness of the undeveloped humanity can be stirred to growth. We have to learn by pain because we are yet children, and the higher motives do not yet touch us; when we are grown up, it will be to us but a child's trouble, matter only for a careless smile or a passing sigh over the recollection. And even now (if rightly viewed), pain, injustice, sorrow and the rest are mere passing incidents in the growth of the true Self, matters of the lower mental and physical planes, which pass with the life of the physical body. The true Self, even now, lives beyond them and touches them only by the generousities they draw forth and the increase of life it receives by them. As pain and sorrow they do not touch *us* at all—only as help on our own way, pressing us forward in the evolution for which alone we return time after time to life. Some of us are not far, even now, from the time when all sense of pain shall be utterly transcended, and their lessons learned by love alone; so tremulously and sensitively alive to the higher Will rightly called God's Will, that they answer to it without the faintest jar in their music caused by the limitations which mean pain; God and man in fullest harmony of joy and bliss. And to this, some time in the Kalpas, shall we all come!

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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, 3, Langham Place, 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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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.—ARTHUR A. WELLS, *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, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. X.

LONDON, FEBRUARY 1, 1901.

NO. 7.

Edited by ARTHUR A. WELLS.

### MOVEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT-FOUNDER.

WE take the following from the November number of the Buenos Aires' *Philadelphia* :

“ By letters lately received from Col. Olcott, we find his plan is, after reaching San Francisco, to make a tour through the United States, visiting no less than sixty towns and cities where branches of the Society are established. From thence he will cross to Havana. The Colonel hopes to be with us (at Buenos Aires) in March or April, and will stay with us somewhere about a month, and then sail direct for India.”

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to Jan. 20th: H. S. W., 10s.; H. S., £2 2s.; F. C., 15s.; J. D. C., £6 6s.; R. P., 5s.; H. B., £1; M. S., 6s.; E. S., 5s.; A. L., £1; M. H. L., £2 10s.; W. S.-E., £2; E. D., £2 2s.; A. P. C., 10s.; E. K. T., £4; A. H. W., £3 3s.; E. P., £1; W. J. B. D., £2; T. B. B., £1 1s.; A. B., £15 1s. 9d.; E. M. M., £2; E. P., £2; M. A. L. G., 5s.; L. E. C., £1. Total, £51 1s. 9d.

#### Section Reference Library.

The following books have been received during the month, and are acknowledged with thanks: *Proben der Volksliteratur der Türkischen Stämme Süd-Sibiriens und der Nördlichen Türkischen Stämme*, gesammelt und übersetzt von Dr. W. Radloff, 6 vols., St. Petersburg, 1866-86; *Notes on the*

*Margins, Being Suggestions of Thought and Enquiry, Five Essays*, by Clifford Harrison, London, 1901; *Inferences from Haunted Houses and Haunted Men*, the Hon. John Harris, London, 1901.

A. J. WILLSON,  
*Librarian.*

#### Afternoon Meetings at Headquarters.

Afternoon meetings will be held at 28, Albemarle Street, from 3 to 5 on Mondays, in February and March, for discussions and questions on Theosophy. Open to all members of the Theosophical Society and their friends.

The names of those who will answer questions are: Feb. 4th, Mr. Ward; Feb. 11th, Mrs. Marshall; Feb. 18th, Mr. Sinnett; Feb. 25th, Captain and Mrs. Lauder; Mar. 4th, Dr. Wells; Mar. 11th, Mrs. Hooper; Mar. 18th, Mr. Mead; Mar. 25th, Miss Ward.

#### Classes at Headquarters.

The class for study of the principles of Theosophy, formed under the charge of Mr. G. Dyne, meets on Wednesday evenings at 8 p.m., at 28, Albemarle Street. Any member of the Society wishing to join the class should communicate with Mr. Dyne at the above address.

Mrs. Leo's elementary class for the study of Theosophy will be resumed on February 7th, and held on alternate Thursday afternoons at 4.30 p.m.

#### Lectures by Mr. Mead.

During February and March two courses of lectures will be given on the Earliest Christian Mysticism, by Mr. G. R. S. Mead, on Tuesday afternoons, from 5 to 6, in the Lecture-room of the Theosophical Society, 28, Albemarle Street, W.

## SYLLABUS.

*A Course.*—February 5th, The Great Initiation of the Master; February 12th, The Wisdom Mystery-myth; February 19th, The Mystery of Man; February 26th, The Books of the Saviour.

*B Course.*—March 5th, The Book of the Great Logos: (a) The Mysteries; March 12th, (b) The World-emanation and the Return; March 19th, The Visions of a Great Seer; March 26th, The Gospel of Mary and the Wisdom of Jesus.

Course Tickets for either Course, 5s. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 3, Langham Place, W. Admission to each Lecture, 2s.

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 North of England Federation.

The twenty-eighth Conference will be held in the Swedish Gymnasium, Grand Opera House Buildings, Harrogate, on Saturday, February 2nd, 1901, at 3 p.m., under the presidency of Mr. G. R. S. Mead. All members of the Society are cordially invited to attend.

W. H. THOMAS,  
Secretary.

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 Blavatsky Lodge.

The Thursday evening meetings were suspended on the last Thursday of December, 1900, and the first and second Thursdays in January, 1901. The *Conversazione* on the third Thursday of December was sparsely attended owing, probably, partly to the weather and partly to the near approach of Christmas. The *Conversazione*, with which the new syllabus began, was, on the other hand, well attended. Many members brought friends, and the evening appeared to be successful; the meetings seem to be having the effect for which they were inaugurated, namely, rendering it possible for members to become acquainted with each other.

The Sunday evening meetings are well attended, and a new syllabus has just been issued. Mr. Mead gave the opening address on: "Religion: its Childhood, Youth, and Manhood"; the lecture was one of very great interest, and of such value to enquirers as to lead to the expression of an opinion that it ought to be published in pamphlet form.

S. M. S.

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 Rome Lodge.

Steady work has been carried on since the return of Mrs. Cooper-Oakley in October. The chief point of interest has been the founding of a Central Office for Italy, in order that the organisation of the work may be facilitated. This office is under the direction of Mrs. Cooper-Oakley and Captain Boggiani. A reference library is attached to the office.

Meetings for members and enquirers have been

held regularly three times a week at the Rome Lodge. A question class, directed by Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, on Mondays at 6.30 p.m., and classes on *Reincarnation*, *Karma* and *The Three Paths* have been held by Signor and Signora Calvari and Signor Aureli. The syllabus for February appears under the Lecture List.

Besides the work carried on at the Rome Lodge, classes and receptions have been held regularly at Mrs. Oakley's private apartment. As it has been found advisable that she should live in a more central position, she has decided upon moving in February. Her address, after the 15th, will therefore be: Palazzo Sabini, 53, Via delle Muratte, Rome.

M. C.

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 Bath Lodge.

This Branch, which was formed a short time ago, now holds meetings every Monday, at 15, Alfred Street, at 8 p.m. Miss Ward visited Bath on Jan. 14th, and lectured at 3.30 and 8 p.m. The subject of her evening lecture was "The Making of Character." There was a good attendance, and the lecture was highly appreciated.

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 Edinburgh Lodge.

Mr. A. P. Cattanach, who is leaving Edinburgh, has consequently been compelled to resign the post of Secretary of this Branch. Mr. J. Lorimer Thomson, of Roseburn House, Murrayfield, has taken his place *pro tem.*, and information can be obtained from him, or from the Librarian, Miss Hope, 32, Merchiston Avenue.

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 North London Lodge.

The past year has been an important one in the history of this Lodge. The new quarters, moved into at Michaelmas, are larger, more convenient, and more suitable in every way for the work of the Lodge.

The membership (thirty-eight) shows a net increase of seven for the year; the demands made upon members' generosity, in consequence of moving and furnishing expenses and the increase in rent, have been so well responded to by occasional donations and the guarantee fund that the previous year's slight deficit has been changed into a somewhat larger balance.

The Monday evening class has been very well attended and at this meeting and that for more advanced study at Gospel Oak, much good work has been done.

The Annual General Meeting, held on January 4th, was well attended, when the thanks of the Lodge were given to the officials and other members who so generously assisted in furnishing, and in the work of moving into, the new room.

The Lodge regrets the retirement from the presidency by Mr. Glass, but has every confidence that the position will be well filled by Mr. King, the new President.

W. M. GREEN,  
Hon. Secretary.

### Middlesbrough Lodge.

A class for elementary study commenced on January 10th, and will be continued weekly until further notice. The subject at present is *Man and his Bodies*.

On Sunday, January 13th, Mr. Thomas delivered a public lecture on "Reincarnation in the light of Christian teachings," at the Temperance Hall, and on the 27th Mr. Bell, of Harrogate, lectured on "Thought Control."

B. H.

### Theosophical Lending Library.

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

Terms of subscription: three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra.

Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 2.30 to 6 o'clock.

Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W.-

LILIAN LLOYD,  
Librarian.

### Lotus Circle.

The children meet at 2.30 p.m. on Sundays at 28, Albemarle Street, W.

A. J. W.

### Lecture List.

BATH LODGE.—Meetings at 15, Alfred Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: Feb. 3rd, *Practical Theosophy*; Feb. 10th, *Palingenesis*, Miss Hustler; Feb. 17th, *Esoteric Bible Studies*, Miss J. Keeley; Feb. 24th, *Our Relations to Time and Space*, B. Old. For information apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings in the Yorkshire Penny Bank Buildings, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of "Some Problems of Life."

BRIGHTON LODGE. Meetings on alternate Sundays at 3.30 p.m., and on alternate Mondays at

8 p.m., 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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: Feb. 19th, *A Study of Mesmerism*, W. Wilson. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. G. Lorimer Thomson, Roseburn House, Roseburn.

EXETER CENTRE. Meetings at 19, Bedford Circus, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

FLORENCE LODGE. Meetings at Via Venezia, 8, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, at 3 p.m.

GLASGOW LODGE. Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on the fourth Tuesday in each month at 8 p.m.: Feb. 26th, *Theosophy in Relation to Modern Science and Religion*, F. J. McKechnie.

HAMBURG LODGE. Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at the Swedish Gymnasium, Grand Opera Buildings, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: Feb. 3rd, *Some Forgotten Sayings of the Christ*, G. R. S. Mead; Feb. 10th, *The Soul's Awakening*, Miss Shaw; Feb. 17th, *The Song Celestial*, Hodgson Smith; Feb. 24th, *Theosophy and the Science of Life*, W. H. Thomas. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at Vidyā, Canterbury Road, on Fridays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, 25, William Street.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings every Sunday at 7 p.m., at 97, Westbourne Avenue.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarian Restaurant, Boar Lane, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.: Feb. 4th, *Man and His Bodies*, A. R. Orage; Feb. 18th, *God, Man and the Devil*, Miss Shaw. Branch meetings on alternate Mondays. Enquiries to be addressed to Mr. W. H. Bean, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Freia" Vegetarian Restaurant, 8, Nürnbergerstrasse, on the first and third Saturdays of each month, at 8.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., at 18, Colquitt Street: Feb. 6th, "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten," Mrs. J. B. Gillison; Feb. 20th, *Man's Spiritual Development*, C. S. Kinnish; Feb. 13th and 27th, Class for Study. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings are held on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Meetings at the Central Free Library, Lavender Hill, S.W., on

Sundays at 7.30 p.m. Feb. 3rd, *The Seal of the Theosophical Society: What does it mean?* L. Stanley Jast; Feb. 10th, *The Spirit that maketh alive*, Mrs. Sharpe; Feb. 17th, *Fate and Free-will*, A. J. Faulding; Feb. 24th, *Reincarnation*, A. H. Ward. Class on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 28, Albemarle Street, W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m. (open to all members of the Society): Feb. 7th, *The Physical Basis of Yoga*, A. A. Wells; Feb. 14th, II. *The Second Object of the Society*, G. R. S. Mead; Feb. 21st, *Conversazione*; Feb. 28th, *The Theosophy of Shelley's Poetry*, W. C. Worsdell. On Sundays, at 7 p.m. (open to members and visitors): Feb. 3rd, *Theosophy and Religion*, Herbert Burrows; Feb. 10th, *Theosophy and Science*, Herbert Burrows; Feb. 17th, *Theosophy and Life*, Herbert Burrows; Feb. 24th, *Theosophy and Death*, Herbert Burrows.

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

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "West View," 12, Oakfield Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Students' Class on alternate Thursdays. Hon. Sec., F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 8 p.m.: Feb. 4th, *Craniology*, G. Dyne; Feb. 11th, *Dharma*, Alan Leo; Feb. 18th, *Personality and Individuality*, A. H. Ward; Feb. 25th, *There is no Death*, R. King. Class for study on Mondays at 7 p.m.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 13, Tyndale Place, Upper Street, N., on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.; and at 86, Savernake Road, Gospel Oak, on Saturdays, 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 on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m., at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W.: Feb. 1st, *A Scientific Trinity*, Miss Ward; Feb. 8th, *Jacob Böhme*, Mrs. A. P. Sinnett; Feb. 15th, "At Home"; Feb. 22nd, *Asceticism in the Light of Theosophy*, Miss E. M. Green.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 31, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 68, Linthorpe Road, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m., for study of *Man and His Bodies*.

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.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8 p.m., at the Oddfellows' Hall, Morley Street, and on Wednesdays (students' class) at 8 p.m., at Dr. Mariette's, Ford Park House, Mutley.

ROME LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at 6.15

p.m., at 72, Via S. Niccolo da Tolentino: Feb. 4th, *Transmigration, Metempsychosis and Reincarnation*, Signora O. Calvari; Feb. 11th, 18th and 25th, Class conducted by Mrs. Cooper-Oakley. Class conducted by Signor D. Calvari on Fridays at 6.15 p.m. for study of *Dharma*. *Conversazione* on Wednesdays at 6.15 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m., and on Saturdays from 3 to 5 p.m.

TAVISTOCK CENTRE. Meetings on Tuesdays at 8.30 p.m., at 5, Broadpark Terrace, Whitchurch.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR SIR,

I was much interested in the answer given by A. P. S. to D. Y. T. in the January number of the VĀHAN, and should like the answerer to let us know where he would draw the line beyond which he would say the negroes were the remnants of a past race only to be left like—even worse than—dogs, to die out.

Do we not find that some of these African negroes, when treated properly, grow in intelligence?

Take Khama, for instance, who asked us not to bring him the civilisation of fire-water to curse his nation. And the Maories of New Zealand, who have dealt rationally with our Colonists out there. Do not some of these appear to be a rising, if they had the proper conditions supplied, rather than a dying and decaying race? This point needs a little more elucidation, I think.

I notice on p. 48, in a reply *re* psychic powers by A. A. W., that the psychic powers are found amongst savage races. Would not this also point to the fact that these savages are capable of development?

If they are to die out what becomes of the egos or spirits of them?

H. W.

A. P. S.—My comment on the above letter would be that undoubtedly individual negroes nicely treated may grow in intelligence, and when this happens are satisfactorily guaranteed against having another negro incarnation. That which is dying out is the mode of expression for souls on the physical plane which negro and other such races represent. The African chief referred to may, I should say, be regarded as the most potent force that has yet been employed by nature for the extermination of the African savage. Few of those who have been fortunately born his subjects are likely to come back into negro incarnations. With modifications the same remarks will apply to the Maories, though they, of course, are enormously superior to the negro races. The drift of evolution is plainly in the direction of the later root races and sub-races. All that I have said on this subject is the mere corollary of the broad theosophic teaching about race development, the simplicity of which, in the main, is so clear that there is not much room for misapprehension about it on our part.

## ENQUIRER.

## QUESTION 106.

(Continued from p. 48.)

C. F. G.—If the First Cause is omnipotent, all wise, and all good, why is not the Being below Him and immediately derived from Him, all wise and all good, and so on down the whole chain, to the ego? If there be no "evil" in the whole, there can be none in the part.

G. L. S.—The difficulty arises from our forgetting that what man recognises is only "the human conception of evil and not the inherent feature of evil." Now the human conception of evil varies very greatly and is constantly changing. For example many of us before hearing about reincarnation and karma, imagined that there was a vast amount of "evil" in the shape of undeserved and purposeless suffering, and a happy-go-lucky distribution of joys and sorrows in a world governed—apart from its mechanical and chemical laws—largely by chance and the grossest partiality and injustice. Now, however, we recognise that *those* evils at all events never existed, and that the most exact justice has all along been meted out to every man in the circumstances and environment in which he is placed. Wherein did those evils lie? In our ignorance. And in our ignorance, we may be sure, also lie all the other seeming imperfections in the general scheme of things we see around us. If this be so, it follows that as real knowledge is acquired, apparent evil disappears. The evil, in this sense, that any given man finds in the world, is therefore not a reality but simply a reflection of his own ignorance, just as the universe he beholds is not a reality but a reflection of his own powers of cognition, changing as those powers change. Each organic unit cognises a different universe, greater or smaller, better or worse, according to the stage of development that unit has reached. Before we are in a position to criticise, we must find out which of these worlds is the real one. Manifestly none is; all are purely relative, from the world of the oyster to the world of the scientific man who juggles with atoms and phenomena and thinks he knows a lot. Instead of fixed reality (the popular conception), we have different states of (developing) consciousness, each having its own world distinct and different from that of any other. To put it in another way, the world which *we* cognise is not made; it is making. There is an old proverb which says that children should never see things half done. This is very applicable to our conception of the world as a kind of spoilt pudding that has gone wrong in the making, because of the flaws, the "evil" which we wise children think so evident throughout its structure and so inconsistent with the handiwork of Omniscience.

Turning from the question of popular conceptions of evil to the question of what evil is in itself, the latter, as was pointed out by a writer

in the *Theosophist* some years ago, is fully explained in Vedântism, to those who care to grapple with metaphysics. Ignorance is the cause of evil; and if it be remembered that a limitation of knowledge is a necessary factor in evolution and concomitant therewith, we can understand that there is no inconsistency in the absence of such limitation in the absolute and the presence of limitation in the conditioned, the relative, and the finite.

W. K.—With reference to this question, and many similar ones involving the primary interrogation, "What is evil?" I would suggest that our conventional ideas of "evil" need a good deal of revision. Are we really sure that there is such a thing as "evil" even in the *part*? We can hardly admit it in the *whole*; that is to say, we can hardly admit such a thing as evil *per se*. Like everything else viewed from our limited point of view, evil is only relative. Though, however, we cannot hope to solve the problem on this plane of consciousness, I do not think that it is altogether hopeless as affecting our faith; even in its purely intellectual aspect. Our philosophy postulates a First Cause, which both is and is not that which It causes, or emanates. The process of creation or emanation is repeated downwards or outwards, in endless cycles, producing the universe of infinite parts of which we are conscious. Now suppose that instead of the word *evil* we write *limitation*. We see that that First Cause, which we are compelled to regard as in no wise limited or affected in Its infinite nature by the act or process of emanation, becomes by that very process an infinite number of limited *parts* or centres of consciousness. In other words, that which the First Cause is not in the whole, it is in the parts. Shall we, therefore, put it as C. F. G. does in his question, that if there be no limitation in the whole there can be none in the part?

We are told that the Logos, by an infinite act of self-sacrifice, limits himself in time and space, in order that our ego may be evolved. This is one of the esoteric meanings of the divine incarnation. This act involves suffering; again a mystery to our faith intelligence; the infinite divine perfection becoming the imperfect or limited human sufferer—in each one of us, not as an isolated historical event. But if we cannot understand this, we can at least possess the splendid optimism which refuses to believe that "evil" can be other than the best possible means of an infinite power and goodness, which will make out of the imperfect part, a perfect likeness of the divine whole.

A. v. M.—Arithmetically it is for the same reason that  $\frac{1}{2}$ , though derived from unity or perfection, is no longer complete or perfect in comparison with its source.

This is the practical answer, but I should like to add a theoretical one.

The querent seems wrongly (in my opinion) to hold the view that good or evil is something in itself instead of being (like the *accidental forms* of the scholastics of old) a mere ideal relation.

Of late we have had from a highly valued source a splendid exposition of the relativity of duty, good and evil, right and wrong. That invaluable little book *Dharma*, by Mrs. Besant, would certainly clear away the difficulties in the querent's mind. A former lecture by the same author, on "The Use of Evil," treats of the same question.

Two more points I should like particularly to draw attention to:

Firstly, that in speaking of the First Cause as all-good, etc., that goodness must be an "over-goodness" which has nothing at all to do with the popular notion of that same virtue. So that, speaking practically, the First Cause is not all-good, all-wise at all; rather devoid of all positive virtues, or in words of old: "Not this, not that."

Secondly, that *we* and *all things* are all-good in precisely the same way as the World-Soul is such Itself. For if it is true that a man may say with real truth, "I am THAT," or "I and the Father are One," we—in the metaphysical aspect of our innermost being—are possessed of the same virtues (or rather meta-virtues) as that Divine Principle.

So we shall be able to see the profound truth of the Leibnitzian statement (*Monadologie*, 41, 42):

"Creatures have their perfections through the influence of God, but they have their imperfections through their own natures, these being incapable of existing without limits."

And in this light also the change of the Greek conception of "*σοφός*" becomes clear, as that word meant originally: in-sight (literally: taste), then: fit, skilful; afterwards: sensible, judicious, experienced; and only lastly: wise. For the highest human wisdom is to suit ourselves to our Dharma, or the "form" (etymologically closely connected with, if not the exact equivalent of, Dharma) which the Universe assumes for any man.

M. E. G.—Perhaps the following line of thought might be suggestive to C. F. G. in dealing with the time-worn question of the Origin of Evil. Taking, then, the First Cause in the sense of the unmanifested Logos, when He in the beginning willed to multiply that He might bring many sons unto glory, the logical sequence of the act was self-limitation. The attributes of omnipotence and omniscience could pertain only to That which lies behind all manifestation, the Whole or Undivided; the Part, therefore, became the Self-limited, the First Sacrifice, willing to carry out the Divine Idea. Bearing this limitation in mind, manifestation on each succeeding plane of ever-increasing density would mean fresh barriers, greater limitations; *till, in the outermost circle of Divine Ideation dense matter had birth and completed the Form side of nature. Into this the Life side entered, the countless rays from the One Ray, the egos of humanity, that they might fulfil the will of Him who sent them forth, not as puppets moved from without, but as self-evolved sons of God. With Intelligence (or Life) bounded on every side by Matter (or Form) the factors that came into play were "choice" and "experience," the one*

regulating the other, but of necessity bringing with them what we call "Evil"; that is, the possibility of choice, unproductive through ignorance of the end desired. In this way experiences multiplied, till at last those in the front ranks of the mighty host caught sight of the Wholly Desirable and the Path became a possibility to humanity. As yet that highway through His universe is trodden only by the Great Ones, messengers of His will on every plane, but the day will dawn when He shall become the Desire of all nations, and the necessity for evil shall have passed away.

In the words of the Hebrew Scriptures this necessity is acknowledged with startling simplicity: "I am the Lord God, I do good, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things."

A. W.—Fortunately for humanity, neither the savage nor the sage is troubled by the problem of good and evil. The former has not yet become conscious of the difficulty, the latter has faced and solved it. It is we who are between these two extremes and who have evolved enough mind to cogitate over what we see going on around us, but have not yet attained the higher spiritual faculties inherent in all, who brood over this most perplexing and subtle question. The more brilliant the intellect and the finer its physical instrument up to a certain point, the more difficult of solution are found to be the problems raised; for the incongruities in any attempted explanation become more obvious, and the wise stop short before they quite lose their senses amidst the intoxicating vapours arising from the "Fathomless," into which they have dared to "sink the string of thought."

"Parabrahm," however, in one form or another, has to be faced by each of us in our evolutionary progress in this or in other lives, and those who have tried to arrive at ultimate conclusions and remain sane, sooner or later are forced to confess that the human brain is not an organ fine enough to be of use beyond a certain stage. To such enquirers the esoteric philosophy is presented as a hopeful guide that can be tested step by step.

Whilst it explains that along certain lines, which lead to the awakening of dormant, super-physical faculties, the question of good and evil can be solved, and has been solved by those before us on the Path, it frankly confirms the conclusion that none can "know by mortal mind," and may thus gain our confidence gratefully to study its plan of the way. Proofs accumulate, if slowly, and even in one short life much may be done to convince the intellect.

Those who from kârmic causes lack acquaintance with this plan, or cannot follow it, usually harden into materialism, after letting their intellect flash fruitlessly over the various religious systems and philosophies—or they may attain the graces of a quiet agnosticism that listens to all but is satisfied by none.

In many of the people it would seem that something besides the intellect had begun to stir, faint echoes from higher planes of being have filtered

through the density of their grosser envelopes and have stamped themselves on the physical brain in the form of an absolute certainty that all is good behind the seeming evil. Lacking the necessary connections, built by the higher mind, between spiritual knowledge and their lower mind, they can give no logical reason for their belief, but it suffices—happily for the world—to make many men and women quietly do their duty in life. Through the aspirations raised by the religion of their native land, these often gain ever louder and louder echoes of the Realities behind.

Premising, then, that the ultimate solution is beyond our reach here, we throw out a suggestion, gathered from the teachings, that may help us better to understand the events around us.

Our Theosophical studies show us the plan of the Universe as an orderly one. All is thought out by the great "First Cause" and exists in His Mind before evolution begins. And all is in Him and is good. All forces, from the highest Spiritual, through all grades down to grossest matter, are potential in Him and are "breathed out" in sequence; it is by their play and interplay that all the processes of evolution take place. The various stages can be studied in our Theosophical literature, where they have been roughly indicated for us.

It is the interplay of these forces that confuses our judgment. We can only cognise what takes place on our own plane, the lowest, or rather grossest, in our universe. But that which we perceive as good or evil action in it results from the innumerable finer forces composing all the higher, inner or more spiritual planes. It is as if we judged of a pictured landscape by a tree in the foreground and a tree in the background, taken haphazard. They are then seen out of perspective, and out of proportion, and we label either tree as "good" or "evil" according to our pleasant previous acquaintance with big trees or with little ones. The lines of the landscape will alone give us the connection, and enable us duly to prize both.

To take the instance lately quoted. The quick breaking up of many forms consequent upon what we call "war" comes to our notice. We are accustomed to a slower process and, besides, cannot trace the expansion of the life thus set free, and we pronounce war evil. Few can look behind and note the heightened play of the emotional and spiritual forces which precedes the bursting of the form, now too gross to serve as the instrument of the evolving life. Our eyes are holden, we perceive not the gods of the battlefield freeing their rising sons. So we lament and, rightly down here, from the limited standpoint, bewail war and death as evil.

We become silent when we know more.

A. H. W.—The writer understands that the answer to this question is something as follows: First carry the imagination back to the scheme of evolution before the present—the scheme of which our world and planetary chain and all the other planetary chains are, so to say, the reincarnation.

The highest and greatest centre of consciousness of that scheme is the Logos of this, and He carried over His consciousness through the, to us, inconceivable "state of non-being," the night of Brahmâ, to re-manifest and so limit it in the present system. But the myriads of lesser centres of consciousness evolved during that scheme ceased to function when their material basis was withdrawn at its time of fading out. These re-appeared as the "Glorious Sons of the Manvantaric Dawn," as soon as the Logos had re-established their material basis by creating the higher planes of this system. How far down the ladder of life this re-emerging chain of entities extended, and severally emerged as the lower worlds came into being, is not told us, but it seems probable that the very simplest centres of physical life which first appeared in any world of this scheme must have been evolved so far at the extreme end of the last one. These were the beginnings of the evolution of the new centres of consciousness which the cosmic scheme was initiated to create. So by a continuous evolution through plant and animal forms, the centres of consciousness at last evolved the human form, in order to manifest their stage of growth. Every step of this long process is good in itself since it subserves the great object. Consequently there is no such thing as real evil; each evolving centre is good as far as it goes, and its acts are also good inasmuch as they are all experience, and by experience alone it evolves. Where relative evil comes is here: each ego is at its own stage of evolution: those acts which it has already done and perhaps suffered for, are evil if repeated, for they waste its time, as well as cause it pain.

But identical acts will be perfectly good for a less-evolved ego, inasmuch as they are experiences which it has to go through in order to gain knowledge. "To gain knowledge we must have gone through all places, foul and clean alike." Consequently we cannot judge of anyone's acts or pronounce that they are evil; if an act is evil to us, it is because we have committed it and it has brought suffering; but it is an experience which the other must have to gain that knowledge. We are to become centres of consciousness, like and equal to the One in the fullness of time; this can only happen when every detail of the universe is represented in our consciousness. Hence the necessity for knowledge. But it may be objected that the details of the cosmos are practically infinite; if we go on learning at our present rate it will take innumerable lives to master those details. True. But at a certain stage of evolution the ego consciously becomes one with all the other egos, and all their experiences of the details of the universe become his, thus the great wisdom is attained. When the ego-consciousness further expands to that of the One, then he becomes perfect as the One is perfect. The Whole is always greater than the part, and in like manner It is better, wiser, and more powerful. Only when the part becomes the Whole is it equal to It in wisdom, goodness and power.

A. L. B. H.—As well say : “if there be no partiality in the whole, there can be none in the part.”

Evil has only a relative existence, it is a point of view. There is no such thing as absolute evil. This question is like the time-worn one: “Why doesn't God kill the Devil?” The answer is: “Because there isn't one,” but it is not often given, because the question implies a belief in the Devil's existence, which is still very popular—a belief in the reality of evil which cannot be uprooted by arguments, it has to be *grown out of*.

G. R. S. M.—The fallacy involved is that the “First Cause” is the “whole.” If the “First Cause” is postulated as the “all good,” then it is not the “whole,” for there is manifestly difference and therefore something other, to which indeed it owes its very manifestation as good. It is better, however, to start with experience and not with absolutely unknown premises. We had far better revise our premises by our experience, than postulate hypotheses which land us in logical absurdities.

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QUESTION 107.

J. H. E.—*As children are on the downward arc of their individual evolution, is it best to avoid stimulating their contemplative faculties? Should we avoid stimulus altogether, since it is so difficult to give it wisely, and wait to give help and teaching whenever the need arises?*

G. R. S. M.—Are children “on the downward arc of their individual evolution”? It may be so, but I hardly know what the phrase means. “Child” is the name usually given to the yet imperfect physical instrument of a human being. By the hypothesis, “the contemplative faculties,” which are the highest faculties usable in a fully developed physical body, cannot be used by a child. Therefore, any attempt to stimulate them must necessarily be unsuccessful. Perhaps, however, J. H. E. is using the term “contemplative faculties” in some other sense, and means the development of the subtle or so-called astral senses. Speaking for myself I should say that it would be exceedingly dangerous to stimulate the subtle senses of a child, and that such a proceeding would immensely increase the difficulties of the unfortunate ego in getting control over its vehicles and the development of its moral character. There must of course be exceptions to every rule, but these presumably belong to special cases of rare occurrence.

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QUESTION 108.

W. J. W.—*In the pamphlet The Lunar Pitris, it is said that Mars and Mercury belong to our chain, and, like the Earth, are physical planets. Is this the same Mercury which is referred to in The Secret Doctrine as the “Lord of Wisdom”? Or is the Mercury which astronomers know merely used as a blind for one of the sacred planets as yet unknown by*

*Western scientists? Some confusion arises by the placing of Mars and Mercury, hitherto regarded as two of the “Seven,” as mere globes of our Earth chain? Can this be explained away?*

W. S. E.—The main fact to be stated in answer to this question is that the planet Mercury recognised by astronomers is one of the seven *actual globes* which form our Earth chain. There is no blind about the matter.

It is quite true also that this planet has been regarded as one of the seven so-called sacred planets of Ancient Religion and of Modern Astrology.

As to the expression used in *The Secret Doctrine*, however, the term “Lord of Wisdom,” while referring to the Planetary Spirit presiding over Mercury, is really but a symbol with a still more occult meaning.

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QUESTION 109.

J. B.—*When the soul is free of the body, is the body comatose or does it carry on the usual functions, breathing, etc.?*

A. P. S.—Certainly the functions of breathing, digestion, etc., are carried on all the time. The body is not dead any more than a house is empty and deserted, because the master may go out for a time. The activities he has organised there go on in his absence because it is known that he will return. How does the body know that the absent soul will return? it may be asked. That question would not be so easy to answer. The more profoundly we study nature the more we are struck by the way in which even the simplest processes involve some mystery we cannot explain. Throw a little salt into a glass of water. Presently it disappears from sight. What has become of it? Why of course it has been dissolved, replies the simple-minded person content to deal with the obvious side of events. But who really knows what happens when salt is dissolved in water? Profound chemists have written many books on the subject, and the theory of solutions is still unsettled. Roughly we may conjecture, that some of the astral matter, some of the mānasic, and so on, belonging to the higher vehicles of the soul remain behind in the case of flights from the body during life, and that these are enough to maintain the bodily organism in a fit condition to receive back the absent master when he returns. But in saying this we do not really get much further than we get in the other case, when we say the salt dissolves!

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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, 3, Langham Place, 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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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.—ARTHUR A. WELLS, *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, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. X.

LONDON, MARCH 1, 1901.

NO. 8.

Edited by ARTHUR A. WELLS.

### MRS. BESANT IN BENARES.

OUR friends will be pleased to read the following extract, taken from a letter of Mrs. A. C. Lloyd, in the January number of *Theosophia*:

BENARES, 9th December, 1900.

"Mrs. Besant's house is a handsome bungalow with wide roof, one storey high, raised about four feet above the ground on a stone terrace to keep it from floods during the rainy season in August, September, and October, at which time it looks like an island in the middle of a lake.

"It is of a square form, with a wing which projects a few yards, for the kitchen and servants' quarters. In the centre is a garden with flowers and a few fruit trees neatly arranged. A wide verandah on pillars and arches surrounds the house, and also the inner court, so as to give us a good walk in the rainy season, and shade for the hot weather.

"Outside there is a large garden, nicely laid out in geometrical beds, with a luxuriant growth of roses and other flowers. All around is a grove of trees of all kinds—mango, guava, custard apple, sandalwood, etc., from which the house takes its name, "The Grove of Peace"; and beyond this the Society's land extends, in all about fifteen and a half acres. In this stands a large building for the Central Offices, and a beautiful Hall for lectures.

"The edifice is covered by a terrace-roof, where meetings will be held during the hot weather, from April to the end of July.

"At this time of year the mornings before nine o'clock are very cold; but we rise early and take our tea together in the verandah at 6.30; and Mrs. Besant and some others of us have generally taken their walk before this.

"In this enclosure is also Mr. Chakravarti's

house and other buildings belonging to the Society, lodgings for the officials, and a library arranged in a room formed out of the graceful ruins of a little Temple, and surrounded by a few fine and lofty broad-leaved palms and other trees.

"In fine, our settlement is in the most beautiful and healthy part of Benares, which is a city of 80,000 inhabitants, spread over a long stretch of the bank of the Ganges.

"Not far off is the Central Hindu College, comprising a fine range of buildings, amongst which are fifteen large new class rooms recently opened. It is of two storeys, and has two wings with small minarets at each corner, and between, a splendid hall the whole height of the building, sixty feet long, and thirty wide, used for lectures and meetings.

"In this hall Mrs. Besant has recently given a course of lectures on the *Ramāyana*, beginning at 8 o'clock on Sunday mornings, to the students. Each lecture was preceded by a Recitation in Sanskrit taken from the sacred books, and sung by one of the students, or by a choir of seven. This hall, gaily decorated with the College colours (purple and yellow), was also used last month for the second Anniversary of the College, when the prizes were given, and Athletic Sports held in the splendid playground, in the presence of a large gathering of spectators.

"The College is formed out of a palace which, with nine acres of ground, was given by the Mahārāja of Benares. The Boarding House is composed of various separate rooms and verandahs, forming a square adjoining the College. This will soon be completed by a house for the Superintendent, and another for the Director and the other Professors, who almost all give their services gratuitously, or at most receive only sufficient for their food and lodging. The College is affiliated to the Government University of Allahabad, and combines a complete Western education with the traditional Hindu religious instruc-

tion. Mrs. Besant is the President of the Board of Administration, which includes amongst its members various Hindu names well known in the country."

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### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to Feb. 20th: B. P., 5s.; F. L. B., £1; A. A. de P., £2 2s.; S. B., £1; H. B., £3; G. G., £15; E. G., £1; H. M. H., 5s. 6d.; C. D., £2 2s.; K. and H. D., 7s.; J. E. H., £5; M. A. N., £1 1s.; G. G. S., £5; Dr. and Mrs. K., £2 2s. Total, £39 4s. 6d.

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#### Charter Returned.

The Wandsworth Branch having decided to dissolve, its charter was returned on Jan. 21st, 1901.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary.*

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#### Afternoon Meetings at Headquarters.

Afternoon Meetings will be held at 28, Albe-marle Street, from 3 to 5 on Mondays in March, for discussions and questions on Theosophy. Open to all members of the Theosophical Society and their friends.

The names of those who will answer questions are:—March 4th, Dr. Wells; March 11th, Mrs. Hooper; March 18th, Mr. Mead; March 25th, Miss Ward.

On Saturday afternoons at 3.15 a debating class is held, to which members of the Society are invited.

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#### North of England Federation.

The twenty-eighth Conference was held at Harrogate, on Saturday, Feb. 2nd, under the presidency of Mr. G. R. S. Mead. Delegates and members were present from Manchester, Leeds, Harrogate, Athene (Bradford), Sheffield, Middlesbrough Lodges, and Hull, York and Bradford Centres. The Chairman, in opening the Conference, alluded in appropriate terms to the great loss which the country had sustained in the death of Queen Victoria and expressed the deep sympathy which was felt for the members of the Royal Family in their bereavement.

Mr. Mead then called upon Mr. H. E. Nichol, who read a very interesting paper on "Our Attitude towards Christian Enquirers." In the discussion which followed Messrs. Hodgson Smith, Orage, Thomas, and the Chairman took part. Mr. Barker, who was to have read a paper on "Environment as a Factor in the Evolution of the Ego," was unfortunately unable to arrive in time, but Mr. Hodgson Smith kindly undertook

to inaugurate a discussion on the subject, and various other speakers also contributed.

At 5 the Conference adjourned, and the members were entertained to tea by the Harrogate members, who, as usual, had provided this welcome refreshment.

On re-assembling at 6.30, Mr. Mead delivered a most instructive address on "Some Forgotten Stories of Jesus," which was heartily appreciated by the members. The proceedings were brought to a close by a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman, who, it was stated, had also presided over the first Northern Conference, and whose help had always been highly valued by the members.

Mr. Mead also addressed a large and appreciative public meeting in Harrogate on Sunday, February 3rd, the title of the lecture being "Some Forgotten Stories of the Christ."

W. H. THOMAS,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

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#### South Western Federation.

The Sixth Annual Convention of the South Western Federation was held at Exeter on January 30th and February 1st, under the presidency of the General Secretary. The first meeting on Thursday evening at the small Barnfield Hall was of a social nature, and made an agreeable introduction to the more serious work of the Federation. Dr. Wells conducted a very pleasant talk between the music and social intercourse. He also very patiently replied to the questions that were addressed to him.

At the business meeting on the following morning, at which delegates were present from Plymouth, Tavistock, Bristol and Bournemouth, very encouraging and satisfactory reports were received from Plymouth, Tavistock, Exeter, Bristol, Bath and Bournemouth. In the report from the latter place it was mentioned that a new centre had been started in the western part of the town, the regular Branch meetings being held in the eastern part. This new sphere of activity is owing to the energy of Mrs. McDouall. The meetings are held on Friday afternoons.

There is also an endeavour being made to form a centre at Southampton.

In the afternoon at 3, a conversational meeting was held, Dr. Wells answering in a lucid manner the many questions that were showered upon him. In the evening he delivered a much appreciated lecture on "Theosophy and Dogma."

During the General Secretary's tour in the South West he visited all the Lodges and Centres of the Federation.

J. WALTER COCK,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

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#### Blavatsky Lodge.

On January 21st Mr. Mead delivered a lecture on "The First Object of the Society," in which he strove to estimate the amount of success the Society might fairly claim to have achieved in the attempt

to form a body of people amongst whom the distinctions of religious creeds, race, sex, class, caste and colour were less regarded than they are among humanity as a whole. Mr. Mead's remarks gave much valuable food for thought.

On January 31st Miss Arundale kindly took the place of the Gen. Secretary, who was travelling from Lodge to Lodge in the West of England; her paper was an analysis of some very charming and instructive Indian allegories of the history of the soul.

On February 7th Dr. Wells lectured on "The Physical Basis of Yoga."

On February 14th Mr. Mead lectured on "The Second Object of the Society"; he made no attempt to indicate to the members what should or should not be their personal attitude towards this object; in praising the enormous industry and valuable work of specialists in all departments of scientific and philosophical inquiry, he pointed out that few, if any, Theosophists possessed the necessary equipment for such specialisation, but all Theosophists could possibly assist, in some measure, in the task of synthesising the work of others, and bringing about a great unity of feeling.

The Sunday evening lectures, on February 3rd, 10th and 17th, were delivered by Mr. Herbert Burrows. Mr. Burrows spoke on "Theosophy and Religion," "Theosophy and Science," and "Theosophy and Life." The lectures were eloquent, and specially suitable for enquirers; the room, usually well filled, was crowded.

S. M. S.

#### Middlesbrough Lodge.

The following public lectures were delivered during February at the Temperance Hall: Sunday, February 10th, "My Brother's Keeper," by B. Hudson; Sunday, February 17th, "Masters of Wisdom," by E. Outhwaite. Arrangements are in progress for March.

B. H.

#### North London Lodge.

A Debating Class has just been formed, and meets each Saturday at 6.30 p.m., at the Lodge Room, 13, Tyndale Place, Upper Street, N. All members of the Theosophical Society are cordially invited.

W. M. G.

#### Brighton Lodge.

An excellent start was made on January 13th, with the new syllabus of work for the session. *The Ancient Wisdom* is being again studied at the alternate Sunday meetings. A class is held at Mrs. Porter's, 6, Old Steine, on alternate Mondays, for the study of *The Astral Plane*, and another class for the study of elementary principles is held by the Librarian at 15, Old Steine, on the remaining Sundays.

A. KING,  
Hon. Secretary.

#### City of Liverpool Lodge.

The meetings have been well attended during January and February. Mr. Duffell's absence on the continent for health has for the time put a stop to his valuable lectures on the *Bhagavat Gîtâ*.

Owing also to ill-health on the part of the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Gillison, she was unable to hold two of her classes. Her paper on *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* was also postponed until the next session. Madame de Steiger filled the blank with papers. Mr. Zeper read an interesting paper on "Philosophy," followed by Mr. Kinnish on "Man's Spiritual Development."

#### Florence Branch.

The following is an extract from a letter from Mrs. Scott, who is now residing in Florence and superintending the work there:

"You will be glad to know that the interest here is increasing. I have made my large drawing-room, at 8, Via Venezia, the headquarters for the winter. I have an 'At Home' for enquirers on Monday afternoons, a Lodge meeting conducted in French on Wednesdays, and one in English on Saturdays. I have made large additions to the library, including a copy of Mr. Mead's new book, and keep books in Italian, French, and English for sale. The work began December 12th, 1900, and has gone on regularly ever since."

#### Theosophical Lending Library.

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

Terms of subscription: three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra.

Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 2.30 to 6 o'clock.

Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W.

LILIAN LLOYD,  
Librarian.

#### Lotus Circle.

The children meet at 2.30 p.m. on Sundays at 28, Albemarle Street, W.

A. J. W.

#### Lecture List.

BATH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Alfred Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: March 3rd, *Evolution*, G. Tubbs; March 10th, *Karma*, A. W. Greener; March 17th, *Plato*, H. M. Chaplin; March 24th, *The Three Gunas of Prakriti*, J. H. Duffell; March 31st, *Body, Soul and Spirit*. For information apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

**BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE.** Meetings in the Yorkshire Penny Bank Buildings, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of "Some Problems of Life."

**BRIGHTON LODGE.** Meetings on Sundays at 3.30 p.m., and on alternate Mondays at 8 p.m., 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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

**EDINBURGH LODGE.** Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: March 12th, *Selflessness*, G. L. Simpson. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. G. Lorimer Thomson, Roseburn House, Roseburn.

**EXETER CENTRE.** Meetings at 19, Bedford Circus, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

**FLORENCE LODGE.** Meetings at Via Venezia, 8, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, at 3 p.m.

**GLASGOW LODGE.** Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on the fourth Tuesday in each month at 8 p.m.

**HAMBURG LODGE.** Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

**HARROGATE LODGE.** Public meetings at the Swedish Gymnasium, Grand Opera Buildings, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: March 3rd, *The Light of Asia*, Miss Hilda Smith; March 10th, *The Rise and Fall of Nations*, C. N. Goode; March 17th, *Happiness*, Miss Pullar; March 26th, *The Object of our Teaching*, W. Bell; March 31st, *The Ancient Wisdom and Mental Science*, Miss Margery Smith. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of *The Christian Creed*.

**HERNE BAY CENTRE.** Meetings at Vidyā, Canterbury Road, on Fridays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, 25, William Street.

**HULL CENTRE.** Meetings every Sunday at 7 p.m., at 97, Westbourne Avenue.

**LEEDS LODGE.** Meetings at the Vegetarian Restaurant, Boar Lane, on Mondays, at 8 p.m. Enquiries to be addressed to Mr. W. H. Bean, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

**LEIPSIK CENTRE.** Meetings at the "Freia" Vegetarian Restaurant, 8, Nürnbergerstrasse, on the first and third Saturdays of each month, at 8.30 p.m.

**LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE.** Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., at 18, Colquitt Street. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

**LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE.** Meetings are held on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

**LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE.** Meetings at the Central Free Library, Lavender Hill, S.W., on Sundays at 7.30 p.m.: March 3rd, *Conceptions of Truth*, D. N. Dunlop; March 10th, *Man—His Nature and Destiny*, Miss E. Ward; March 17th, *The Ascending Scale*, Dr. A. A. Wells; March 24th, *The Spiritual Life*, Mrs. Alan Leo; March 31st, *The Value of Environment*, P. Tovey. Class on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

**LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE.** Meetings at 28, Albemarle Street, W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m. (open to all members of the Society): March 7th, *The Mirror of the Mind*, A. H. Ward; March 14th, "*Lenuria*," a *Submerged Continent (recent scientific evidence) II.*, James Stirling; March 21st, *Conversazione*; March 28th, *The Third Object of the Society*, G. R. S. Mead. On Sundays at 7 p.m. (open to visitors): March 3rd, *Organic and Inorganic*, M. U. Moore; March 10th, *Practical Mysticism*, Mrs. Sharpe; March 17th, *The Life of a Crystal*, James Stirling; March 24th, *The Ascending Scale*, A. A. Wells; March 31st, *Histories of the Soul*, Mrs. Hooper.

**LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE.** Meetings on Mondays, at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., at 8.30 p.m., for the study of *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*. March 4th, *The Conception of the Soul*, Miss Arundale.

**LONDON, CROYDON LODGE.** Meetings at "West View," 12, Oakfield Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Students' Class on alternate Thursdays. Hon. Sec., F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

**LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE.** Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 8 p.m.: March 4th, *Dreams*, Mrs. Leo; March 11th, *Occultism in Astrologic Study*, Alan Leo; March 18th, *What is Mâyâ?* Miss E. Ward; March 25th, *Karma and Destiny*, Miss Arundale. Class for study on Mondays at 7 p.m.

**LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE.** Meetings at 13, Tyndale Place, Upper Street, N., on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.; and at 86, Savernake Road, Gospel Oak, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m. Debating class at 13, Tyndale Place, on Saturdays, at 6.30 p.m.

**LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE.** Meetings on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m., at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W.: March 1st, *How we get our Notions of Time*, Miss Arundale; March 8th, *St. Paul*, G. H. Whyte; March 15th, *Science and Poetry*, W. C. Worsdell; March 22nd, *Detachment*, Miss E. M. Samson; March 29th, *Ideals*, A. J. Faulding.

**MANCHESTER LODGE.** Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 31, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

**MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE.** Meetings at 68, Linthorpe Road, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m., for study of *Man and His Bodies*.

**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.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8 p.m., at the Oddfellows' Hall, Morley Street, and on Wednesdays (students' class) at 8 p.m., at Dr. Mariette's, Ford Park House, Mutley.

ROME LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at 6.15 p.m. Class conducted by Signor D. Calvari on Fridays at 6.15 p.m. for study of *Dharma*. Conversazione on Wednesdays at 6.15 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m., and on Saturdays from 3 to 5 p.m.

TAVISTOCK CENTRE. Meetings on Tuesdays at 8.30 p.m., at 5, Broadpark Terrace, Whitchurch.

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## ENQUIRER.

### QUESTION 110.

A. C. D.—*One often reads in Theosophic books that the only way to gain real progress for ourselves is to work for others. Now I have done this for a long time and am haunted by the feeling that if I had spent the time in training and exercising my own powers instead of pouring out my energies on others on this lower plane, I should by this time have been able much more efficaciously to do good to them, as well as have stood much higher on the Path than I do. Is this only an illusion? I should be grateful for some explanation of the matter.*

G. R. S. M.—We sympathise with our questioner's difficulty, but do not think he need feel discouraged. He is evidently learning the lesson of discrimination in working for others, and has certainly started on right lines. He has discovered that "work for others" is not the same for all if there is to be progress. The first step on the path, it is true, is open to all men in one way or another; it consists of alleviating the physical distress of our fellows. This is a vast and most necessary sphere of work for others, but it is not the only sphere; it is the simplest kind of work, work which the least skilled workman can in some measure perform. But it is speedily apparent, even to the least skilful worker, that "man shall not live by bread alone," and thereafter he begins to perceive, though at first dimly, higher spheres of usefulness and work. But to accomplish this he must first of all make himself more fit to help. If this is his motive, the time he devotes to improving himself and fitting himself "to help and teach others," is time given not really to himself but to his fellows. By the help of this training and by his growth in understanding the nature of man and his needs, he perceives that much he has previously attempted, though it has been good for him in that it has developed the unselfish side of his nature and therefore made for his progress, has really not benefited others so much as he imagined. They wanted, and they want, something more than bread, for they are men, not animals merely.

What we want in this world is not an infinite number of charitable institutions—for the more of these we create, the more we need; but an explanation of life—instruction on the nature and purpose of life and man, a science of the soul. The more hospitals we build, the more we want; disease is not thereby lessened. The more work-houses we construct, the more we increase pauperism. The more churches we build, the less people attend them.

With these facts staring us in the face it is time we turned our attention to some other kind of work for the benefit of our fellows. And if we members of the Theosophical Society ask ourselves the question why we have sought refuge in its ranks, most of us will answer: Because we found in it a nucleus whence light was thrown on these dark problems of life. Our work, then, is to let that light increase; and as the light radiates from within, our best means of allowing it to work on other minds is by purifying our own. This is the first lesson of wisdom; it teaches us that we can do nothing for others; all we can do is to minimise our own imperfections, so that the Light of the Self may stream forth in greater power. This is true progress.

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### QUESTION 111.

X. Y. Z.—*In the Growth of the Soul, p. 176, Mr. Sinnett says that the astral plane after death is a world of effects, not of causes, and that the will-power is inactive, while in THE VĀHAN of July, 1900, Mr. Leadbeater speaks of a man after death ordering his life there, if he wishes to make the best of it. Is that only a seeming contradiction, or a real difference of opinion?*

A. P. S.—I feel sure there is no real difference of opinion. The seeming contradiction merely arises from the way all theosophical writers find themselves sometimes speaking of broad rules, sometimes of exceptional possibilities. For the vast majority of people at the present stage of evolution the astral plane can only be a world of effects. From the days of *Esoteric Buddhism*, indeed, it was recognised that in rare cases people could continue to make bad karma on the astral plane after the death of the physical body, and later investigation has shown that the highly-developed person can do the other thing—make good and benevolent use of his astral life; but that possibility has to do with the varieties of activity open to persons either on or entering on the Path. And referring to C. W. L.'s answer in *THE VĀHAN* of July last, I do not think he is dealing with that possibility at all, but merely with the way in which an ordinary person might be induced to give himself up quietly to the purification processes, so to speak, of the astral period, and thus as soon as possible float on to devachanic conditions. There would be no making of fresh karma one way or the other in such a mere adaptation of himself, on the part of the person concerned, to the laws of nature and progress.

## QUESTION 112.

F.—A solution is earnestly requested of the following ethical problem:—

X is at a stage of evolution where the duty to return good for evil is recognised, but where physical fear is not yet conquered. X receives an injury—a blow, an insult, or the like—but (a) from fear of consequences does not return it, or (b) screws up his courage to the point of avenging it. Which action is right for him at his stage of evolution?

A. W.—A warrior, in ages long behind us, was in difficulties over the choice between two evils, and the explanations given to him by his friend and teacher are contained in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. We are taught to look beyond actions to their hidden causes, to throw the whole force of our nature consciously on the side of the highest we recognise; then to act, regardless of results.

Thus the problem in F.'s question is one that in many forms is continually presenting itself. Few of us realise that in the daily and hourly choice between two evils it does not matter so much which evil is chosen, whether the insult to X is avenged, or ignored from cowardice. Either way the results are bad.

What does matter is that the stage of evolution has been arrived at where "the duty to return good for evil has been recognised." This recognition can be used by X to lift himself out of the difficulty and gradually to gain a higher level of thought and consequently of action. At any given moment X will act in accordance with the sum total of his preponderating desires and thoughts, and either the blow will be given back or he will be restrained by fear of results as the thought force behind his action determines. On looking back in calmness at the incident, whether he has resented or condoned the offence, the best in him will be dissatisfied with his conduct, for either course of action will be recognised as produced by an unworthy motive. Let him then take refuge in the conviction he has attained that the right course lies in neither of the unworthy actions, but in *the return of good for evil*. Let him foster and cherish this conviction and ponder over it, and it will increase in strength, until one day it will triumph over all lower motives and sweep him along—perchance to some heroic deed of forgiveness. Meantime, he will fail, often and often, and now one and now another, more or less unsatisfactory motive will sway his action. But the force of right thought accumulates surely, if slowly, and sooner or later he will find the battle won.

S. M. S.—I wonder how far F. will be helped towards a solution of his problem if, as may quite easily happen, he get diverse answers to the question he propounds. And yet such an event might be of far more real help to him than an authoritative and decisive judgment, for it would show him two very important things: that within the Theosophical Society there is room for every variety of opinion, and that after all a man must himself be the final judge as to his own conduct.

It would be comparatively easy to recommend to X either one or another course of action in the circumstances supposed, but the advice would be likely to be given from the point of view of the writer, and, as such, it might be unwise for X to follow it. Whereas he will gain more real courage, as well as judgment and discrimination, if he can make up his mind to decide for himself what seems to him right, and can fearlessly face the result. It is quite possible that he will not be able to adhere at first to his intention when the opportunity comes to put it to the test, and in the rush of the moment will be carried away, but that will not matter so much as he may suppose. Failure in the face of a resolve to conquer often brings a man a truer strength than many victories—which is only another way of saying that the standards by which we judge success and failure are entirely artificial, as indeed must be the case when we try to apply our little judgments to the workings of an invisible and mighty Will.

Our method of growth depends upon a law imposed by the Life within, and even a partial understanding of this would help us greatly not to be disquieted by the "little idol of what people say." For a time may come to each of us when we shall have to *choose* to make what all our little world may see as a "mistake," impelled to it by something within which *must* be the supreme authority, and which can summon no support from argument or reason, because it is so far above them.

There is *no* failure but in a refusal to obey the mandates of this imperious voice; and judged by this standard are we not all constantly failing, while all our little world applauds? And the penalty? A chance thrown away, an opportunity gone by, the inner voice for a little silenced, the possibility of a fuller conception of the God within for a little while delayed. But if we can only realise it and will it, no failure need be irretrievable, and every false step may be in time retraced.

Truly, who are we, that we should judge?

M. E. G.—Does not the solution of this problem lie in the counter question, "Can any benefit to self be carried out conscientiously at the expense of another"? Surely if the man is conscious of physical cowardice, his own self-condemnation would be sufficient to make him fight against the weakness at every *justifiable* opportunity, but in the case cited, the blow once struck would set up a chain of karmic action, of which the end might be very far off. From a further point of view physical fear may be the result of purely physical action, such as ill-health, over-strained activities, etc., either in the present or some past incarnation. Such fear, once fully recognised, should be bravely met and conquered when possible, but to give to it undue prominence in the mental horizon does not seem to me to be the best way to set about its elimination. When the ruling principle is others before self, the man's growth goes on as a matter of course, even to the killing out of physical fear.

E. A. B.—There seems here some little confusion of thought. The *motive* must determine the right or wrong of an action. If X refrains from returning a blow merely from cowardice, he cannot flatter himself that his conduct is “right”; but if he has recognised that his duty is to return good for evil, he may surely find better occasions for cultivating the quality of courage than one which violates that “duty.”

I. H.—Personally I should have thought that if the duty of returning good for evil is recognised X cannot do a thing contrary to his sense of duty, which moreover inflicts an injury on another person, for the sake of strengthening himself in a quality in which he feels himself to be lacking. It seems to be a choice between two evils, certainly; but if, in returning good for evil, X recognises quite clearly that his motives are a little mixed, it seems to me that he will not be unduly puffed up by his exercise of a virtue; and the clear recognition of a gap in the character is, I think, a step towards filling it up; X can take further steps in that direction by the steady thought of courage, and the attempt to practise it when so doing does not violate a conscientious scruple. After all, to avenge is an act of hate; and we have been told that fear is also a form of hatred; therefore to refrain from vengeance and think forgiveness and peace to the wrongdoer is, perhaps, a more effective way of building fearlessness into the character than to revenge his injury.

A. A. W.—I am sorry that I cannot gratify X's very natural desire to be saved the trouble of making up his own mind. In saying, as the question does, that the duty to return good for evil is *recognised* by him, the “ethical problem” is decided before it is put. At *his* stage of evolution *both* alternatives are wrong—(a) because he should have — and (by the supposition) has — higher motives for refraining from avenging himself than the vulgar fear of getting hurt; (b) because he would be consciously doing wrong (in other words *sinning*) for fear of public opinion. No one but himself can judge how far—being the man he knows himself to be—he may be excused from following what he knows to be right, on the ground of his human weakness. He must, as it seems to me, make up his mind to the course of action which is possible for him whilst coming as near as may be to the fulfilment of the law he recognises, crediting himself with a little more power than he believes himself to possess, for it is reasonable to hope he may rise somewhat to the occasion, and by the occasion. And, indeed, why should he not be bold enough to do *quite* right? Perhaps even more important than his choice is that he should abide manfully by it when it is made, taking the consequences, both for good and evil, quietly and without anxiety or remorse at the karma he has incurred. Anyway, there will be suffering; but by it he will grow a stronger and better man and do better still next time, provided only that he do not

waste time and strength in regretting his decision and vain wishes he had chosen otherwise.

But how the querist can put the alternative of “screwing up his courage to the point of avenging it” as one which might possibly be *right* for a man who “recognises” that it is entirely *wrong*, I don't quite see.

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QUESTION 113.

D. Y. T.—*Is it possible to identify any particular portion of the organism as the place where the sub-conscious memories often evoked in trance or somnambulism have been preserved? Are recollections in all cases drawn from what has been described as the memory of the Logos, or may it be that the sense-organs retain an impression of all which has ever touched them (even without reaching the consciousness at all), in the way which the phenomena of psychometry and certain photographic experiments suggest that all physical objects do; an impression which the mind may read off when in states of special lucidity, from its own organs?*

A. P. S.—The whole problem, “What is Memory?” is involved in this question. None of us “down here” (to use a favourite expression of Mr. Leadbeater's) can possibly answer it confidently. Certainly, in my opinion, no impressions linger in the sense organisms. These are merely subservient to consciousness on this plane. Memory must be an attribute of consciousness, and all consciousness is derived from that of the Logos. The manner in which it vibrates back and forwards between the primeval consciousness and that of the offspring of the Logos, is a profound mystery. But one fact emerges clearly from the experiences of mesmerism and trance. When consciousness is working on a higher plane than that to which it is bound down during the waking state of an ordinary person, it is enormously more effective, more capable of remembering things, than in the normal state. There seems to be no limit to the power of recollection on the part of a mesmeric subject in trance, assuming that such subject is spiritually advanced to the point of being able to function on the *mānasic* plane. Great things and small, trifling and important, are equally at command if called for. The power of recalling them is clearly an attribute of the “Higher Self,” not in any way of the lower, still less of the organism of the lower.

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QUESTION 114.

K. H. H.—*I find the idea of “devachanic delusion” a very disturbing one to the minds of all enquirers, in spite of Mrs. Besant's explanation in Death and After. The teaching immediately produces an objectionable conviction of fraud, in its statement that only the illusionary form of one's “beloveds” can be possessed in Devachan. . . I shall be grateful for further light.*

A. A. W.—This question is one which has been so frequently answered, here and elsewhere, that

it seems useless to go over again so old a story. Perhaps we might succeed better this time by beginning from the other end. The most absolutely "illusionary" form in which our friends can ever present themselves to us is the physical body, which to such as the querist appears so "real"; and until this is clearly seen and felt, the devachanic association must seem more or less of a fraud, as our friend rather rudely puts it. We confuse ourselves by treating the body as the reality, and the Self as something which "ensouls" it—which may dwell in it or leave it—the body in either case unaltered and "real." That which is our friend is, in real truth, his Self and not his body—astral or physical. It is the commonplace of moralists and poets how little man really knows of his dearest friend or lover; that he may live in the closest relationship with men and women for a whole life long and yet be an entire stranger to their real mind and heart, and this is because the body *hides* them. If the friendship is of the physical plane only—a matter of mere physical convenience or pleasure, then the so-called friends will not meet in Devachan at all—their connection is not "real" enough. But if there has been spiritual communion down here, where the physical veil of matter renders recognition so hard, then, surely, when they meet *without* the veil between, there can be no idea of "illusion"—no "fraud"! The "fraud" is in the physical plane, which clogs our senses and clouds the clear sight by which entities in Devachan comprehend each other.

I am not sure that the difficulty which our querist feels has not been at least aggravated by a too materialistic exposition of Devachan—that in trying to bring it down to *our* comprehension the Seers have not condescended rather too far, if one may say so without offence. We are led to picture it to ourselves as a sort of glorified Summer Land where we sit surrounded by figures of our own creation, which (says the O.P.) can't be "real" because the originals are living all the time down on earth. From the ordinary person's point of view, there is much to be said for this, but we Theosophists should know better. The originals are *not* living on earth—only their bodies—that is what we are apt to forget. The Higher Egos of those who live on earth are *ever* on the plane of Devachan, where the Devachanee can meet them in an intercourse incomparably more real than anything on the physical plane. And the picture of the soul, shut up in a sort of cell from the world outside, edifying itself with dreams of the good it would do or the marvels of music or painting and science which pass, apparently idly, through its mind, is one which, whilst good for a first rough sketch, must not be allowed to hang as a weight upon our higher intuitions. Our intercourse with our friends, living or dead, on the devachanic plane, is no looking at pictures or statues—no question of "illusory forms" or of forms at all, but the answer of soul to soul, outside the bounds of space and time. When our mind first opens into consciousness in

the "fine air" of the Heaven-world it opens to the feeling of perfect, intense *bliss*, which for the time is enough for it. As it grows a little accustomed to its new existence it feels around for those presences who made the joy of its past earth-life. The thought is a call to them, as they range freely in the space where, at present, the new comer is unable to go to them; they come about it as the blessed souls in Paradise swarmed about Dante with the joyous cry, "Lo, here a new companion to increase our love!" And whether it be with us as with him, that first we only dimly sense their presence; then know them by their light, too dazzling for earthly eyes to behold; and finally when (as to Arjuna) new eyes and new sight are given to us, are able to distinguish the loved form and gracious air; or however it may be, of *one* thing we are certain, that no least doubt of *reality* will trouble the perfection of the "joy of our Lord."

QUESTION 115.

*E. C. A.—Can an astral worker who uses meat, wine, tobacco, and other stimulants, which coarsen and darken the materials of the astral body, work on the higher planes of the astral world side by side with those who eat pure vegetable food, and have fine, delicate astral bodies, or are they confined to the lower planes only?*

*Also, does it not make it more difficult for one using flesh or mixed diet, to control one's thoughts—having the elementals which are attracted by unclean food to fight?*

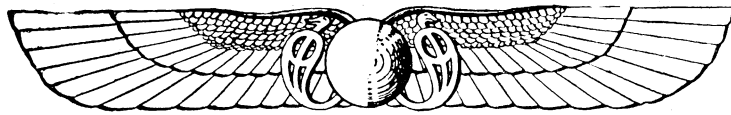
A. P. S.—As a fact within my knowledge the answer to the first part of this inquiry is unequivocally, Yes. I do not want to recommend "unclean food," whatever that may be, as preferable to clean. Most assuredly I do not want to perpetuate the cruelty of killing animals for food, but when we come to the fancy which some people have that the growth of the Soul depends on what you eat and drink (always assuming you are neither glutton nor drunkard), I protest against that idea as in my humble opinion—nonsense. Nothing on this earth that feeds at all, feeds upon such unclean food as a vegetable, but by the time the chemistry of nature has changed manure and carbonic acid into a peach, I find the product very clean indeed, as in a loftier sense may be the souls of those who are reared on kindly thoughts, on loving aspirations, on generous and unselfish action, even though beef and claret may have contributed some of their constituents to the formation of their temporary physical vehicles.

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, 3, Langham Place, 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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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.—ARTHUR A. WELLS, *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, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

Vol. X.

LONDON, APRIL 1, 1901.

NO. 9.

Edited by ARTHUR A. WELLS.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### GUARANTEED DONATIONS.

As the financial year of the European Section ends on April 30th, the Treasurer will be glad if those who kindly guaranteed an annual donation to the funds of the Section and who have not yet given their donation for the current year, will be good enough to forward the amount if possible before that date.

#### LETTER FROM THE FRENCH SECTION.

To the *General Secretary*,  
*European Section.* February 22nd, 1901.

DEAR SIR,

In the first general meeting on February 10th, the French Section of the Theosophical Society unanimously decided to send a declaration of their fraternal sympathy to the European Section and to its devoted officers.

With fraternal salutations,  
TH. PASCAL.

#### LETTER FROM THE NEW ZEALAND SECTION.

The *General Secretary*,  
*European Section*, January 20th, 1901.  
*Theosophical Society.*

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you a resolution of fraternal greeting and good wishes for success in work passed by this Section at Convention assembled here in the beginning of the month.

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

#### New Branch.

Feb. 25th, 1901. Charter issued this day to Mrs. Passingham, Miss Wheaton, Mrs. Bernard, Mrs. Pengelly, Mrs. White, L. A. D. Montague, Mrs. Snodgrass, J. I. Pengelly, and Mrs. Lake, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society at Exeter, to be known as the Exeter Branch.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary.*

#### "Information for Enquirers."

A new edition of this pamphlet is being prepared. Any Branches or Centres requiring copies can obtain them on application to the General Secretary.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to March 20th: B. P. M., 5s.; E. J. G., £1 1s.; A. B., £18 4s. 5d.; New Zealand Section, £1 15s.; L. L. P., 5s.; A. J. McF., 4s.; M. F. G., 5s.; K. and H. D., £1 1s.; K. B., £1; Anon., £6; T. O., £1 1s.; E. W., £10; A. C. P., £6; O. F., 5s.; F. F., 5s. Total, £47 11s. 5d.

#### Reference Library.

The Library is open to members of the Society from 3 to 10 p.m. on Sunday; on other days from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The following books have been received, and are now acknowledged with thanks: *Proben der Volksliteratur der Türkischen Stämme Süd Sibiriens und der Nördlichen Türkischen Stämme*, gesammelt und übersetzt von Dr. W. Radloff, 6 vols., St. Petersburg, 1866-86; *Notes on the Margins, Five Essays*, Clifford Harrison, London, 1901; *Four*

*Lectures on Astrology, Exoteric and Esoteric*, Alan Leo, London, 1900; *Egypt Exploration Fund, Archæological Report*, 1899-1900, edited by F. Ll. Griffith, M.A.; *De Apuleio Isia coram Mysteriorum Teste*, H. H. E. de Yong, 1900.

A. J. WILLSON,  
Librarian.

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#### Afternoon Meetings at Headquarters.

The meetings on Monday afternoons arranged by the Social Committee having proved of such general interest will be resumed in May. Particulars of these meetings, with the names of those who will be present to answer questions, will appear in the May VĀHAN.

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#### Blavatsky Lodge.

The usual monthly *Conversazione* was held on February 21st. On the 28th, Mr. W. C. Worsdell lectured on "The Theosophy of Shelley's Poetry"; he read many passages demonstrating the closeness of sympathy between the mind of the poet and those of many of our most prominent theosophic writers. On March 7th, Mr. Ward spoke on "The Mirror of the Mind"; his lecture, full as it was of thought and elaborate analysis of the phases of consciousness, greatly interested his audience; Mr. Ward elucidated his lecture by a diagram. On March 14th, Mr. Stirling gave the second of his addresses on "The Scientific Evidence for the former Existence of Lemuria"; lack of time had prevented Mr. Stirling from fully preparing his lecture; he promised an amplification, illustrated by diagrams, on some future date, and he kindly filled the remainder of the time at his disposal by answering numerous questions. The Sunday lecturers have been: Mr. Faulding, who kindly took Mr. Moore's place at short notice; Mrs. Sharpe, and Mr. Stirling. The Lodge will be closed on Thursdays, April 4th and April 11th, re-opening with a *Conversazione* on April 18th; members of the Lodge who desire to invite a friend to this *Conversazione*, may obtain an invitation by sending the name of their guest to the Secretary.

There will be no Sunday evening meeting on April 7th and April 14th; the meetings will begin again on April 21st.

S. M. S.

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#### Theosophical Lending Library.

The following books have been added to the Library:

*The Science of the Emotions*, Bhagavān Dās; *Açva-ghosha's Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Māhāyāna*, trans. by Teitaro Suzuki; *A Ceux Qui Souffrent*, Aimée Blech; *Essai sur l'Évolution Humaine*, Dr. Th. Pascal; *The Meaning of Good*, G. Lowes Dickinson; *The Neo-Platonists*, Thomas Whittaker.

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LILIAN LLOYD,  
Librarian.

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#### Lotus Circle.

The children meet at 2.30 p.m. on Sundays at 28, Albemarle Street, W.

A. J. W.

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#### Lecture List.

BATH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Alfred Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: April 7th, *Know Thyself*, R. Burton; April 14th, Readings from the *Secret Doctrine*; April 28th, *Soul Culture*, Miss Hustler. For information apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings in the Yorkshire Penny Bank Buildings, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of "Some Problems of Life."

BRIGHTON LODGE. Meetings on Sundays at 3.30 p.m., and on alternate Mondays at 8 p.m., 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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: April 16th, *Cosmogonensis*, J. Lorimer Thomson. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. J. Lorimer Thomson, Roseburn House, Roseburn.

EXETER LODGE. Meetings at 48, High Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

FLORENCE LODGE. Meetings at Via Venezia, 8, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, at 3 p.m.

GLASGOW LODGE. Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on the fourth Tuesday in each month at 8 p.m.

HAMBURG LODGE. Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at the

Swedish Gymnasium, Grand Opera House Buildings, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: April 7th, *The Christ Triumphant*, Miss Shaw; April 14th, *Music and the Inner Life*, H. E. Nichol; April 21st, *The Story of Atlantis*, A. Burt-Woodhead; April 28th, *Man and his Bodies*, A. R. Orage. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of *The Christian Creed*.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at Vidyā, Canterbury Road, on Fridays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, 25, William Street.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings every Sunday at 7 p.m., at 97, Westbourne Avenue.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarian Restaurant, Boar Lane, on Mondays, at 8 p.m. Enquiries to be addressed to Mr. W. H. Bean, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Freia" Vegetarian Restaurant, 8, Nürnbergerstrasse, on the first and third Saturdays of each month, at 8.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., at 18, Colquitt Street. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings are held on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Public meetings suspended till the autumn. Class on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 28, Albemarle Street, W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m. (open to all members of the Society): April 4th and 11th, no meetings; April 18th, *Conversazione*; April 25th, *Life in Ancient India as described in the Indian Epics*, Romesh Dutt, C.I.E. On Sundays at 7 p.m. (open to members and visitors); April 21st, . . . . . Bertram Keightley; April 28th, *The Gospels and Modern Criticism*, G. R. S. Mead.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., at 8.30 p.m., for the study of *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*.

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "West View," 12, Oakfield Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: April 2nd, *The Seal of the Theosophical Society—What does it mean?* April 9th, *Ideals*, P. Tovey; April 16th, *The Way*, A. H. Ward; April 23rd, *Dreams*, R. King; April 30th, *Thought—as a Force*, Mrs. Raphael. Students' Class on alternate Thursdays. Hon. Sec., F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 8 p.m.: April 1st, *Evolution*, P. G. Tovey; April 8th, *The Use of the Imagination*, Mrs. Hooper; April 15th, Addresses by members; April 22nd, *The Letter and the Spirit*, Mrs. Sharpe; April 29th, *The Science of Life*, Mrs. Leo. Class for study on Mondays at 7 p.m.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings

at 13, Tyndale Place, Upper Street, N., on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.; and at 86, Savernake Road, Gospel Oak, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m. Debating class at 13, Tyndale Place, on Saturdays, at 6.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m., at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W.: April 5th and 12th, no meetings; April 19th, *Histories of the Soul*, Mrs. Hooper.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 31, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 68, Linthorpe Road, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m., for study of *Man and His Bodies*.

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.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8 p.m., at the Oddfellows' Hall, Morley Street, and on Wednesdays (students' class) at 8 p.m., at Dr. Mariette's, Ford Park House, Mutley.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 72, Via S. Niccolo da Tolentino, on Mondays, at 6.15 p.m. Class conducted by Signor D. Calvari on Fridays at 6.15 p.m. for study of *Dharma*. *Conversazione* on Wednesdays at 6.15 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m., and on Saturdays from 3 to 5 p.m.

TAVISTOCK CENTRE. Meetings on Tuesdays at 8.30 p.m., at 5, Broadpark Terrace, Whitchurch.

## ENQUIRER.

QUESTION 115.

(Continued from p. 64.)

E. C. A.—Can an astral worker who uses meat, wine, tobacco, and other stimulants, which coarsen and darken the materials of the astral body, work on the higher planes of the astral world side by side with those who eat pure vegetable food, and have fine, delicate astral bodies, or are they confined to the lower planes only?

Also, does it not make it more difficult for one using flesh or mixed diet, to control one's thoughts—having the elementals which are attracted by unclean food to fight?

M. C. L.—I find my experience at variance with that of A. P. S. in his reply to this question; certainly the growth of the soul cannot depend on what we eat and drink, nevertheless as the upward path is so hard to tread and beset with so many difficulties we should do nothing to weight us in that upward course.

In studying the highest examples of past ages we find them to be ascetics in their lives and absolute abstainers from flesh. Certainly those who occasionally indulge in flesh and alcohol, even though moderately, can never understand

how the perceptions of their souls are thereby veiled. For myself it is a matter of certain assurance that we must leave all those things if we would press *quickly* on the upward way. We must by degrees detach our bodies from every earthly desire; conquering in little things, and growing stronger to allay our passions, the little light that shines on our path will grow and become a radiant flame.

F. M. M. R.—One Theosophist would not like to be so uncharitable or so unjust to another as to say that one cannot attain to purity of heart and life on a mixed diet, but that is not the point at issue. Earnest-minded students of Theosophy of two or three years' standing are just a little puzzled at A. P. S.'s generalisation on the subject. It would certainly be intolerant to say that the "growth of the soul" depends entirely on what we eat and drink, but the quickening of its evolution does depend on removing every conceivable obstacle to that growth. "Let us lay aside every weight," saith St. Paul. If it be admitted that meat, wine, tobacco, and other stimulants do "coarsen and darken the materials of the astral body," then why do Theosophists deliberately take these things, or if they believe it necessary to their well-being to do so, why mention it in the pages of THE VĀHAN, to the probable detriment of weaker brethren who want helping—not hindering—on the Path?

M. E. G.—I would like to say a few words upon the constantly recurring subject of food, as once more brought to the front by the above questions. Many years ago, I heard the following words from a Scottish pulpit, and somehow they seem to fit in with the discussion in point. The preacher was describing the various reasons that lay at the bottom of men calling themselves Christians—religious conviction, policy, and such like, were reviewed in turn; then he burst out in his strong vernacular, "and some men are Christians from a geographical necessity!" May we not say that some men eat animal food from a kârmic necessity? Somehow, it seems to me that the attitude of mind most needed at *this stage of evolution*, is a quiet and simple acceptance at the hands of the Lords of Karma of the body they have prepared for one, and a loyal resolve to make the best of it. If perfect health can be attained without the use of animal food, then by all means let us refrain from it; but if, on the contrary, a half-nourished, ill-regulated, nervous system is the result, surely, from the astral point of view, such an one would fall an easier prey to the elemental and passionate forces, than if he were in a perfectly healthful body, even though attained by the eating of meat and such-like aids; whilst, on the physical plane, his condition would be such as largely to magnify "self" in his mental horizon, and certainly would militate against his powers of service.

The old adage of "plain living and high thinking" is an excellent watchword, and a certain characteristic best described by the term *abstemious-*

*ness* should, I think, be the keynote of life. The man who, on an occasion, eats his ill-done chop and says nothing about it for fear of worrying his wife, has climbed higher than he who grumbles if his vegetable repast is not quite to his liking. The Kingdom of God is not only in meat and drink, and the Law of Abstemiousness or Moderation may be carried into every corner of life; but let it not be thought that it has anything to do with Asceticism, for the products of the former are always strength, and balance, and calm. Nothing has been said in the foregoing remarks about compassion to all that lives—the most cogent reason it seems to me against the use of animal food. Therefore it is, that even those who are bound to its use by kârmic necessity may joyfully look forward to the time when the lion shall lie down with the lamb, and a little child shall lead them—when the reign of slaughter shall have gone for ever.

S. M. S.—It would be so much better if on this question of food, as on every other, we could each make up our mind as to what is best for ourselves, go our own way, and leave others to go theirs—in peace.

As a vegetarian of very many years' standing I may perhaps appeal to my fellow-vegetarians to show less intolerance than is now and then to be noticed towards those who do not think with them on this subject, or who for some reason may not be able, even while agreeing, to follow their example.

There is a tendency sometimes to elevate vegetarianism into a dogma, and even to identify it with Theosophy. If we do this we degrade the loftiest philosophy to the level of a party catchword. And surely we do not achieve any object if on the one hand we preach Theosophy—which, if it is anything, is all-inclusive—while on the other, on the plea of our one-ness with the animal kingdom, we make our abstention from eating them a cause of separation between man and man. We have not so learned brotherhood.

So much has been written and spoken on this subject of food, and that on what for many of us is sufficiently high authority, that we are quite able to weigh the statements that have been made and decide as to our course of action. Why then should we continue to collect opinions?

Incidentally, it may perhaps be suggested that after we have solved the question of vegetarianism or non-vegetarianism, and decided perhaps in favour of the former, there still remains the choosing of the right kinds of food. Few vegetarians are sufficiently careful in this, and the result is that vegetarianism from the point of view of health is an entire failure. But this is not the fault of vegetarianism, but of our own foolishness. For example, lentils and haricot beans, which have been so much extolled, are probably the two forms of food most unsuited to the largely sedentary occupations—or want of occupation—of the majority in the west. Yet many think that if only they can eat sufficient of these nothing more is required.

It is I believe quite a question whether our present sub-race had not done better if it could have arisen, flourished and decayed without a knowledge of the existence of these two things.

But to return to the deeper question. We have never been told, so far as I know, that the growth of the soul depends upon what we eat. What we have been told is that certain foods make it easier or more difficult for us to control and purify our lower bodies, the instruments through which the soul works. Having regard to the fact that so few can speak with any authority on this, and seeing the interpretation which may be put upon such teaching—as shown for instance by this query—it may be that for the majority the humanitarian argument in support of vegetarianism is at once the safest and the strongest. A true love for animals is by no means confined to vegetarians, some of whom may quite well lack this genuine feeling for the animal kingdom. Where it exists it is unmistakable; and from personal observation and experience, I am inclined to think that it would be difficult to feel quite so whole-hearted an affection for animals, not excluding even that frequent butt for scorn, the “silly sheep,” if one contributed one’s share in eating them.

We may do well to remember those words, which are very familiar to many, but too little considered. “And He called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear and understand: not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.” This is a clear statement, and appeals to us with the force of truth. It may perhaps serve as a reminder lest in pursuing a militant vegetarianism we fail in our loyalty to the deeper things to which Theosophy binds us.

[*Note.*—I have inserted the preceding answers, that all sides might have fair play, but cannot continue the discussion.

I find in one of our Indian exchanges a saying of Śrī Rāmakrishna which seems to me to sum up the matter from the higher side—“He who eats the food of the Gods, but does not desire to attain God, for him that simple food is as bad as beef. But he who eats beef and desires to attain God, for him beef is as good as the food of the Gods.” It is the desire to attain God, the “iron will” at all cost to rise in the spiritual life, which is the main thing; everything else is mere detail. St. Augustine’s motto was “Love—and do what you will,” for with true love you can will no wrong; and, in the same way, I think we may all agree that one who truly aspires, may be safely trusted to find out for himself what are the hindrances in his way. But the most elaborate clearing of the way is useless if we do not run. The question of questions is not “Do you eat the food of the gods?” but, “Are you striving your hardest to take your place amongst them?”—EDITOR.]

#### QUESTION 116.

H. B. D.—*In studying Buddhism in non-theosophical literature, we find the constantly recurring assertion*

*that there is no permanent re-incarnating ego, no individual continuity. For example, “It is not the Self but the non-Self which passes from form to form.” I find it difficult to reconcile this with what I understand to be the Theosophical teaching, viz., that a permanent ego is re-incarnated in each new personality. Is there a permanent bit of All-Soul held separate from the rest through the ages, by individuality, until Nirvāna is reached (or after). If this is so, is it to be considered a Buddhistic doctrine, or a development of modern Theosophy and modern thought?*

A. P. S.—In studying non-theosophical Buddhist literature the wise course to adopt is to disregard all statements encountered, if they run counter to (genuine) theosophic teaching. Exoteric eastern literature is just as corrupt as exoteric Christian literature. Theosophic teaching has proved in effect a revelation clearing up both varieties of corruption. If people cannot see that this is so on account of the inherent reasonableness of theosophic teaching—and its harmony with the results of every investigation into the mysteries of super-physical nature which it is in our power to carry out—so much the worse for their powers of interior vision. Sooner or later in the progress of their evolution they will see more clearly. As for Buddhism no doubt there are multitudes of Buddhist priests (or monks or whatever you like to call them) who are as ignorant of the true meaning of reincarnation and Nirvāna, as the commonplace country curate would be ignorant of the true meaning of the Atonement. The current exoteric Buddhist writings reflect their ignorance, and the English translations of these surround the subjects treated with a new stratum of fog. To answer the above question more fully would be to re-write modern theosophical literature. Reincarnation is not a Buddhist doctrine, nor a Brahminical doctrine, nor a Christian doctrine—though if the Christian books are properly understood it will be seen to be as much that as any other sort of doctrine. It is simply a fact in nature like the circulation of the blood, which the wisest men on earth have been familiar with through all the ages, which crops up therefore in all religious teaching, and which in recent years some of us have been privileged to verify by means of faculties of observation enlarged for that, among other purposes.

#### QUESTION 117.

X.—*When uncivilised people suffer great wrongs from stronger races—as was, for instance, the case in Hayti, when the natives were enslaved and then extirpated by cruel oppression—are we to understand that such sufferings are kârmic, consequent on former wrong-doing by such races?*

A. A. W.—It does not seem, at first sight, quite easy to give a simple answer to this question.

It may be said that everything is a great deal more complicated than we have any idea of, and that a simple explanation must be wrong. Modern Christianity and modern science have both demoralised us in this respect; science is slowly

recovering from the illusion that a "few simple principles," as Austin said, will give all we need, and Christianity will have to follow or to give up the game altogether.

For my own part, I think the key to the difficulty put by the querent lies in the statement by Mrs. Besant that the undeveloped mind requires only *sensations*—no matter whether of pleasure or pain, so long as they are *strong* enough to touch and stir the blunt and horny perceptions. In the ordinary sense these Indians had not *deserved* their fate, because to have incurred such kârmic penalty by their own evil doing was not possible for them—they were not developed enough to sin in such a way. But they were, as I take it, children in the lowest class, and of the two—pain and pleasure—pain is far the most effective stimulus to progress, and the most appropriate to the lower state. For us, it is a shame if we have to be taught by pain; we ought to be awake enough to learn without by this time; but for such as these, and the countless victims of the great Eastern conquerors, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, etc., agony and death were, I think, the spur to progress which would bring them back to their next life better provided, more alive and intelligent than if they had lived out a long life but little above that of the beasts that perish.

Of karma, or right or wrong, is not here the question at all at this stage, as I look at it. It is a good thing for them that their souls should be stirred up—even by pain—and that their forms should perish to make way for others more adapted for the life of the intellect. I am inclined to carry this view far, even in answer to many of the difficulties of our own day, at the condition of the lowest classes in our great towns, etc. There are a vast number of personalities amongst us who are not yet beyond these most elementary lessons, and these must have the bodies and the circumstances in which to receive them. If there were not, such bodies could not be there, we may be certain.

When we are quite clear that the object of the universe is *not* that everybody shall be happy and comfortable but that everyone shall be stirred up to *advance*, we shall not be so horrified at the whip and spur. As I say, the shame to us is that even *we* can't do without them!

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QUESTION 118.

H.—How can you reconcile prevision with free-will?

G. R. S. M.—If it be true, as has been asserted by all mystical philosophers, that there is a state of consciousness in which the three modes of time—past, present and future—are simultaneous, and that there is also a state of consciousness where here and there and elsewhere are identical in space, then it is very evident that the ideas of succession in time and extension in space vary according to the intensity of consciousness of any entity—that is, of any will.

The problem of free-will and determinism is

usually discussed simply from this standpoint of normal consciousness; but immediately we extend our consciousness in time or space, at once the sharp opposition of free-will and necessity assumes fainter outlines. As consciousness extends it becomes evident that the hard and solid earth shakes itself free from the bonds of its solidity, that past and present and future things refuse to be determined as they were previously by the barriers of the physical time instrument; as consciousness expands nature gains freedom instead of having stronger shackles forged for it.

Along this line of thought, it may be seen that prevision, or seeing the future in the present, is really a greater freedom of the will; although apparently, as far as the happening in matter is concerned, it is a proof of a greater determinism. But this apparently increased determinism is a fallacy due to our translating the true nature of the intensified consciousness back into terms of ordinary past-present-future time and three-dimensional space.

The "fourth dimension" so-called is not a state of matter of three-dimensional properties *plus* some other property of a like nature; it is a state of matter quite other than any matter we can measure by height and breadth and depth. So likewise the corresponding phase of time is not an "eternal now"—the eternising of one phase of physical time; but a state which is neither past, nor future, *nor yet present*.

Now if such states of consciousness are possible for the human will, it is evident that the ordinary determining factors that are brought forward in the usual arguments and classed as "necessity," are in reality phantasmal shadows and no true shackles of the will.

It must, however, be understood that the "will" here stands for the ground of a man's being, and not the false will which is desire, and which is determined because it seeks after the three-dimensional shadow that dances on the triple screen of time.

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QUESTION 119.

B. T. S.—I am by no means convinced (but quite the contrary), of the equality of men, either mentally or physically. And this being so, I cannot accede to the first "Object" of the Society. I believe in rank, station and caste—in the English sense; and can only affirm a very attenuated "brotherhood" with a South Sea Islander, for example. Can you give any explanation of this Object?

A. A. W.—I, for my part, am in entire sympathy with the querist's objection to admit the "brotherhood" of savage races, in the sense in which he seems to use the word. But this is not our doctrine. Brotherhood is *not* equality, either in a single family or the great World-Family to which we all belong.

"Brothers" we all are, in the sense that the same spark of Divinity dwells in all;—in the lowest savage as in the highest races, and that

this must, sooner or later, be so developed that all may reach the goal of their evolution; but the differences between the advanced and the belated ones in this development are such as the usual and obvious distinction between *elder* and *younger* brothers is hardly strong enough to express.

In our view, the savage is a *baby* brother; and the word carries with it the whole of our relationship to him and the statement of our duties towards him; by no manner of means to treat him as *now* our equal; but also to remember that he is not a lower animal to be exterminated, but a human being—a child, needing our dutiful care as he learns to walk. We must not expect any sudden spring forward to our own position, but patiently watch and guide his tottering feet in one small step after another. It is here that both “missionary enterprise” and secular attempts at civilisation fail; they insist on treating him as a “brother” in the wrong sense, and expect by some process of “enlightenment” to make a twentieth century Englishman out of him—as foolish as to think of “teaching” a three-year-old child to do a labourer’s day’s work. He can only *grow*, and that slowly (as in all works of Nature) by many repeated lives, in which he will no longer be a savage, to the point we have already attained.

The same principle is applicable to the ignorant and degraded classes of our own nation. I cannot myself see anything unreasonable or objectionable in such a statement of “Brotherhood.” On the contrary, it seems to me to express and harmonise the actual facts of nature as no other view does; and that it would, alone, be sufficient to commend our doctrines to an unprejudiced and enlightened mind.

A. M. G.—I fear that most of us who are sufficiently honest to ourselves would have to confess to a feeling of practical brotherhood “attenuated” enough to meet with the approval of the questioner. The feeling he expresses, a repugnance to accept any form of ethical belief which may mean a great deal more than he is inclined to hold, is a very natural one. There is in most people a deep-seated dislike to display moral sentiments even if they feel them. Often, indeed, the dislike is the stronger the more profound are the feelings. But it is still more objectionable to make any formal statement of an ethical belief which is felt to be a mere shell—a statement which seems to mean so much more than the man can really agree to.

But is the idea of universal brotherhood a rigidly defined creed? Do all who profess a belief in it mean the same thing? Because one man thinks brotherhood is the destruction of rank and caste and the uniform distribution of wealth, that is no reason why another who upholds the present condition should be debarred from an admission of a brotherhood which in his view is to be founded on things as they are. In fact the idea of universal brotherhood as it seems to me is an idea altogether apart from any scheme of “brotherhood” whatever. It no more upholds equality than it emphasises difference. It may be as much the

foundation of an autocratic system as of a socialistic. It is an idea more or less like that of universal gravitation, which draws all things together, but none the less doesn’t, in a real universe, drag them into one gigantic smash. If gravitation alone were to act then indeed we should have a chaos, but the fact that we do not all come together in no way interferes with the recognition of a force which draws all bodies to each other. Universal brotherhood is spiritual gravitation, the bond which tends to bring souls together. Alone it would bring about a spiritual chaos, as would an unbalanced attraction in the physical world a physical one, but as the bond which links souls it is the main foundation of conscious order, no matter of what nature is that order.

Any attempt to narrow the ideal to some particular order must of necessity offend. But if one upholds the justice of existing things, believes that to some it is rightly given to be kings and rulers while others are servants and “common people,” there is nothing in that which rejects the idea of brotherhood. There *are* things which surely all will admit are for everyone who can receive them. The right of possession is measured only by the power to retain. These things form part of the Objects of the Society and are the teachings of all the religions of the world, and the thoughts of those who have endeavoured to pierce through the mystery which surrounds life and death. The right to share in these surely cannot be limited by caste or creed or colour, and the clear recognition of that right seems to me to be what is meant by our first Object. It may mean to some much more, but can hardly mean less than that.

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QUESTION 120.

A. S. G.—How can we benefit others on the astral plane? If it is possible, is it not our duty to learn to do so?

E. L.—We can benefit them in a variety of ways, to be determined, 1st, by our own particular capacity; 2nd, by the existent need in any particular part of the plane where we might be present at the time; 3rd, by the preparation we make for such an office, in our lives here. Calmness, compassion, tolerance, wisdom, all of which we are lacking in; only as these are developed in us, may we hope to serve in a world where their opposites would and do cause far more disastrous effects than when physical matter acts as a medium for their operations.

E. A. B.—Doubtless it is our duty to benefit others, where possible, on any “plane.” For most of us, the only one we know anything of is our everyday physical plane; but the qualifications needed for work on higher planes are explained in Mr. Leadbeater’s *Invisible Helpers*, pp. 99-103; where it is also said that almost any one can do some good act during the body’s sleep at night, by making the last waking thought a strong and definite intention to go and give some help.

A. A. W.—We are taught that the majority of mankind are not yet capable of working on the astral plane, whilst confined within the physical body. Those of us who are awake on the astral plane will learn by experience that there also the great law holds, that to do what we can to benefit others is the strict condition of our own advance; but even of these the vast majority have no consciousness of their adventures when they wake, and no learning on this plane will be of any avail to assist. Fortunately the gulf which, for most of us, divides consciousness on the physical plane from consciousness on the astral does not thus limit our thoughts and desires. When we, in the physical body, fix our thoughts on our beloved (wherever they may be) our good wishes are an actual power to bless, not only on the astral plane, but as high above it as our spiritual development reaches and as our friends are capable of receiving. Of this, the only way in which most of us are able to benefit others on any plane, so much beautiful teaching has been given by Mrs. Besant, Mr. Leadbeater and others in our Theosophical literature, that the querist can find no difficulty in obtaining what he wishes. But as far as *duty* goes, our duty whilst on the physical plane is to do our best to help the world around us and leave the astral world to mind its own business, of course excepting the case of those of our family and friends who have passed over, and whose claims upon our help and good wishes are rather increased than diminished by the fact that they are what we call “dead,” and thus to be found only on the astral plane.

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QUESTION 121.

K. H. H.—*So much reliable evidence (in my experience) exists to prove the apparition of the spirits of very young children—say from the tender age of from five to nine years—and also of one in the latter case grown to maidenhood, that I fail to grasp the theosophic teaching which would contradict such a possibility. Does Divine Wisdom admit of exceptional cases of infant spirit development in the “other world”?*

A. A. W.—I have often been asked this question, and it may be well to set down the answer I have usually given. There is, in spiritualistic records, as the querist says, abundant evidence of the appearance at materialising *séances* of the forms of beloved relatives, sometimes at the age at which they died, and sometimes as they would have been had they lived. But these very records also contain the explanations given by the “spirits” themselves of this. The latest statement of the kind which I remember seeing is to the effect that “we can take whatever form we please, and so usually take the one which we think will most please our friends.” It seems to me that this answer covers the whole ground; and our theosophic teaching would only add that in all probability the materialising entity (whatever that may be) is not itself conscious how much the shape it takes is really controlled by the thoughts and

desires of the members of the circle, and how little freedom it has, in actual fact, to take any other.

But it must be carefully noted that all this is (in the querist’s words) a matter of *apparition* only. I certainly cannot undertake to answer for what “Divine Wisdom” may or may not admit; but I may recall to K. H. H. that in the “other world” the ego which had animated a dead child’s form is not *itself* an infant, and can only appear as such in condescension to our human weakness. There are (at least amongst our own circles) no “infant spirits” to develop—the whole question is based on a complete misunderstanding. If in such a case you *are* actually communicating with the soul of your departed child, you have before you an entity very possibly of far higher spiritual growth than your own. Its having been for a few months or years imprisoned in an infant body which it received from you, leaves no trace on it when freed; and when that body has returned to dust there is no conceivable reason why the higher body, which still exists, should take its shape or develop it to further growth, unless it were for a few brief instants of *Mâyâ*, to please the child-spirits of the human parents or friends left behind. The “appearance” is a possibility, the “growth” is not; for perfectly obvious reasons.

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QUESTION 122.

J. H. P.—*Can you explain the difference between the Blessed Lord who speaks as “Me” in the Bhagavad Gîtâ (xii. 1-3), and the Absolute, the Unmanifest, etc.?*

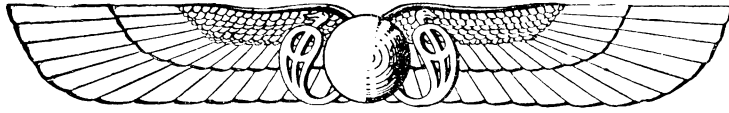
G. R. S. M.—As when the Christ declares, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life,” so when the Blessed One declares that all come unto Him, we are to suppose that the Teacher is speaking as the accredited representative of Him whose office it is to watch over this humanity of ours. But there are other humanities, other worlds, other systems, infinite in the boundless fields of space. Beyond Him who is for *us* the “One and Only Mystery,” the Logos of our humanity, there is an infinitude of glory, unapproachable for us, except through Him; and not only so, but even for Him there is an “unapproachable,” a Depth beyond His (to us) immeasurable profundity. To quote the words of a beautiful hymn of the Gnosis: “I praise Thee, O Unapproachable God, for that Thou didst shine forth in Thyself; Thou hast emanated Thy One and Only Mystery, Thou who art an unapproachable God even to these Logoi.” The term Absolute must be kept for the idea of The Deity beyond being.

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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, 3, Langham Place, 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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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.—ARTHUR A. WELLS, *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, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. X.

LONDON, MAY 1, 1901.

NO. 10.

Edited by ARTHUR A. WELLS.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### New Branch.

March 25th, 1901. Charter issued this day to Mme. A. von Ulrich, M. Caniglia, A. Mazzerelli, L. Mangosi, A. Lancia, A. Veneziani and L. Piattelli, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society at Rome, to be known as the Besant Branch.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary.*

#### THE CONVENTION.

Members are hereby notified that the next Annual Convention of the European Section will be held on Saturday and Sunday, July 13th and 14th. The business meeting will take place on Saturday morning at 28, Albemarle Street. The usual reception will be held at this address on the evening preceding the Convention. Particulars of the other meetings will be given in the June VĀHAN.

Secretaries of Branches are requested to send their annual reports and lists of members in good time.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary.*

#### CLOSING OF THE LIBRARY.

Members are notified that the Library will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, May 6th and 7th, for the purpose of cleaning.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary.*

#### LETTER FROM THE AUSTRALASIAN SECTION.

*The General Secretary,  
European Section,  
Theosophical Society.* February 21st, 1901.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,

I have much pleasure in conveying through you to your Section a resolution of fraternal greeting and good wishes for success in work, passed at our recent adjourned Convention, held in Sydney, December 19th last.

Yours fraternally,  
A. MARQUES,  
*General Secretary.*

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to April 20th: B. P. M., 5s.; L. N., £1; H. R. H., £4; J. K.-L., £1; W. C., 5s.; G. T., £10; F. K., £20; M. L., £2; A. J. V. R., £3 3s.; V. T., £15; W. A. A., £1; M. S. J., 15s.; E. D., 10s.; W. D., 5s.; I. B., £5; E. B., 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. H., £1; O. L., 3s.; K. K., £1 1s.; M. R., £1; F. J. B., 15s.; A. G. B., £2; E. W., £2; B., £1; T. B. B., £2 2s. Total, £75 14s.

#### “White Lotus Day.”

The meeting always held upon the anniversary of Mme. Blavatsky's death, will take place on May 8th, at 8.30 p.m., at 28, Albemarle Street. All members are invited to attend.

Flowers to decorate the hall will be gratefully received at the Sectional Headquarters in the morning or afternoon of the same day.

#### Afternoon Meetings at Headquarters.

Six Afternoon Meetings will be held at No. 28, Albemarle Street, from 3 to 5 on Mondays in May and June, for discussions and questions on Theosophy. Open to all members of the Theosophical Society and their friends.

The names of those who will answer questions are: May 6th, Mr. Sinnett; May 13th, Captain Lauder; May 20th, Dr. Wells; May 27th, Mr. Bertram Keightley; June 3rd, Mrs. Burke; June 10th, Mr. Mead.

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### Debating Class.

It is thought to be desirable that during the summer months, and beginning in May, the Practice Debating Class at 28, Albemarle Street, should be held on Thursday evenings at 6 p.m., instead of on Saturday afternoons as hitherto. All members of the Society are welcome.

E. G.

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### Class at Headquarters.

The class for elementary study of Theosophy, conducted by Mrs. Leo, will be resumed in May, and will be held on Thursday afternoons from 4.30 to 5.30, during the months of May, June and July.

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### Reference Library.

The Library is open to members of the Society from 3 to 10 p.m. on Sunday; on other days from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

We have much pleasure in acknowledging the presentation of a complete set of the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Riverside Edition, 12 vols., 1900, and also the addition to the Library of the following valuable books: *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. by James Hastings, M.A., D.D., 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1900; *Sri Bhagavad Gîtâ with Sri Râmânujâcharya's Visishtadvaita-Commentary*, trs. by A. Govindacharya, Madras, 1898; *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, A. A. Macdonell, M.A., Ph.D., London, 1900; *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 44, *The Satapatha-Brahmana*, trs. by Julius Eggeling, Oxford, 1900; *The Hibbert Lectures*, 1893; *Lectures on the Basis of Religious Belief*, Charles B. Upton, B.A., B.Sc., London, 1894.

A. J. WILLSON,  
Librarian.

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### Lectures by Mr. Mead.

Mr. Mead will deliver a course of four lectures, entitled "Studies in the Gnosis," in the Lecture Room at 28, Albemarle Street, on Tuesday afternoons in May and June.

The syllabus of the lectures is as follows:

May 21st, The Gospels and the Gospel; May 28th, Some Hymns of the Gnosis; June 4th, The Mystery of the Cross; June 11th, Jesus, the Living One.

Course tickets, 5s. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 3, Langham Place, W. Admission to each lecture, 2s.

### North of England Federation.

The Quarterly Meeting of the Federation will be held at Harrogate on Saturday, May 11th, at 3 p.m., under the presidency of the Hon. Otway Cuffe. All members of the Society are cordially invited.

W. H. THOMAS,  
Hon. Secretary.

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### Blavatsky Lodge.

The Thursday and Sunday meetings of the above Lodge were suspended on April 4th, 7th, 11th, and 14th.

On the 18th the Lodge re-opened with a very successful conversazione, which was attended by numerous members and their friends.

The lecturer on Sunday, April 21st, was Mr. Bertram Keightley, who had recently returned from India.

S. M. S.

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### Rome.

Members will be interested to hear of the formation of a second Lodge in Rome, to be known as the Besant Lodge.

Meetings are held on Thursdays, 9 p.m., at 119, Via Frattina, under the Presidency of Baroness von Ulrich, one of our energetic and capable workers. Another point of interest is the engagement of Miss Gretchen Wagner (niece of our well-known colleague Dr. Hübbe Schleiden) to our Organising Secretary, Captain Boggiani.

On Monday evening, April 22nd, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley held an evening reception to introduce Miss Wagner to the members of both Lodges.

Mrs. Cooper-Oakley goes to Naples on April 25th for a week.

M. C.

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### Theosophical Lending Library.

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

Terms of subscription: three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra.

Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 2.30 to 6 o'clock.

Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W.

LILIAN LLOYD,  
Librarian.

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### Lotus Circle.

The children meet at 2.30 p.m. on Sundays at 28, Albemarle Street, W.

A. J. W.

## Lecture List.

BATH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Alfred Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: May 5th, *Plato*, H. M. Chaplin; May 12th, Question evening; May 19th, *Esoteric Bible Stories*, Miss J. Keeley; May 26th, *For the Sake of Others*, B. Old. For information apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings in the Theosophical Room, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of *The Growth of the Soul*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. Meetings on Sundays at 3.30 p.m., and on alternate Mondays at 8 p.m., 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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

EDINBURGH LODGE. Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, on one Tuesday in each month, at 8.15 p.m.: May 14th, *Will*, R. F. Sibbald. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. J. Lorimer Thomson, Roseburn House, Roseburn.

EXETER LODGE. Meetings at 48, High Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

FLORENCE LODGE. Meetings at Via Venezia, 8, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, at 3 p.m.

GLASGOW LODGE. Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on the fourth Tuesday in each month at 8 p.m.

HAMBURG LODGE. Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at the Swedish Gymnasium, Grand Opera House Buildings, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: May 5th, *Is Theosophy Practical?* May 12th, *Wisdom and Knowledge*, Hon. Otway Cuffe; May 19th, *How to train the Emotions*, Mrs. Corbett; May 26th, *The Holy Spirit*, Mrs. Bell. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of *The Christian Creed*.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at Vidyā, Canterbury Road, on Fridays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, 25, William Street.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings every Sunday at 7 p.m., at 97, Westbourne Avenue.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarian Restaurant, Boar Lane, on Mondays, at 8 p.m. Enquiries to be addressed to Mr. W. H. Bean, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

LEIPSIC CENTRE. Meetings at the "Freia" Vegetarian Restaurant, 8, Nürnbergerstrasse, on

the first and third Saturdays of each month, at 8.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., at 18, Colquitt Street. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings are held on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Public meetings suspended till the autumn. Class on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 28, Albemarle Street, W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m. (open to all members of the Society): May 2nd, *Illusion*, A. A. Wells; May 9th, *A Scientific Trinity*, Miss Ward; May 16th, *Conversazione*; May 23rd, *Gospel Criticism, I.—A "Modern" View*, G. R. S. Mead; May 30th, *Theosophical Aspects of Representative Books—Dante's Divine Comedy*, Miss Cust. On Sundays at 7 p.m. (open to members and visitors): May 5th, *True Christianity*, A. A. Wells; May 12th, *Life and Form*, Miss Ward; May 19th, *Organic and Inorganic*, M. U. Moore; May 26th, *Theosophy and Forms of Belief*, Mrs. Sharpe.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., at 8.30 p.m., for the study of *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*.

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "West View," 12, Oakfield Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: May 7th, *The Voice of the Silence*, F. Horne; May 14th, *Time*, Miss Arundale; May 21st, *Vibrations*, A. M. Glass; May 28th, *Some Teachings of August Comte, Positivist*, Mrs. Lauder. Students' Class on alternate Thursdays. Hon. Sec., F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 8 p.m. Class for study on Mondays at 7 p.m.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 13, Tyndale Place, Upper Street, N., on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.; and at 86, Savernake Road, Gospel Oak, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m. Debating class at 13, Tyndale Place, on Saturdays, at 6.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m., at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W.: May 3rd, *Gospel Tales in Ancient Egypt*, G. R. S. Mead; May 10th, *The Art of Speaking*, Miss Kate Emil-Behnke; May 17th, *Some Points in India's History*, B. Keightley; May 24th, *John Ruskin*, W. C. Ward; May 31st . . . Miss E. M. Mallet.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 62, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 68, Lin-

thorpe Road, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m., for study of *Man and His Bodies*.

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.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8 p.m., at the Oddfellows' Hall, Morley Street, and on Wednesdays (students' class) at 8 p.m., at Dr. Mariette's, Ford Park House, Mutley.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 72, Via S. Niccolo da Tolentino, on Mondays, at 6.15 p.m. Class conducted by Signor D. Calvari on Fridays at 6.15 p.m. for study of *Dharma*. Conversazione on Wednesdays at 6.15 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m., and on Saturdays from 3 to 5 p.m.

## ENQUIRER.

### QUESTION 118.

(Continued from p. 70.)

H.—How can you reconcile prevision with free-will?

A.—By recognising that there is no conflict. Taking the meaning of "free-will" to be: "the faculty of choosing, from among several, one course of action, and carrying out the choice," we have only to exercise this faculty a few times in order to know that we have it. When an omniscient being has foreknowledge of the choice, the choice still is a choice. It is not the omniscient being making the choice, he is only knowing that the choice will be made. He is the knower, not the chooser. Choices can be made in certain circumstances, and they will be in accordance with the nature of the chooser; his choice is part cause of the event; the circumstances are the other cause. The nature of the individual being what it is, and the circumstances being as they are, these facts do not take away the choosing faculty from the individual.

R. B.—The answer given in the April number to this question will, as it seems to me, fail to give satisfaction; and will only furnish new support to the reproach of mystical confusion often made against Theosophists by their enemies. C. W. Leadbeater has also unsuccessfully attempted to solve this important and interesting problem in his *Clairvoyance*; and yet it seems to me that the solution is not so hard to find. We do not need to confuse ourselves with such impossible conceptions as that of Time without present, past or future—in other words, timeless time; nor yet with that of four-dimensional space. There is no such thing as *absolute* freedom of the will; every decision is determined by *motives*, generally manifold and mutually conflicting—inner and outer motives, appealing to the lower or higher Self—but *only* by motive, were it simply the motive of trying to decide without any, and thus to make an ex-

ception to the general law. There is no exception possible; every determination of the will, however free, must arise from some motive. There are, however, higher Beings, who are in union on higher planes with all other creatures, though unknown to them; and these, knowing intimately and intuitively all the peculiarities of all things, are able to predict how these will respond to all possible excitements. And as an electric current in a system of conductors, however complicated, finds its way at once, and without previous trial, in the right direction, so these Beings will be able, even for hundreds of years beforehand, to perceive (that is to say to prophesy) the results of all possible combinations and reactions upon the relationship of all existences one with another, without the slightest interference with the freewill of an individual.

## QUESTION 123.

I. G.—In the Raushitaki-Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣhad it is written: "Whoso knows Brahman, by no deed soever is his future bliss harmed"; not the most heinous crimes, the murder of a Brāhman, of a mother, or father, can smirch him or endanger him howsoever. How may this be reconciled with the teaching that "according to deeds" a man attains either to rebirth or to liberation?

G. R. S. M.—It was also charged against one of the Schools of the Gnostics that they taught that the Perfect could commit any crime or indulge in any enormity, and yet suffer no taint. It has always seemed to me that there was a grain of truth hidden beneath this mass of pernicious error. "He who knows Brahman" and "he who is Perfect" are expressions connoting one who has transcended all limitations and united himself with the will of the Lord of the Universe. He, therefore, on this hypothesis, is no longer a man, but a direct instrument of the Divine Will. The Divine Will destroys as well as it creates and preserves. This is the grain of truth in the chaos, as it seems to me. But when uninstructed and untrained people begin to talk of these high matters, when some of the mysterious facts connected with the working of this "face" of the Deity are imprudently hinted at, the result is that destruction speedily follows to the moral and intellectual nature of those who have approached the mystery unprepared. Poor fools, who imagine that they "know Brahman," or have become "Perfect," because they are members of some little occult school or metaphysical Bethel!

So also it is recorded of the Christ that He said: "Unless ye hate father and mother ye cannot be My disciples," a dark saying, which no literalist can explain. But the Gnostics, not the incarnate devils of Patristic fancy, but the mystics of the Christ, explained how that these "parents" were the makers of our passion nature, the "bastard spirit" which so continually usurped the place of the true heir in our kingdom. It may

be, too, that the statement in the *R.-B. Upanishad* may have been originally based on some mystic saying of this kind. In any case we may be very sure that if we find a man committing such heinous crimes, he is so far from being a "knower of Brahman" that he does not yet know the conditions of knowing.

QUESTION 124.

K. H. H.—If, as *Theosophy* asserts, no actual personal "Devil" or Spirit of Evil exists, how does it account for the frequent allusions by Christ to such an individuality (as "Prince of Darkness," "Satan," etc.), which are so constantly made throughout all the Gospels. Also, how does it explain the teaching of Buddha, who alluded frequently to such a Spirit as "Māra, the Evil One," and asserts that he appeared personally to tempt him, as he appeared to tempt the Christ?

A. L. B. H.—It cannot be said that "Theosophy asserts no actual personal 'Devil' or Spirit of Evil exists." As far as the present writer can discover, Theosophy makes no "assertions" with regard to these eternal problems.

H. P. B. may however be quoted as having written that there is no "*malum in se*," and that "*Demon est Deus inversus*." The suggestion of the great Compensation, the doctrine that all things are working together to some perfect end, that all the Law is for Good and not for Evil, runs like a silver thread through all the world-scriptures.

But on the other hand it may truly be said that the Devil is nothing if not "personal." As long as we are each of us behind the prison-bars of our personalities, as long as we are capable of fear, capable of being delayed, capable of want, of pain and of fatigue, so long shall we see a great "individuality" which is kept vitalised by the collective mental action of each one of us. Yet surely it is but the phantasm of the human brain, the shadow of a thing which will pass, projected for the time being on to the mists of our unknown future.

E. L.—If we assume a Being (such as the Logos) who sums up in Himself all the forces that make for evolution, we must of necessity postulate the opposing Being who will embody so to speak all forces which retard it. Personally I believe in the existence of such an entity—if we regard things from this plane. The old phrase "*Demon est Deus inversus*" seems a more philosophical way of putting this great mystery. But here as in many other instances terms confuse more than they elucidate, for every person will have his own peculiar interpretation of terms. The stand Theosophy made against a "Personal God"—or "devil"—was an effort to free people's minds from the grossly anthropomorphic tendency they had been under the sway of for so long. If by a personal God or His opposite, we mean a Being confined in form limits—however vast these limits may be—then in the very fact of manifestation in all its varied

degrees we get gods and devils of many ranks and capacities, and an evil being of some kind—presumably a high order—seems to have appeared to Gautama Buddha and the Christ. At the ending of each stage of our evolution we are told a final effort is made by the Dark Powers to overthrow us and so prevent further progress, the nature and the extent of the trial depending on the stage reached.

Madame Blavatsky, in vol. ii., p. 406, *Secret Doctrine*, says "Satan represents metaphysically simply the reverse or the polar opposite of everything in nature. He is the 'Adversary,' allegorically, the 'Murderer,' and the Great enemy of all because there is nothing in the whole universe that has not two sides. But in that case light, goodness, beauty, etc., may be equally called Satan with as much propriety as the Devil, since they are the Adversaries of darkness, badness, and ugliness."

A. A. W.—The assertion of the popular religions about us is that there exists a Spirit of Evil—a Being as absolutely desirous of doing harm to humanity as God is desirous of its good; a Being wholly separate from and antagonistic to God and (practically) His equal, or even superior, in power. Mankind is regarded as being fought for by these two opposing Powers; and in the struggle, according to the vulgar theology, the Devil has distinctly the best of it, and far the majority of the human race go *his way* and *not God's*.

This exceedingly crude and infantine conception of the conditions of the universe is repudiated by Theosophy, as it has been by all philosophical thought worthy of the name. When a man begins really to think about his relations to the Powers which rule his world, the first step is to find that this Dualism is impossible. It is, as Defoe rightly puts it, only "a very young theologian" who is puzzled by Man Friday's question, "Why God no kill debbil?"—the fact is so plain that if He did, the world would instantly come to an end. Good and evil are but the rising and falling sides of the wheel—the opposing forces whose resultant is the needful progress of humanity on its upward way. All, without exception, must (in the ultimate analysis) be done by God's power and guided by His wisdom and love; there is no place for the vulgar Christian "Devil" in true Theology any more than in true Philosophy.

But for all this, *tempters* (devils, if you like to call them so) there are, in abundance. For we may, and continually do, set ourselves against our own best interests, try to keep the lower pleasures we should have grown out of—to stifle the voice of our Higher Ego, who would lead us upwards. Every man has that within him which is a tempting devil to him; his life is beset by devils which he has made for himself—sometimes in earlier lives, more often in his present one. And more:—every man draws to himself the *outward* temptations to which his soul has an affinity. The thoughts of evil floating in the astral air; the sights and sounds of the shops and streets; the

disembodied spirits who desire, through his organs, once more to enjoy the unforgotten pleasures of the physical world; the lost souls whose sole happiness is to drag others into the same abyss—all these gather round the man to whom such things are still an attraction, the man who is not protected by perfect purity of soul and body. For a preacher like the Buddha or the Christ, there is nothing more natural than to sum up all these under one name, as the Indian Kāma, the Buddhist Māra, or the Christian Satan; in each case implying, not a person, but the complex of all the powers and attractions which tend to draw men back from their duty to press forwards to the true Life. I am not sufficiently familiar with Buddhist literature to venture positively to deny that (in the querist's words) Buddha ever *asserted* that Māra had personally appeared to tempt him; but I myself have only met with the statement as a story told of him by later chroniclers—an exceedingly beautiful and poetic story, but not anything to be appealed to as an authority. It should be remembered that the crude, dualistic idea always tends to reappear as civilisation relapses into barbarism; and the tales of the Buddha and the Christ were copied and recopied in times which were "dark ages" indeed as compared with those in which they had lived. It cannot be a matter of wonder if the eclipse of learning which followed the crash of the Roman Empire—that eclipse to which we owe the introduction of the Devil into the creeds and formulas of Church doctrine—should have introduced into the Gospels here and there words which Jesus did not say, or omitted qualifications which were needful to prevent the misunderstanding which has, in fact, arisen. It would be an interesting study if someone qualified for the undertaking would discuss the various texts contained in the Gospels as they now stand, to which the querist refers; but it is certain that Jesus, "a Teacher sent from God," could never have really said anything which implied belief in what He knew was wholly untrue. It is the fundamental doctrine of the Wisdom that each man is his own Angel, his own Devil; that he can hope for no Heaven he has not made for himself, and needs fear no Hell but such as his own life has framed. In a story quoted in Lafcadio Hearn's *In Ghostly Japan*, the demon torturer in Hell says to his victim "Blame not me! I am only the creation of your own deeds and thoughts; you made me for this!" And if anyone should be inclined to say that our view removes some of the safe-guards against evil-doing, let him only think for a while what *this* means!

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QUESTION 125.

A. W. G.—*Might I ask through the VĀHAN what is the attitude of Theosophy towards forms of life that are considered by us disagreeable or harmful—such for instance as vermin and poisonous or savage creatures? Does the teaching require of us an acceptance of the discomforts or dangers as karma—or does it*

*give us any advice with regard to remedying these manifestations; and also how might we answer the objections raised by the anti-vegetarian that by not using animals, etc., for food they would so over-run the world as to make it uninhabitable for man?*

M. P.—The "teachings" of Theosophy do not, as far as I am aware, lay down stringent rules as to our attitude towards vermin and such like pests, their toleration or extermination being left to the individual conscience. All of us—who are trying to be Theosophists—would, I take it, rather:

Kill not for Pity's sake, and lest we stay  
The meanest thing upon its upward way.

But, alas! in this complicated, civilised life of ours we are sometimes forced to choose the lesser of two evils. I *need* not kill for food; I *need* not kill for sport; I *need* not (by deputy) "tear plumes from living and dead bodies" for the adornment of my own body; if my house is isolated I *can* keep mice and blackbeetles at bay; but in our towns, where people in clean houses and people in dirty houses congregate side by side, unless I resort to destruction, cockroaches and mice would conquer me, and so I take the karma of keeping my house free.

By "poisonous or savage creatures," I presume snakes and wild animals are meant. But these creatures do not, as a rule, seek out man to injure him; they know their enemy and avoid his atmosphere. It is civilised man alone who kills and wounds for "sport."

As for that ancient argument, apparently still in use, that "by not using animals for food they would over-run the world," I would remind A. W. G. that the increase of domestic animals is strictly regulated by demand; they do not increase *ad lib.* Animals are not allowed to breed unless the breeder foresees a distinct profit from the transaction.

In a state of Nature, amongst wild creatures, the increase or extinction of species is determined by the food supply and the survival of the fittest seems, up to now, to have kept things evenly balanced.

E. A. B.—Theosophy, as such, should scarcely be held responsible for the "attitude" towards the many details of daily life which must be decided by the judgment and common-sense of the individuals dealing with them. As a general principle, one may consider the needless taking of life as wrong. What *is* needless, circumstances and the individual must decide.

The objection that animals would over-run the world if not eaten may be met by the reminder that an enormous number of animals are now bred solely for the *purpose* of being killed for food.

R. B.—Each may act according to the stage of his development. He who still prizes a comfortable earth life and feels too little compassion for other beings, will very easily persuade himself to get rid of the creatures that trouble him. He who, however, feels drawn towards the spiritual realities, who lays no more stress upon earthly

things and who would help to raise all beings to such a height as quickly as possible, would mercifully leave, even to troublesome and harmful animals, that life which serves to raise them, and he would be indifferent to the danger of over-production.

Nothing is to be gained by people who stand at different levels disputing upon this subject.

E. L.—I am not prepared to say what the attitude of Theosophists towards these lower manifestations of the One Life *is*, but I think that most, if not all, will agree with me as to what it *should* be. That is to avoid as much as possible at our present stage the destruction of any form of life whatsoever. I do not think it can be avoided wholly. Extreme cleanliness is one method of preventing the development of the discomforts mentioned, such as vermin for instance. With regard to wild beasts, if a man were placed in too close proximity he would have to decide as to the survival of the fittest, and I suspect the animal would not have much chance—if the man had a loaded rifle! But we learn that the Yogi can walk the jungle unharmed and that St. Francis of Assisi was a tamer of savage animals. And this we can understand, seeing in it the promise for a newer and a better race than our own, who shall prove the truth of the words, "Perfect love casteth out fear."

Nor can we wonder that there are wild animals hostile to man in existence, when we reflect on the widespread cruelty which has been, and is, practised by human beings towards the lower kingdom. A reaction *must* take place. We have to know a good deal before we can say that the non-slaughtering of animals would result in an over-production of them. Many animals are deliberately bred for food, and this is a convenient argument for anti-vegetarians to take refuge in.

Again, on the other hand, it *might* be that at the present stage of evolution some method of stopping over-production *is* necessary, and that meat-eating folk are used for this purpose. At any rate, it is quite certain that the great beings who guide evolution know how to bring "good" out of "evil," if meat-eating is to be regarded as an evil. But let us frame our own rules, which are suitable for ourselves alone, and above all things avoid being rabid on any point, for we all have much to learn, and to forget. Thus only shall we grow to look at disputed points calmly, and answer objections raised by those who differ from ourselves.

A. A. W.—What is the attitude of *Theosophy* towards this question no one will venture to say; and even an individual Theosophist who dares to express his own personal view does so at a certain amount of risk. One thing may be safely laid down; that the teaching does not require an acceptance of any discomforts or dangers whatever as karma, provided we can lawfully escape them. It can never be our karma to endure what we ourselves can remedy; the doctrine is a consolation

for unavoidable evils, not an excuse for mere inaction. But what means of escape *are* lawful is a thorny question, on which (as far as I know) the "teachings" leave us to our own decision. Some, as the Jains of India, think no means of escape are lawful. In the course of my religious life I have had to associate with certain holy brethren who held this doctrine. Whether they were holier in this life or higher up in the next for it I cannot say; but I can testify that their neighbourhood was exceedingly disagreeable and provocative of "sins of the tongue" to others—myself by no means excepted!

I think that those who do not go this full length will find it hard to justify the drawing of the line anywhere short of admitting that the lives of our inferiors—those below us in evolution—are in our hands; to be disposed of, not capriciously but conscientiously, as the best interests of the advancing race may require. To those who fear that to admit this would seem to encourage wanton cruelty and destruction I would say that the "teachings" are never weary of assuring us that such things bring their own penalty, and that we never need fear they will go unpunished, even if human justice should fail. As an instance, one might take the case of the man-eating tiger, or the venomous snakes in India. They are not sinners—they are following their nature—but that nature in the present state of things brings them into play as a force working in *the wrong direction*, interfering with the development of beings higher than themselves, and they not only *may* but *must* be prevented from hindering—even at the cost of taking their lives if nothing short of this will avail. The slaying of animals for food, or using them for study of medicine, etc., falls under the same rule. I entirely decline to admit to the vegetarian that I have no *right* to use animal food, provided it be necessary or useful to do so; but I am fully open to be convinced that it is *not* necessary or useful, if he brings arguments which approve themselves to my reason. It is a question, not of sentiment, but of fact.

I may add that it is beyond question that this is the way in which the Powers above deal with *us*. In the working out of the plans of Those who deal with *our* evolution human beings are slain and "vivisected" without scruple, and by thousands at a time. In all cases, whether of men or animals, this is but a destruction and recreation of forms; and those who may reasonably enough dispute the wisdom of some of our dealings with the lower creation have happily no cause to fear the consequences of anything done to us by Those above us, who see the end.

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QUESTION 126.

R.—In the *Gîtâ* we read: "They who take refuge with Me, though of the womb of sin, women, Vaishyas, even Shûdras, they also tread the highest Path." Why are women thus classed? Does *Theosophy* offer any explanation of the modern "woman problem"?

G. R. S. M.—According to Hindu theological notions, to be born as a woman is a misfortune; the punishment for certain sins is rebirth in a female body. The *Gīta* here seems to be endeavouring to break down this ancient orthodoxy of priestly Brāhmanism, and to be preaching a higher doctrine. In doing so, the Teacher had to use the old dogmatic forms of expression. Of course, compulsory birth into any body is, in its final analysis, conditioned upon "sin." There may, however, be some special explanation of the term "womb of sin," as used in the context, which might throw further light on the subject.

In any case, such dogmas as those implied in the above passages, if they have any truth in them whatever, have nothing to do with the Western world; they apply only to a state of society founded on the Laws of Manu. As to the "woman problem," the Theosophical Society declares in its first object that its ideal is to form the nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of sex; and not only does it declare this to be its object, but loyally carries it out, as may be seen by looking over a list of the officers of its branches and of its principal writers and speakers. The only exception to this is found in our Indian branches, where the social customs are such that women can take no part in public affairs. To change the state of affairs in India we shall have to wait till souls of sufficient energy are born into the women of India to break through their present disabilities. A soul that has been once born into the freedom of the West, would certainly find it a punishment to be born into the present hampering conditions that surround the women of India.

A. B. C.—I should venture to opine that the reason for the above classification is to be found in the fact that the *Bhagavad Gītā* is primarily a Hindu scripture given to a race among whom for, at any rate, a very long period of time the usual oriental view as to the inferiority of women appears to have prevailed. Had such teaching been given in our own day and to a Western race, such a specific inclusion of women would have been unnecessary, in the East it *was* necessary. Any student of the *Gītā* is sure to find expressions and statements at variance with, or rather incongru-

ous with, modern Western ideas, but is it not rather a pity to fix upon small details which are absolutely unessential, and belong to time and place, instead of viewing the teaching as a whole, and disregarding what obviously belongs to another stage of civilisation than our own? Having done a profound service to the West in bringing the priceless "Scripture of Yoga" within reach of all lovers of the Wisdom, it would be a great pity if the Theosophical Society should in any sense begin to regard it as the old orthodoxy viewed the "Holy" Bible, and to worry about the modern application of every phrase and expression as though salvation depended on it. Its value to us will be proportionate to the extent we apply, not merely the higher, but the highest criticism.

It would be impossible to give a satisfactory answer to the latter part of the question until the querent has defined what he means by the "modern woman problem." There are many modern problems in which women are concerned—the extension of the franchise, for instance; or the Social Evil; or the regulation of labour, but none of these could properly be termed the "modern woman problem." Or perhaps R. wants an explanation of the very existence of the "modern woman." Being one of this species myself, I have never found it necessary to ask Theosophy to explain my existence, so I am afraid I shall have to give up this riddle until R. affords a better definition of what he means. One thing is clear to all students of the theory of life which has been set before us under the name of Theosophy—it is that to any *real* problem which meets us in our individual or corporate existence the hypothesis offers a more helpful and hopeful solution than any other that is yet before the world.

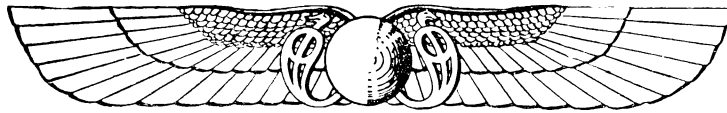
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The subscription to THE VĀHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 3, Langham Place, W.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

*All communications for "Activities" 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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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.—ARTHUR A. WELLS, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. A communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. X.

LONDON, JUNE 1, 1901.

NO. 11.

Edited by ARTHUR A. WELLS.

### 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 1901-1902 are now due.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary*.

### THE CONVENTION.

The Eleventh Annual Convention of the European Section will be held in London on Saturday and Sunday, July 13th and 14th.

On Friday evening, July 12th, there will be a Reception at 28, Albemarle Street, W., from 8 to 10 p.m. Owing to the comparatively small accommodation, it is necessary to limit the attendance to members of the Society, but the Executive Committee may issue a few invitations to visitors.

The Convention will meet in the Lecture Room, 28, Albemarle Street, at 10.45 a.m., on Saturday, July 13th.

On Saturday afternoon the rooms at 28, Albemarle Street will be open for the reception of members, unless other arrangements are made in the meantime. A final announcement will appear in the July VĀHAN.

On Saturday evening there will be a Public Meeting of the Convention in the Small Queen's Hall, at 8.30 p.m.

On Sunday, July 14th, 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 VĀHAN the account of receipts and expenditure and the Convention Agenda are sent to members.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary*.

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to May 20th: J. H., 10s.; F. T., 5s.; W. C. W., 10s.; M. A. B., £2 2s. 6d.; W. B. L., £2 5s.; Hampstead Lodge, £5 5s.; M. McL., 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. G. A. W. C., £1 10s.; E. M. £1 1s.; M. E. T., £1 1s.; I. H., £2 2s.; S. B., 15s.; E. A. B., £6; W. H., 5s.; J. G., 8s. 11d.; J. W., £1; S. H., 5s.; E. M. T., 5s. Total, £26 os. 5d.

### Reference Library.

The Library is open to members of the Society from 3 to 10 p.m. on Sunday; on other days from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

We have much pleasure in acknowledging the reception by the Library of the following books: *Encyclopædia Biblica, A Critical Dictionary of the Literary, Political and Religious History, Archaeology, Geography and Natural History of the Bible*, ed. by the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A., D.D., and

J. Sutherland Black, M.A., LL.D., London, Adam & Charles Black, 1899, 2 vols., A-K; *Matter, Ether and Motion, the Factors and Relations of Physical Science*, A. E. Dolbear, Ph.D., English edition, edited by Prof. Alfred Lodge, London, S.P.C.K., 1899; *Every Living Creature*, Ralph Waldo Trine, London, 1901; *La Doctrine du Cœur*, Annie Besant, French trs., Paris, 1901; *Le Dharma*, Annie Besant, French trs., Paris, 1901.

A. J. WILLSON,  
*Librarian.*

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#### Social Committee's "At Homes."

The Social Committee will be "At Home" at 28, Albemarle Street, on Mondays, June 17th, 24th, and July 1st, from 4 to 6 o'clock. Members are invited to come and bring one friend. The Secretary would be glad to receive the names of those intending to be present. The speaker on June 17th will be Mr. Sinnett; on June 24th, Mr. Bertram Keightley; and on July 1st, Mr. Mead.

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#### Debating Class.

During the summer months, the Practice Debating Class at 28, Albemarle Street, will be held on Thursday evenings at 6 p.m. All members of the Society are welcome.

E. G.

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#### Class at Headquarters.

The class for elementary study of Theosophy, conducted by Mrs. Leo, will be held on Thursday afternoons from 4.30 to 5.30, during the months of June and July.

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#### Lectures by Mr. Mead.

Mr. Mead is delivering a course of four lectures entitled "Studies in the Gnosis," in the Lecture Room at 28, Albemarle Street, on Tuesday afternoons.

The concluding lectures in June are as follows: June 4th, The Mystery of the Cross; June 11th, Jesus, the Living One.

Admission to each lecture, 2s.

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#### White Lotus Day.

The annual meeting to commemorate the life and work of H. P. Blavatsky was well attended; many of those who gathered together were of opinion that there had seldom been a White Lotus Day on which the unity of the movement was felt so strongly by those present. The platform was decorated with many flowers, arranged there by numerous workers. Mr. Keightley read a selection from the *Gîtā*, and Mr. Moore a passage from the *Light of Asia*; Mr. Keightley then spoke impressively of the unswerving devotion of H. P. Blavat-

sky to the great work entrusted to her hands; Mr. Mead followed him with a most eloquent testimony to the debt we owe to one whose work was that of a pioneer, no easy task in any field of labour, and against whom in this case were arrayed forces that might well have crushed a weaker soul, for she fought her battle with the world and with opinion against terrible odds.

No recognition of what we owe to our President-Founder, no gratitude paid for our great debt to Mrs. Besant, should cause us to forget the fact that it is to H. P. Blavatsky we owe the revival of the Ancient Wisdom in our own day; that to her we trace the fresh upspringing of a stream of teaching which has helped and strengthened us, and given us a clue whereby to follow after that Wisdom.

I. H.

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#### North of England Federation.

The Twenty-ninth Conference was held in the Swedish Gymnasium at Harrogate, on Saturday, May 11th, under the presidency of the Hon. Otway Cuffe. There was a large attendance of delegates and members from Manchester, Sheffield, Hull, York, Leeds, Bradford, Middlesbrough, Harrogate, Whitley, etc.

The Lodge reports showed that much active work had been carried on during the past quarter both in Lodge study and public lectures. The Glasgow Lodge applied for membership and was unanimously elected by the Council. The Federation now consists of ten Lodges and four Centres.

Papers were read by Mrs. Corbett on "Dharma, or Eastern and Western Ideals," and by Mr. Orage on "The Neglect of Beauty." Many of the members present took part in the discussions which followed, and several interesting points in the papers were commented upon.

At the invitation of the Harrogate Lodge, the members adjourned to the Winter Gardens, where tea was provided. On re-assembling Mr. Cuffe delivered a very thoughtful address on "Wisdom and Knowledge." The proceedings were terminated by a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Cuffe for his presence.

The following day Mr. Cuffe delivered a public lecture in the same room on "Faith and Creeds."

The next meeting of the Federation will be held in August, when it is hoped Mr. Leadbeater will be able to be present. The subjects selected for discussion are "The Ethics of Commerce" and "Comfort as an Obstacle to Progress."

W. H. THOMAS,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

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#### Blavatsky Lodge.

On April 25th Mr. Romesh Dutt, C.I.E., lectured to a highly appreciative audience on "Life in Ancient India as described in the Indian Epics"; Mr. Dutt has kindly promised to lecture on the *Upanishads* at some future date. On May

2nd, Dr. Wells lectured on "Illusion," and on the 9th, Miss Ward spoke on "A Scientific Trinity," illustrating a very clear and interesting lecture by diagrams taken from Professor Dolbear's work on *Matter, Ether, and Motion*. On the 16th, a *Conversazione* was held. The Sunday evening lecturers have been Mr. Mead, Dr. Wells, and Miss Ward; each lecturer attracted a good audience and aroused much interest in their hearers.

S. M. S.

### Theosophical Lending Library.

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

Terms of subscription: three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra.

Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 2.30 to 6 o'clock.

Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 28, Albemarle Street, London, W.

LILIAN LLOYD,  
Librarian.

### Lotus Circle.

The children meet at 2.30 p.m. on Sundays at 28, Albemarle Street, W.

A. J. W.

### Lecture List.

BATH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Alfred Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: June 2nd, *Elementals*, A. Roberts; June 9th, *Meditation*, G. Tubbs; June 16th, *Science and Poetry, Ether and Spirit*, B. Hodgson; June 23rd, *Symbolism (Astrological)*, Mrs. Leo; June 30th, *The Relative Importance of the Physical Body*, Miss E. F. Lankesheer. For information apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings in the Theosophical Room, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of *The Growth of the Soul*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. Meetings on Sundays at 3.30 p.m., and on alternate Mondays at 8 p.m., 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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

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. J. Lorimer Thomson, Roseburn House, Roseburn.

EXETER LODGE. Meetings at 48, High Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

FLORENCE LODGE. Meetings at Via Venezia, 8, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, at 3 p.m.

GLASGOW LODGE. Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on the fourth Tuesday in each month at 8 p.m.

HAMBURG LODGE. Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at the Swedish Gymnasium, Grand Opera House Buildings, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: June 2nd, *Theosophy in Emerson*, C. N. Goode; June 9th, *Discrimination*, Miss Hilda Smith; June 16th, *The Foundations of Christianity*, W. H. Thomas; June 23rd, *The Soul's Pilgrimage*, Miss Pullar; June 30th, *Fear—Its Cause and Cure*, William Bell. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of *The Christian Creed*.

HERNE BAY CENTRE. Meetings at Vidyā, Canterbury Road, on Fridays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, 25, William Street.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings every Sunday at 7 p.m., at 97, Westbourne Avenue.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarian Restaurant, Boar Lane, on Mondays, at 8 p.m. Enquiries to be addressed to Mr. W. H. Bean, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Freia" Vegetarian Restaurant, 8, Nürnbergerstrasse, on the first and third Saturdays of each month, at 8.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., at 18, Colquitt Street. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings are held on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

LONDON, BATTERSEA CENTRE. Public meetings suspended till the autumn. Class on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in the month. Enquiries may be addressed to P. Tovey, 28, Trothy Road, Southwark Park Road, S.E.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 28, Albemarle Street, W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m. (open to all members of the Society): June 6th, *The Way*, A. H. Ward; June 13th, *Gospel Criticism*, II.—*An "Advanced" View*, G. R. S. Mead; June 20th, *Conversazione*; June 27th, *Craniology*, G. Dyne. A meeting (for members of the Lodge only) to elect Delegates to represent the Lodge at the Convention will be held on Thursday, June 27th, at 8 p.m.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings on Mondays, at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford

Park, W., at 8.30 p.m., for the study of *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*.

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "West View," 12, Oakfield Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: June 4th, *Sketches in Greek Philosophy*, Rev. E. S. Lang Buckland; June 11th, *The Doctrine of the Heart*, Mrs. Leo; June 18th, *The Value of Environment*, P. Tovey; June 25th, *The Theosophy of Emerson*, Miss A. Hallawell. Students' Class on alternate Thursdays. Hon. Sec., F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9 Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 8 p.m. Class for study on Mondays at 7 p.m.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 13, Tyndale Place, Upper Street, N., on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.; and at 86, Savernake Road, Gospel Oak, on Saturdays, at 8.30 p.m. Debating class at 13, Tyndale Place, on Saturdays, at 6.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m., at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W.: June 7th, *Esoteric Religion*, P. Tovey; June 14th, *Vibrations*, A. P. Sinnett; June 21st, 7×7, G. Dyne; June 28th, *Theosophy in Relation to Modern Thought*, Miss Ward.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 62, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 68, Linthorpe Road, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m., for study of *Man and His Bodies*.

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.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8 p.m., at the Oddfellows' Hall, Morley Street, and on Wednesdays (students' class) at 8 p.m., at Dr. Mariette's, Ford Park House, Mutley.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 72, Via S. Niccolò da Tolentino, on Mondays, at 6.15 p.m. Class conducted by Signor D. Calvari on Fridays at 6.15 p.m. for study of *Dharma*. Conversazione on Wednesdays at 6.15 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m., and on Saturdays from 3 to 5 p.m.

## ENQUIRER.

### QUESTION 124.

(Continued from p. 77.)

K. H. H.—If, as Theosophy asserts, no actual personal "Devil" or Spirit of Evil exists, how does it account for the frequent allusions by Christ to such an individuality (as "Prince of Darkness," "Satan," etc.), which are so constantly made throughout all the Gospels. Also, how does it explain the teaching of Buddha, who alluded frequently to such a Spirit as

"Māra, the Evil One," and asserts that he appeared personally to tempt him, as he appeared to tempt the Christ?

G. R. S. M.—Does "Theosophy" assert that there is no "personal 'Devil' "? I frequently learn far more about what "Theosophy teaches" from questions in THE VĀHAN than from a long and patient study of the world's theosophies. But, then, perhaps, it is because "Theosophy" means something else to me than the essays of modern Theosophical writers. Some few years ago, people objected that "Theosophy denied a personal God"; since then the Logos doctrine has been brought into greater prominence by our writers, and we hear less of Parabrahman. Now the doctrine of a personal Logos connotes its opposite in all its fulness. Therefore . . . ! But, just as Theosophic ideas of the Logos exalt Him so far beyond the highest possible human conceptions that the term "personal" can scarcely bear the weight which is put upon it, so Theosophic conceptions of the Devil remove the mystery of the "Hidden Face" from the ground of crude caricature and fantastic demonology to the sane region of illumination where the "Mystery of Satan" begins to reveal the first dim outlines of its beauty. Let any one read the magnificent episode so entitled in Edward Carpenter's *Towards Democracy*, and he will begin to understand; and if he require authority, let him turn to the last words of the ritual of the earliest Christian Mysteries preserved in *The Acts of John*. There he will find it stated in all nakedness: "I am thy God, not thy betrayer!"

### QUESTION 126.

(Continued from p. 80.)

R.—In the *Gītā* we read: "They who take refuge with Me, O Pārtha! though of the womb of sin, women, Vaishyas, even Shūdras, they also tread the highest Path."

Why are women thus classed? Does Theosophy offer any explanation of the modern "woman problem"?

E. M. G.—Theosophy seems to me to offer a very definite "explanation" of the modern "woman problem"; and in the explanation of the latter lies, I think, the key to the classification of women in the *Gītā*, to which R. refers. The doctrine of reincarnation (which has been rightly termed the central doctrine of Theosophy, since all others fall into place once it is grasped) teaches that for the growth and final perfection of every individual ego many births and deaths are necessary during long ages in which every experience has to be undergone, every quality evolved and tested. It has not been so definitely taught—but it is surely the inevitable sequence of this teaching—that during these many lives the ego puts on the physical body of both sexes, incarnates as a man or as a woman, in accordance with the qualities evolved in those lives; and also, let it

be noted, in accordance with the karma set up during the acquisition of those qualities. This doctrine throws much light upon the position of woman in India in the past and in the present; and also upon the position of woman in England in our own day. In the India of Vedānta times, and to a large extent in the India of to-day, woman was regarded as the possession, the absolute "goods or chattels" of her lord and master. There are exceptions to this rule, like that of Kunti in the *Mahābhārata*, and others whose origin was held to be partly divine; but in the majority of cases the wife or wives were *things*—to be shielded and guarded, but still to be valued as a possession and to be treated in every essential as such. Therefore to India were drawn by karmic necessity such egos as needed for their further development a life of dependency and obedience, and the evolution of the virtues of wife and motherhood. To such egos this would be the "next step," the Dharma waiting to be done, and *needing* to be done before aught else could rightly be undertaken. And in like manner to England to-day come the egos who incarnate as the "modern woman" and are often the pioneers of social movements, the leaders of moral reform, the fearless crusaders against old-standing abuses.

Most of such women—or would it be too much to say *all* such women—have lived as men in their last incarnation and now return to earth equipped with mental bodies built by strenuous living and high thinking, and with astral and physical bodies capable of responding to higher vibrations than would those of the "*stronger*" sex. And I would not have R. think from this answer to his question that Theosophy exalts woman to a place *above* that of man in the scale of creation; it is just that view of the relation of the sexes which will be impossible to the careful student of theosophical teaching as to reincarnation. But I would very definitely assert that for the ego who has (in many lives as man *and* as woman) partially exhausted karmic desire, the less dense and material, and more subtle and pliable *female* physical body, will be the most suitable vehicle; and that the "new" woman is new in this, if in nothing else, that she has turned her back for ever upon the karmic as the *predominant* element in human nature. For such an ego, desire has been lifted, and the truth has been glimpsed, even if "as in a glass darkly," that the union towards which every living soul strives blindly, is not *only* that of human life with human life, but is meant to be, *must* be ultimately, that union of human with the divine Life towards which "the whole Creation tends." The new woman is by no means perfect; on the contrary, she is entering upon a life on other planes than the physical, and on the physical she will oft-times appear very inadequately equipped for the battle of life, and will be at a disadvantage with the multitude who tread the beaten track. The question R. has raised is a vast one, and in answering it, it is only possible to touch the fringe of the subject; but if it be followed out carefully in the light of theosophic teaching, I am convinced

that the "modern woman problem" will be seen to be no problem at all, but one of the sign-posts that mark the roadway of human evolution towards the Divine.

A. W.—Theosophic teachings appear to throw light down to the very foundation of the modern "woman problem," based as that problem would seem to be upon a misapprehension of the relative values of the physical bodies of men and women.

As instruments by which the ego contacts material life to learn its lessons, now in the body of a man for successive lives, again in that of a woman, it would be hard to say which form was most effective; each seems to give peculiar opportunities for the growth of the soul in diverse virtues. Men and women save time in evolution if they recognise this; and that they are at their best when each is content with the work of learning perfectly his own lesson.

We can see that, at certain early stages in the progress of races, the subtle and refining lessons that a woman's body makes it easier for the ego using it to master, would be just those that would detract from her seeming value as a member of a rough and fighting community, and so the *Gītā*, taking social life as it existed at the time, is most careful to show that the outer form counts not at all when the soul inside it "takes refuge" with the Supreme.

As a race evolves, the position of women improves, and according to the degree in which they recognise their responsibilities as refiners, in the highest sense, will the men of the period acknowledge them as helpers, or as hinderers in the great upward climb which all, whether consciously or no, have begun.

Men and women, working each at the lessons of their own class in the school of life, afford mutual help just in so far as each is faithful to the highest he knows; and each new woman problem as it arises is solved by the light of the accumulated wisdom stored.

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QUESTION 127.

K. H. H.—*Would Theosophy assert positively, of any highly-evolved individual, that re-incarnation elsewhere than on this earth, is impossible?*

E. L.—Certainly not. Very little indeed is known of such intricate questions. We have been told that humanity does pass from one globe to another in its long evolution, in other words, re-incarnates, as an individual entity on a smaller scale incarnates in many different race bodies during his evolution. It seems quite within the bounds of possibility and probability that a highly evolved individual might pass from this earth to another globe, if he had learnt all this one could teach him. But it appears equally possible that he might choose to remain with his humanity in order to help forward its slower evolution.

A. B. C.—Theosophy—or, as I would prefer to

express it, well-informed Theosophists—would be wisely chary of making positive assertions on such a point as this. In the first place, such an assertion would be equivalent to a claim of omniscience, which surely no Theosophist would ever be foolish enough to make. In the second place, even a qualified answer would depend on the connotation of the expression “highly-evolved.”

The generally accepted view appears to be that, in the normal course of evolution, reincarnation continues upon this planet until the cyclic period arrives for the whole of the human life-wave to commence its drift towards the next planet on our own evolutionary chain. Mercury we have been informed is this next planet. But in the case of some very highly-evolved individuals, who have transcended the normal evolutionary path, there may be a choice as to the special direction in which their energies shall manifest in the future, and such choice might conceivably involve embodiment in vehicles of manifestation other than those common to this particular globe, in this particular stage of its development. Such possibilities, however, are said to be far beyond the range of all but a very, very few as yet, so that the “highly-evolved,” in this case, would mean an adept of a very, very high grade.

G. R. S. M.—I should say that the assertion of the impossibility of anything concerning the soul of man would be highly unphilosophical and unscientific and therefore untheosophical. As far as I understand the matter, just as there are all kinds of exceptions to the average period of time between rebirths, so there are all kinds of exceptions to normal rebirth on *this* earth; that is to say that there are possibilities of rebirth on other “globes” of our “planetary chain” in the case of people not “highly developed,” and, in the case of those very highly developed, into other spheres of activity beyond our “chain.” So far, however, I am not acquainted with any advocate in our ranks of an incarnation of a normal person of our humanity on another planet, in the sense in which this is usually understood.

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QUESTION 128.

X. Y.—*I have heard that spiritualists have what they term twin souls, which they believe appear on earth as two different persons, and finally, after passing through various other stages on other planes, become one complete being. Others speak of something similar under the name of companion souls, or counterparts. There must be some fundamental truth underlying all these ideas; what is this truth?*

G. R. S. M.—Long, long before “spiritualists” were heard of or Lake Harris’ “sympneumata” theory was popularised by the genius of Laurence Oliphant, the mystic Greeks of the Orphic tradition had some theory that the original male-female soul, as a punishment for its daring, had been divided by God, and now each part went

about in the cycle of necessity seeking for its fellow. This theory, when worked out on the lines of the Gnostic Sophia-mythus and applied to spiritual things, explains in admirable fashion the passion of the individual soul, its salvation, and much else, but when taken in its grossest form and applied to the mystery of sex, it simply exalts that impermanency from the rank of the Lesser to that of the Greater Mysteries, and so degrades the “Divine Marriage” to a psychic debauch of the most insidious nature.

A. W.—The beautiful allegory of the twin souls is found under many forms in much of the best literature of the world. Most of us are familiar with its presentation in the writings of Plato and in the *Upanishads*.

We are all more or less conscious of the duality of the contending interests of the Higher and the Lower Self, of the individuality and of the personality. In some high moment of aspiration—perhaps in an initiation in one of the olden mysteries—the spark from the Divine, shut off in the darkness of a body and chained down by that body’s personal karma, has yet beheld its glorious twin, the radiant Augoeides, and knows of a certainty that the two are one. Once seen and known, this can never be completely forgotten, though the connecting consciousness may not yet be sufficiently built up for an intelligent appreciation of what has been perceived to be possible; and that soul wanders hereafter seeking in its prison house of flesh that glorious mate, never content until after ages of upward striving and purification it is united to the object of its devotion and the two are again one.

E. L.—The theory of twin souls has its roots in antiquity, and we find its origin accounted for in the Greek mythology, where a story is told of the androgyne race of men, who became presumptuous and determined to scale heaven and invade the realms of the gods, who thereupon held a council with regard to the best means of punishing such arrogance. One of the divinities advised extermination, but it was argued that thus the votive offerings would cease, and finally the rebellious mortals had their bodies cut in halves. Since that day, the legend runs, one part seeks the other and wanders, seeking till it finds and re-unites. The spiritualist idea seems to be a modern version of this. There is a fundamental truth underlying all these ideas, and it is that the present division into sex seems to be a temporary stage in evolution, that it was preceded by an androgyne, or sexless period, and may be, in far ages to come, followed by a similar period, but with the additional experience of all these vast intermediate periods crowning it. Duality, in whatever sense, is imperfection. Unity is the bedrock of things.

A. L. B. H.—The question of “twin-souls,” of the “Sympneuma,” or “inseverable other-self,” touches upon a subject which has received more unintelligible explanations than most.

The truth underlying the flood of these strange

theories is probably deeply hidden in psychology, and partly suggested in the facts concerning the dual nature of the mind of man—that in every ego there exists that strange indissoluble partnership of Subject and Person, described at great length by Carl du Prel in his *Philosophy of Mysticism*. This bi-unity is also described as that of the conscious and the sub-conscious mind; it is the day-man and the night-man of Leibnitz, the self and the not-self that makes for righteousness, of Matthew Arnold. The Subject or sub-conscious mind is the deeper of the two selves, the home of the Will and the perfect memory; but it is incapable of inductive reasoning, it can only make itself felt as an imperious autocrat, it cannot argue, and can never be fully expressed or made evident on the physical plane.

Therefore it is easy to see how in the case of a medium, this other-self would appear as a distinct personality, for a medium dramatises unconsciously, and, being generally an uneducated member of humanity, he would be utterly ignorant of his psychical anatomy, if one may so put it. He would be unversed in self-analysis, in philosophical terms, and he would *picture* this department of his own mind to himself as his guardian-spirit, or his soul-love, or if he were so inclined would give it the opposite sex and it would become, as it often is, the spirit-bride, and so forth.

But there is no authority worthy the name for the idea that the ego has sex, and therefore each soul is looking about through all infinity for its complementary soul.

The true complement is to be found in our own "buried Self," with its undying will and powers, and its god-like possibilities.

This it is which is, in a most literal sense, our better-half.

And

We shall one day gain, life past,  
Clear prospect o'er our being's whole;  
Shall see ourselves, and learn at last  
Our true affinities of soul.

#### QUESTION 129.

*A. H.*—If sensation is a property of the astral body, how is it that pain is felt at the actual place of injury in the physical body; and how does it come about that disagreeable sights or sounds frequently cause discomfort or sickness in the body, and that even the recollection or hearing of similar scenes sometimes does the like?

*M. P.*—Pain is not "felt at the actual place of injury." The assumption that it is so is sufficiently correct for the ordinary person, but it is by no means strictly accurate. We do not feel with our bodies, or see with our eyes, or taste with our mouths. All these sensations of physical pain and pleasure are due to disturbances set up in the grey matter of the brain, suggestions brought to it from without by the delicate white nerve threads, somewhat as messages are sent along telegraph wires to a central office. A person

whose foot has been amputated senses pain in the toes whenever the terminals of those nerves are irritated which, before the operation, were accustomed to carry the sensation of pain up to, and from, certain centres in the grey matter. Similarly, when disease paralyses the nerve threads, no messages can be transmitted, and the limbs below the lesion may be cut or burnt with no feeling of pain.

To demonstrate fully how mental states are correlated with physical facts would require more space than can be allotted to a single answer, but the following may, perhaps, help to clear the difficulty.

The union betwixt mind, which is not physical matter, and body, which is physical matter, takes place ultimately in the mass of nervous substance called the brain; the astral body acting as a bridge, or connecting link. What happens when "discomfort or sickness" follows upon some train of recollection? It is obvious that here we have a revival of some past sensation, and this is a mental remembrance of a physical disturbance. Sensations which are memorised are stored up, packed away in the brain by means of connections between innumerable centres in the grey matter. Counted by the microscope it has been demonstrated that for every single fact thus memorised the brain has, probably, some hundreds of connections which become store-houses of past impressions, and when vibrations of sight, or smell, or what not, are passed to the brain, which are synchronous with some long ago stored-away sensations, there is immediate response. A centre which holds a group of sensations—say of fear or sickness—in latency is thus roused into action along the lines of repetition. When a shock of any kind interferes with digestion we have the effects of, as Bain puts it, "a two-sided phenomenon." First, the shock as an abstract mental emotion; second, the shock expressing itself in an excited condition of the brain and nervous system; but we cannot sever one from the other, for mind has not, on the physical plane, the option of working by itself apart from the brain in which it functions. The mind and the body act and react one upon the other; hence mental conditions that give rise to emotional disturbances are, by a direct line of causation, translated by the nerves into irritability of organs most easily affected, to wit, the viscera connected with the digestive system.

Although the connection between mind and brain is of the most intimate nature, although thought expresses itself by brain vibration, still mind—the creator of thought—is not of the brain substance.

If mind does exist it must exist somewhere, and, in our teaching, it is localised, as an independent entity, on the mental plane, the astral body acting as the connecting centre between the mental and physical sheaths.

Mind alone can translate *impressions* into *states* of pleasure or of pain, and it does so by way of the astral centres which pass forward vibrating impacts, received from the sensory nerves, to the

mind, receiving them back, and transmitting them to the motor nerves as sensations of pain or pleasure, as the case may be.

E. L.—We are told by physiologists that pain is not felt at the actual point of contact in the physical body, but that the sensation exists in the brain, telegraphed, as it were, instantaneously along certain nerves or lines of transmission. The astral body has its correspondences in the physical—*correspondences*, not identities. The centres of the organs of sensation are astral, that is, you get the physical organ and the inner or astral centre working, the connection being formed by vibration, a continuous track of vibrations, one set succeeding the other, and stirred into activity at the junctions or meeting-points.

I should think, although I do not remember any definite information on the subject, that through the physical organs of sight and sound, and of course smell also, a link is formed between the object of perception and the astral centres of the perceiver, and vibration is thus set up, harmonious or discordant, which affects the physical body, particularly if it be very sensitive.

The phenomenon of memory has not, so far as I am aware, been much investigated along Theosophic lines, but I should say that the fact of such vibrations having been once set up in a person, the power of *reproducing* them, by imagination alone, or by aid of outer stimulus, exists, the vibration become latent is revived, affects the physical surroundings, and causes nausea if discordant, pleasure if harmonious.

A. W.—Perhaps the following way of putting it may throw light upon the difficulty.

It would seem that just as sensation results, as we are told, from the vibrations of the matter of the astral body, so the cogitating and correlating faculty comes into play with the working of finer matter still, that of the mind, or mental body. If the message that a physical finger had been hurt were passed on by the nerve currents through the physical etheric centres to those of the astral and went no further, the pain would not be located; but, at the most, a general feeling of discomfort would result. It requires that the message be passed on to the subtle matter of the mind before the ego turns his attention to it, recognises the pain in the finger and telegraphs the message back through the astral to the delicate matter of the physical brain. We are aware how an "absent-minded" person will become suddenly conscious of an injury. It was perhaps inflicted some time before and the astral body had sensed it, but as the mind-body had not been moved, the pain had not been felt and localised.

The constant passage to and fro between the physical and the mental produces automatic

action in the sets of nerves; *i.e.*, the attention of the mind required to trace a sensation and to initiate a response is reduced to a minimum; and the message received by the mind is not always examined before replying to see whether it originates in a sickness itself, or arises from a thought form of sickness caught and sent on by the brain.

A. H. W.—Pain is really felt in the brain, not at the place of injury. It is projected by the mind to the point from which the nerve is in the habit of conveying impressions. When we hit our "funny bone" we really pinch the nerve of the inner side of the arm against the bone of the elbow, but the pain is referred to the fore-arm and little finger. In the same way pain is often felt in an amputated limb, and patients will minutely describe the fingers or toes affected. But what really happens is that the nerve end in the stump is implicated in the contracting scar, and is being pressed upon. When the nerve end is freed from its bonds the pain ceases.

Disagreeable sights and sounds cause a violent vibration in the unbalanced astral body; this vibration is harmonically reproduced in the etheric double, and thence carried to the sympathetic nervous system. The molecular disturbance produced here causes the symptoms described. Even the recollection or hearing of such scenes is sufficient, in highly emotional people, to act in the same way. In exceptional cases, the writer understands, such symptoms may occur in persons of balanced mind, and are then due to a profound impression on the ego made in a former incarnation. These disabilities can only be conquered by training—by forcing the personality to contemplate such scenes, till it can endure them unmoved. So long as there remains one single crisis in the great creation which causes the soul to shrink, the personality is so far unable to help to lift the heavy karma of the world.

"When frightened by the hot tears of pain, when deafened by the cries of distress, thy soul withdraws like the shy turtle beneath the carapace of self-hood, learn, O disciple, of her silent God thy soul is an unworthy shrine."

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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, 3, Langham Place, W. No back numbers can be supplied.

*All communications for "Activities" 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 all members paying full annual subscription (5s.). 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.—ARTHUR A. WELLS, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. A communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 28, Albemarle Street London, W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

VOL. X.

LONDON, JULY 1, 1901.

NO. 12.

Edited by ARTHUR A. WELLS.

### 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 evening, July 12th.

The meetings at the Small Queen's Hall on Saturday and Sunday evenings, July 13th and 14th, 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 do what they can to fill the Hall, the success of the meetings will be increased.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary.*

### LETTER FROM THE DUTCH SECTION.

AMSTERDAM.  
*June 17th, 1901.*

DR. ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary,  
European Section.*

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,

In our Fifth Annual Convention held at Amsterdam, on the 16th inst., it was unanimously resolved to send hearty greetings and most cordial good wishes to our English brothers and sisters, and to wish them at the forthcoming Convention of the European Section success and prosperity.

It is my very pleasant duty to communicate to you that Mme. E. Windust has been chosen as

the representative of our Section at your next Convention in July.

I remain,

Dear sir and brother,

With most cordial feelings of goodwill,  
Yours truly,

W. B. FRICKE,  
*General Secretary, Dutch Section.*

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Closing of the Rooms at Headquarters.

Members are notified that the rooms at 28, Albemarle Street, will be closed during the month of August. The office, however, will remain open for the necessary business.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary.*

#### Branch Dissolved.

At a meeting of the Zürich Branch, held on May 10th, it was resolved to dissolve the Branch. The Charter of the Branch was duly returned.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary.*

#### New Branch.

May 28th, 1901. Charter issued this day to D. N. Dunlop, R. A. Vennor Morris, A. P. Cattanaich, Miss S. O. Nilsson, James Stirling, Mrs. Vennor Morris, and F. R. King, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society in London, to be known as the Battersea Branch.

ARTHUR A. WELLS,  
*General Secretary.*

## Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received to June 20th: J. L. T., 5s.; H. and K. D., 5s.; Anon., 10s.; A. B., £10; A. F., 10s.; L. S. J., 10s. 6d.; A. McM., 5s.; T. J., £2 2s.; O. H., 3s.; A. H., 5s.; S. G., £3 3s.; A. H., £2; A. F. S., £1; H. E. and Mrs. N., £5; P. T., £2 2s.; M. G., 15s.; G. G., 15s.; R. W. N., £4 5s. Total, £33 15s. 6d.

## Blavatsky Lodge.

On May 23rd, Mr. Mead gave the first of a valuable course of lectures on Gospel Criticism.

On May 30th, Miss Cust was announced as the lecturer, but owing to illness was unable to fulfil her promise; her place was therefore kindly taken by Mr. Keightley, Miss Cust's lecture being postponed till July 18th. Mr. Keightley's lecture was not only entertaining but also profoundly interesting; he was unable to conclude it on May 30th, and will therefore give a second lecture on the same subject on July 4th. Mrs. Hooper has retired in Mr. Keightley's favour, and her lecture will be given at a later date.

On June 6th, Mr. A. H. Ward spoke; his subject was "The Way." The lecturer strove to elucidate the meaning of *Light on the Path*, by means of the careful and painstaking study of consciousness worked out in a diagram which has already appeared in the *Theosophical Review*. On June 13th, Mr. Mead delivered the second lecture of his series of three, on Gospel Criticism; the Lodge was well attended, and a most instructive and interesting lecture was followed by the members with great attention. The Lodge will close on the last Thursday in July, till the first Thursday in October.

S. M. S.

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## Lotus Circle.

The children meet at 2.30 p.m. on Sundays at 28, Albemarle Street, W.

A. J. W.

## Lecture List.

BATH LODGE. Meetings at 15, Alfred Street, on Mondays, at 8 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM LODGE. Meetings at Cobden Hotel, Room No. 5, on Sundays, at 6.30 p.m.: July 7th, C. Burton; July 14th, Members' evening; July 21st, J. H. Duffell; July 28th, J. H. Ross. Elementary class for study on Tuesday evenings at 7.30 in County Chamber. For information apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. M. Chaplin, Cobden Hotel.

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

BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE. Meetings in the Theosophical Room, North Parade, on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., for the study of *The Growth of the Soul*.

BRIGHTON LODGE. Meetings on Sundays at 3.30 p.m., and on alternate Mondays at 8 p.m., 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 5, Beaconsfield Road, Clifton, on alternate Tuesdays, at 7 p.m. Classes on alternate Sundays at 3 p.m., for the study of *The Key to Theosophy*.

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. J. Lorimer Thomson, Roseburn House, Roseburn.

EXETER LODGE. Meetings at 48, High Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

FLORENCE LODGE. Meetings at Via Venezia, 8, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, at 3 p.m.

GLASGOW LODGE. Meetings at 28, Glassford Street, on the fourth Tuesday in each month at 8 p.m.

HAMBURG LODGE. Meetings for members only at 12, Wartenau, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Public meetings at the Hotel zur Krone once a month. Enquiries may be addressed to B. Hubo, 12, Wartenau.

HARROGATE LODGE. Public meetings at the Swedish Gymnasium, Grand Opera House Buildings, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: July 7th, *The Sun and His Seven Sons*, Miss Shaw; July 14th, *Fellowship Unbroken*, Baker Hudson; July 21st, *The Holy War*, Hodgson Smith; July 28th, *Mysticism in Great Composers*, H. E. Nichol. Lodge meetings on Fridays at 7.30 p.m., in the Lodge Room, 67, Station Parade, for the study of *The Christian Creed*.

HULL CENTRE. Meetings suspended until September.

LEEDS LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarian Restaurant, Boar Lane, on Mondays, at 8 p.m. Enquiries to be addressed to Mr. W. H. Bean, 41, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds.

LEIPSIK CENTRE. Meetings at the "Freia" Vegetarian Restaurant, 8, Nürnbergerstrasse, on the first and third Saturdays of each month, at 8.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE. Meetings on Wednesdays, at 7.45 p.m., at 18, Colquitt Street. For information apply to the Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE. Meetings are held on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m., at 53, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

LONDON, BATTERSEA LODGE. Meeting on Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m., at the Central Free Library, Lavender Hill, S.W., except on July 3rd, when meeting will be held at Stanley's Restaurant, Lavender Hill; Secretary, R. A. Vennor Morris, 28, Gartmoor Gardens, Wimbledon Park, S.W.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 28, Albemarle Street, W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m. (open to all members of the Society): July 4th, *Guru Nanak and his Successors*, II., B. Keightley; July 11th, *Gospel Criticism*, III.—*A Wider View*, G. R. S. Mead; July 18th, *Dante's Divine Comedy*, Miss Cust. The Lodge will close on the last Thursday in July and during August and September.

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

LONDON, CROYDON LODGE. Meetings at "West View," 12, Oakfield Road, West Croydon, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.: July 2nd, *Action and Reaction*, R. King; July 9th, 7×7, G. Dyne; July 16th, *God, Man and the Devil*, Miss Shaw; July 23rd, *What is the true Function of Criticism?* Miss E. Mallet; July 30th, *The Search for Truth*, S. F. Weguelin-Smith. Students' Class on alternate Thursdays. Hon. Sec., F. Horne, 27, Keen's Road, Croydon.

LONDON, HAMPESTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays, at 8 p.m.: July 1st, Business Meeting; July 8th, *Clairvoyance*, R. King; July 15th, *Craniology and Theosophy*, G. W. Stone; July 22nd, *Green Leaves*, Mrs. Leo; July 29th, *Conversazione*. Class for study on Mondays at 7 p.m.

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 13, Tyndale Place, Upper Street, N., on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m., at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, W. After July 5th the meetings will be discontinued till September.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings on Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., in Room 62, York Chambers, 27, Brazenose Street. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 68, Linthorpe Road, on Thursdays, at 8.15 p.m., for study of *Man and His Bodies*.

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

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings on Fridays, at 8 p.m., at the Oddfellows' Hall, Morley Street, and on Wednesdays (students' class) at 8 p.m., at Dr. Mariette's, Ford Park House, Mutley.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 72, Via S. Niccolo da Tolentino, on Mondays, at 6.15 p.m. Class

conducted by Signor D. Calvari on Fridays at 6.15 p.m. for study of *Dharma*. *Conversazione* on Wednesdays at 6.15 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Bainbridge Buildings, New Surrey Street, on Wednesdays, at 7.30 p.m., and on Saturdays from 3 to 5 p.m.

## ENQUIRER.

### QUESTION 130.

K. H. II.—*If it is to be inferred (see Sinnett's Growth of the Soul) that there is no growth during spiritual periods for the ego—but only assimilation of past experiences—why does Theosophy encourage missionary effort during the night—or day—in those who can transfer their consciousness, while still living, on to the "invisible" planes? If spirits can't be helped, what is the use of trying?*

A. B. C.—I have never gathered from the *Growth of the Soul*, or anywhere else, "that there is no growth during spiritual periods for the ego," on the contrary I have understood that the whole assimilative process is growth. One does not imagine that a boy is only growing when he is actually eating his meals, quite the reverse—we understand that he is merely taking in the supply of matter which is to enable him to grow continuously. Surely it is the same with the long life of the ego. Neither the time spent on the astral plane nor on the devachanic plane stands for stagnation. It would indeed be curious if the enormously long (relatively) periods between physical lives should be practically unused and only the short physical plane life be of any evolutionary utility. As a matter of fact the trend of theosophical teaching is quite opposed to this idea, which would be much more in harmony with the mistaken views of the old orthodoxy.

The latter part of K. H. H.'s question makes it necessary to distinguish between "spiritual periods" and astral plane conditions. We do not usually refer to the latter as "spiritual," and it is chiefly work on that—*non-spiritual*—plane that might be referred to as "missionary effort" on the part of people able to function in their astral vehicles. All the reports of those competent to investigate tend to show that it is possible very considerably to help and teach those individuals who have merely cast off their physical bodies and are in full consciousness in their astral vehicles—the same people in every respect except the physical body. An immense amount of good may be done by explaining the conditions of their new surroundings to such people, and telling them in what way they may best utilise their experiences on the astral plane, and prepare for the fuller growth of Devachan. And here, in the heaven-world, we have been told, it is still possible to be taught and helped, but that work would fall to the lot of more evolved people than the helpers of the astral plane. Obviously the amount of such

help and teaching must depend on the assimilative capacity of the individual who is to be taught, and that of course depends on his stage of evolution—in other words—the use he has made of the *whole* of his past opportunities, physical, astral and mental. To use a very homely simile—you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, either on earth or in heaven, but if the right *stuff* is there a good deal can be done towards fashioning it.

E. L.—Lately we have been distinctly told that there *is* growth during spiritual periods for the ego—and what is growth but assimilation of past experiences? We have also been told that people out of the body can be very much aided by those who know how to help. I have heard it said that in the earlier investigations this fact of growth-progress in Devachan was not recognised.

And in any case it seems to me that if our help is sought, or if we see help is needed, that is sufficient law for us at present, and all we can do is to help to the best of our ability, sure that, as we have been repeatedly told, nothing is wasted, and remembering that evolution has been defined as the “ever becoming,” which statement does not contain any hint of a standstill. (See *Secret Doctrine*, i., pp. 582-622, and ii., pp. 466-575.)

With regard to Mr. Sinnett's statements the following passages do not to my mind negative the idea of progress, but rather affirm it:

“ . . . No *fresh* causes are being set in motion, but those which are already established as force within the consciousness are thus blossoming out into the maturity of effect.”—*Growth of the Soul*, p. 244.

Again we read: “While the soul's growth during its normal stages of progress is only accomplished very slowly during physical existence; so also, though enormously more hastened, the capacity of the occult disciple winning access to devachanic levels must be thought of as developing by degrees.”—P. 248 *idem*.

E. A. B.—A mistaken impression that no growth is possible during life in the heaven-world (Devachan) may have arisen from some expressions dealing only with one side of a great subject. In that life, no doubt, such “missionary effort” as K. H. H. speaks of would have no place; there could be no need of it in that state, which is described as one of perfect bliss, where no trouble, no disturbing element, can enter. But, surely, “assimilation” in itself implies growth; and the soul there, as everywhere, is open to influences from higher beings. With regard to the intermediate state—the astral world, or Kāmaloka—the case is very different; there, a person is as he was here (minus the physical body); he takes his ignorance with him, and there is no sudden change to knowledge and wisdom; on the contrary, there is often great trouble and perplexity from not understanding his surroundings in the new life, so that there is ample scope for the efforts of “those who can transfer their consciousness to the invisible planes,” and bring their knowledge to

his help—and this is *one* part of their work. All this, and far more bearing on the subject, has been explained in the writings of Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater.

K. B.—The efforts to influence those on super-physical planes encouraged by Theosophic teaching have several objects in view and are not confined, as “missionary” efforts generally are, to the conversion of those helped. Neither are the “spirits” necessarily disembodied and entering on their period of rest and assimilation, as K. H. H. seems to suppose.

Much is no doubt done by more advanced disciples among entities bewildered and terrified by the unexpectedly natural conditions in which they find themselves immediately after their physical death. It is possible to smooth and shorten their path through the intervening “purgatorial” Kāmaloka by suggestions as to the best manner of freeing themselves from the bonds which still attach them to earth.

But a much larger field of activity is among those who, like ourselves, are only temporarily freed from their bodies during sleep, and with whom one can come in touch during the precious night hours untrammelled by the illusions of time, space and opportunity. Enormous is the help which even a slightly advanced student may give if he truly and unselfishly loves his fellow man. He can soothe him in trouble, advise him in perplexity, and suggest new courses of action, explain intellectual difficulties, or lead him to some more advanced friend who can do so.

All this, and much more, can those do who can transfer their consciousness on to the invisible planes. The harvest is ripe, but the labourers are few.

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#### QUESTION 131.

A. E. M.—*I know that, as a rule, Theosophists advocate cremation, and there is no doubt that it is the cleanest and most unselfish way of disposing of the body when done with; but, on the other hand, is there not a certain danger of too rude disruption between the physical and etheric bodies, unless a certain time is allowed to elapse after death?*

E. A. B.—The disruption between the physical and etheric bodies takes place at death, and is complete and final, no consciousness remaining in either body. As the disintegration of the etheric body appears to depend on that of the physical and to coincide with it in time, the swifter and purer method of cremation seems as regards both bodies to be more desirable than the ordinary slow process of decay.

E. L.—Bodies are usually left in the stillness of the death chamber for some days before being removed for cremation or interment. This, I take it, would allow enough time for the separation A. E. M. speaks of to take place gradually. It seems to me that the chief difficulty the liberated

entity has to contend with is the violent emotional disturbance which is as a rule set up around him, keeping him more or less—according to its intensity—in the neighbourhood of his old vehicle. For those who know, and so can perform them, there are certain rites and ceremonies which very materially aid in the gentle and gradual severance of the different bodies. It seems to me that A. E. M.'s very natural and thoughtful inference might be answered by saying that, in the present imperfect state of things, in this matter as in all others we have to weigh the advantages against the disadvantages, and that, following the light we have been given, the former appear to predominate, inasmuch as the person is more quickly freed from what is no longer of any use to him, and the danger involved to the community is lessened by the burning of a corpse, also the various elements of that body are restored more swiftly to their habitats in nature.

With regard to the "rude disruption" anticipated, the attitude of the mourners would do much to soften it, just as the shocks which we pass through in life are considerably tempered by the unselfish strength and love of those around us.

For further information the questioner is referred to *Death and After* (revised edition), pp. 17-23, and *The Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 110-112.

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QUESTION 132.

E. T.—*In Light on the Path, the socialist and reformer are alike condemned for trying by sheer force to re-arrange circumstances which arise out of the forces of human nature itself. The book goes on to say that the disciple recognises that the very thought of individual rights is only the outcome of the snake of self, etc. Surely the material side of life needs its teachers as well as the mental, ethical, spiritual, etc. If this be granted, are socialists and reformers kicking against the pricks? Further, must not a disciple of necessity be a socialist, to avoid the thought of individual rights and the snake of self?*

A. P. S.—I fail to realise what passage in *Light on the Path* is interpreted as condemning the socialist or the reformer, but no doubt somewhere in Theosophical writings E. T. will find arguments that may seem to belittle the value of ordinary physical plane philanthropy, in which case I should regard such writing as entirely misleading. Multitudes around us require all the physical plane help we can any of us give. Both givers and recipients will be the better if the help is given. But Socialism (itself liable to many divergent definitions) is only a scheme of physical plane organisation and may be a good or a bad scheme. That is a matter of opinion. So with any other reform. Meanwhile one broad idea that takes firm root in the mind when the true course of human evolution is comprehended, tells rather against what is commonly called Socialism, by emphasising the enormous natural inequality prevailing amongst men. Earlier conceptions of human

origins, resting on the notion that a new soul was created at every birth, made the inequalities of life seem hideously unjust and drove sympathetic observers to work for changes that should conduce to equality. We see now that such activity must be futile. In a human family some members of which were human in the last manvantara, while others have only this time emerged from the animal kingdom, the inequalities of station and social influence but faintly represent the actual inequalities of soul-growth. Many of the doctrines underlying "liberal" political ideas thus become mere amiable delusions for the student of evolution, rebirth, and karma. Representative government itself becomes rather a transitional stage of progress than an ultimate scheme of perfection. It may help to educate egos of the backward order, but its results cannot be admirable in themselves. The bearing of Theosophic thought on political opinion is full of interest, and no one amongst us can do more than show how it colours such opinions for him, but for myself I may avow—in very brief terms suggestive rather than explanatory—that it brings two great political ideas into comparison one with the other—freedom and loyalty—and the greater of these two is loyalty.

M. E. G.—As far as I can judge, E. T.'s difficulty lies in taking the teachings of *Light on the Path* as intended for ordinary men and women living the life of the world, who, however good their intentions or high their aspirations, are still endeavouring to mould the world as they would wish it to be moulded. It seems to me rather that the teachings contained in this book are for "disciples," i.e., for those who have dedicated themselves to a certain work, and in order that that work should be accomplished in them they have voluntarily renounced the personal self. They are no longer units; they are training to fit themselves to be tools only in their Master's hand. The millenium would be already with us were all prepared to follow at once this narrow path; hence now, and for many a long day to come, there will be plenty of room for socialists and reformers and all the many agencies at work to make up the sum total of experience that this humanity must gain before the completed diversity can return into unity. The teachings contained in *Light on the Path* cannot be "accepted" by all, indeed, were not intended for all, but to those who can receive them, they are truly words of Life.

G. R. S. M.—Will E. T. quote the passages to which he refers in *Light on the Path*? In this little treatise there are three deposits, the main text, and a major and a minor commentary, as may be seen from the printing of the recent French translation. When we have the passages before us we can then more easily refer to the treatise the arguments for "duties" as against "rights." Certainly the material side of life needs teachers, and has them. As to whether reformers and socialists are kicking against the pricks, it de-

pends entirely on the nature of their "reforms" and "Socialism." As to the last query, when we have a definition of a "socialist" we can more easily answer the question.

E. L.—In the opening sentences of this book you find a clear statement that the rules are written for *disciples*, therefore presumably the comments following are also addressed to these.

There are few disciples in the real sense of the word, for it should be only applied to an ego of considerable advancement.

Further on you find it said that it is not expected that all who read it will understand the teaching. If, as a fellow student who also finds many difficulties, irreconcilable at present, I may offer E. T. a suggestion or two, I would point out that the sentences of the paragraphs he quotes seem (to me) to refer to one of these more advanced egos, who would regard the world and the actions wrought in it from a far wider standpoint than those who had not attained his level, though he, too, would have learnt his lesson as socialist and reformer, as these are learning it now. The phrasing is certainly, to my mind, a little misleading, for I feel quite sure from any teaching I have had that no experience is "a waste of life and energy," save where we are really capable of seeing more clearly, and let ourselves weakly slip back into old grooves instead. The socialists and reformers are perfectly right and necessary—in their place—in this great and varied scheme of things, but disciples have other work to do, and this would be for them a waste of life and energy. It is for the latter that this book was written. There is however much in it which must be helpful to earnest and devoted people who are studying the inner aspects of life. You see, a few lines back it is admitted that "all alike are learning a lesson." In struggling for our "rights" we gain needed concentration of purpose and strength, but that stage of combat comes to an end, and the next is where we recognise that we have duties rather than rights, as Mrs. Besant has often said. If by a socialist E. T. means a person who makes no individual claims but only advances those of his fellows this would assuredly be a preliminary stage to discipleship, and such a man would be far higher morally than one who was still only working for himself. But I do not think this is the generally accepted meaning, nor the whole meaning, of the term "socialist." For instance, one of the socialistic ideals is equality, and the disciple knows that all men cannot possibly be equal, nor would remain so if by some magic they could all be suddenly placed in the same circumstances. He would admit that in each ego the same great possibilities were latent, if not at present evolved. In that sense we can all claim a fundamental equality. Socialism of the nobler order sees, so to speak, half a truth, and it is the fact that it has glimpsed a truth that gives it an interest, a force, and an attraction for so many. Draw this truth up to a wider clearer level, and

combine the wisdom of the disciple with it, and you have the reformer who not only loves and aspires, but who understands and recognises that a good many reforms are not as useful as they are thought to be, also that men themselves must change ere their circumstances can be radically changed. Theosophists, it cannot be too often urged, have a duty to the world somewhat different to that of outer reformers. That duty is to fit themselves and others to see the inner essence of things and to evolve that, not devote all their energy to outside "good works."

A. A. W.—Our querist quotes incorrectly; the passage to which he refers is not in *Light on the Path*, but in the fourth chapter of M. C.'s Commentary, which is quite another thing. Valuable as those Comments are, we are in no way bound to agree with or to find an explanation of everything they contain; and in this case I do not hesitate to characterise this as a hasty and careless expression. I myself do not know of any socialist who "endeavours by sheer force to re-arrange the circumstances which arise out of the forces of human nature itself." A hundred years ago, or less, such dreamers were to be found; but the Socialism of the present day limits itself to the endeavour to re-arrange circumstances which (in our view) are contrary to those forces, and prevent their free action.

But there are two ways of arriving at Socialism, and the distinction which M. C. really has in her mind in this passage is as important now as ever. You may come to it as an assertion of the Rights of Man, or as a definition of the Duty of Society. The more noisy preachers of Socialism take it from the former side, as the extreme point of what is usually known as Radicalism. This draws with it the whole of what M. C. condemns. Each individual of the lower classes has a "right" to be fed and clothed and lodged—a "right" to have his children taught free—a "right" to spend his earnings in getting drunk if he pleases, and so forth; whilst for the higher classes we have the "right" to make money without scruple out of the weakness and foolishness of others, and the "right" to squander the living of thousands of their fellow-men in riotous living or capricious founding of colleges and the like to their own honour and glory. These "rights" must be fought for, for you cannot expect those who suffer from them tamely to acquiesce; and every re-arrangement of Society founded upon *this* view, though dignified with the title of Socialism, must be in fact a system imposed by force—*brute* force in the fullest sense of the term, for every nobler instinct of humanity will rebel against it.

But the thoughtful and intelligent socialists—those in whose brains lie the seeds of the actual future—take it from the other side, the side which appeals to the Theosophist. To them, as to us, the idea of individual "rights" is an anachronism, a "survival" of an outworn system. It is the fault of the organisation of society if a man has occasion to think of his "rights" at all. It is

Society's business that everything should be arranged that he should be free to develop his Higher Ego—to become as much wiser and nobler as it lies in him to be; everything else is simply means to this end. This is Society's duty to the individual—this, and nothing less; and when this is done, all is done. It involves constant interference with the lower desires of the individual, for the benefit of his own and others' higher soul; and it is not possible unless by such an arrangement as shall satisfy everyone of ordinary intelligence that the government, whatever it may be, has the wisdom to know, better than he does, how to carry this intention into effect. The first is a system of mutual hatred—everyone defending his rights against everyone else; the second is arranged for the express purpose of developing mutual love, and must die if it fails of its object.

To the extent of this broad general statement, I think all Theosophists are socialists; but in trying to work out any system there must be room for endless differences of opinion. The reason why I myself should hesitate to say that even a "disciple" (and you must remember that this class is a strictly limited one) must "of necessity be a socialist," as E. T. says, is a very simple one. Up to the present time, human development has proceeded on individualist lines. Progress has been made, so far, solely by emphasising individuality, and the time when society in general can move forwards purely by losing the individual in the common life is certainly not come at present. A premature Socialism would be a disastrous failure, even more disastrous than to continue for some time longer as we are. It is, so far, perfectly open to everyone to judge either that the time has not yet come, or that it is much nearer than more timid souls can believe; but in either case he must learn to bear patiently with those who are, as yet, forced by their retarded development to learn by degrees the unselfish love, through the lower struggle for the "meat that perisheth." Whether any modification of the present "struggle for life" short of Socialism can be of any permanent benefit is a question on which much will be said, and countless experiments tried for a long while to come; but it seems to me hardly possible that a disciple should not find his best hope and comfort in the vision of a future when mankind shall no longer need the harsh lessons of competitive struggle, but shall be fit and worthy to "live as the angels."

QUESTION 133.

T. G. A.—*The term cosmic consciousness is used by Edward Carpenter to describe the super-normal faculties of the Gnâni whom he visited, and I have also heard it applied to the form of extended consciousness which Walt Whitman must have possessed, and which, judging from passages in his poems, was similar in character to that of the Hindu mystic.*

*Can you define this consciousness in theosophical terms?*

A. L. B. H.—The term "cosmic consciousness" must in any case mean a consciousness co-

extensive with that of the cosmos—that is, the universe; and the possessor of it would be in perfected union with the Divine Being from whom the universe proceeds, called in modern theosophical books the Logos.

But whether the Gnâni visited by Edward Carpenter was one of those privileged beings who have attained to conscious and continued union, and whether Walt Whitman is at all worthy to be compared to them, are questions of conjecture for the ordinary person. A man can only be judged by his peers.

In the poet there would most probably be deeply implanted that "irrepressible yearning of the inner man to go out towards the Infinite," a phrase used in some manual of occultism to describe the only true beginning of the road to union with the Cosmic Spirit; and for a moment here and there, perhaps great heights might be touched by the aspirant: but without the set purpose and definite discipline of the trained Yogi, it is unlikely that any sustained power deserving of the word cosmic, would be grasped.

E. L.—This question refers to an exceedingly lofty stage of evolution. I certainly do not know how to describe it better than by reference to a statement made recently by Mrs. Besant in one of her lectures on thought-power, in which she described what T. G. A. seems to allude to as being a stage reached from where the individual had only to direct his attention to any object on any plane of the system in order instantly to apprehend everything with regard to it.

But it would need an immense knowledge to be able to perceive accurately that anyone possessed this power; it would probably mean that you had it yourself also, and of course there must be very many different degrees of it. I have read Whitman, and his writings certainly do seem to give undoubted evidence of a wide range of consciousness, but we have no means of estimating its degree, and can safely assume that we should not be able to use these means at present.

QUESTION 134.

H. B.—*Can anyone throw any light on the "Black Problem" in America (and other countries), and trace the advantage which an Ego may derive from having spent a life as a negro (slave) in America—(Christian America!)?*

E. L.—It is unquestionably possible to derive advantage from any and every life, if advantage be taken as meaning experience, and experience as alone making evolution possible. We incarnate to work out old experience and gain new.

The negroes in America undergo much suffering, and presumably their evolution is much quickened thereby, although one could not defend the terrible cruelty shown towards them. The advantage might well be that some kârmic score is being worked off between these races, and such

scores are better to have behind one than before, for the settling up brings about the possibility of newer and better relations between victim and oppressor, as well as the lesson for the evolving of both, although it may take lives to learn.

A. A. W.—Our querist's difficulty arises from the confusion, still far too common, of *progress* and *happiness*. If you insist on judging the world as a contrivance for making men comfortable, you must needs decide that for that purpose it is a failure. As H. B. rightly intimates, it has *not* made negro slaves in America happy. But why should it? The question is not of their happiness, but of their evolution into something higher and better than negro slaves. From this point of view the answer is obvious. Egos begin from the very lowest point; as savages hardly removed from the beasts they were before their new life as men had commenced. They have to be pushed forwards by the roughest physical stimuli, the only ones of which they are capable. For such an undeveloped ego to find itself in the body of a negro slave is a great advance, and the opportunity of a greater one; it is for the first time brought into communication with persons of a higher development, and started on the way to reach their level. It suffers—naturally; there is no climbing without labour and pain. In this sense, the Path is always one of woe; the negro, whose mind has hardly commenced to stir, feels the stimulus in physical pain. His reward will be that in his next life he will be fit for something better than a negro slave; he will be susceptible of higher motives, sensitive to the more refined, but not unfrequently even more painful, mental longings and sorrows which stir to vigorous effort those who have learned to think and feel. There are but few, if any, of us who are beyond this stage ourselves; the suffering will not cease until our Higher Ego has attained full con-

trol, and can draw us forwards to the Place of Peace, undisturbed by that hanging back of the lower nature which makes pain. In past lives, we ourselves have suffered as the negro slave suffered; had we not, we should not now be beyond that step of our progress, for "Nature never takes two steps at once."

As to the "Black Problem" as a matter of Sociology, that is a question of National Karma. The blacks have no business to be in America at all; they were brought there regardless of their suffering to satisfy the white man's greed. Evolution is not responsible for that. Like Frankenstein, the nation has made its monster, and must deal with it the best way it can; it is not the fault of the Good Law if the difficulties prove to be insurmountable. But I would suggest that the ultimate working out of the whole thing, through all this pain and trouble, would seem to be a distinct advance in the right direction. There is no reason to suppose that in their native Africa the blacks would have attained by this time the level they have done, far behind the white race as they still are, and, by the nature of things, must be. And if this be so, the passing pain and suffering of one short life is not worth a thought; in this case, as in so many others, "the wrath" and cruelty "of man have worked the righteousness of God."

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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, 3, Langham Place, W. No back numbers can be supplied.

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