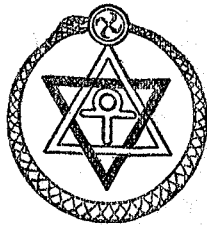


सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।



There is no Religion Higher than Truth

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

[In her *Lucifer* for October 1887 H. P. B. published this article, which was not signed. It deals with three topics, and the sub-headings inserted are our own.—Eds.]

It is intensely interesting to follow season after season the rapid evolution and change of public thought in the direction of the mystical. The educated mind is most undeniably attempting to free itself from the heavy fetters of materialism. The ugly caterpillar is writhing in the agonies of death, under the powerful efforts of the psychic butterfly to escape from its science-built prison, and every day brings some new glad tidings of one or more such mental births to light.

As the New York "Path" truly remarks in its September issue, when "Theosophical and kindred topics . . . are made the texts for novels," and, we may add, scientific essays and *brochures*, "the implication is that interest in them has become diffused through all social ranks." That kind of literature is "paradoxically proof that Occultism has passed beyond the region of careless amusement and entered that of serious enquiry." The reader has but to throw a retrospective glance at the publications of the last few years to find that such topics as Mysticism, Magic, Sorcery, Spiritualism, Theosophy, Mesmerism, or, as it is now called, Hypnotism, all the various branches in short of the *Occult* side of nature, are becoming predominant in every kind of literature. They visibly increase in proportion to the efforts made to discredit the movements in the cause of truth, and strangle enquiry—whether on the field of theosophy or spiritualism—by trying to

besmear their most prominent heralds, pioneers, and defenders, with tar and feathers.

I.—OCCULT FICTION

The key-note for mystic and theosophic literature was Marion Crawford's "Mr. Isaacs." It was followed by his "Zoroaster." Then followed "The Romance of Two Worlds," by Marie Corelli; R. Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde;" "The Fallen Idol," by Anstey; "King Solomon's Mines" and the thrice famous "She," by Rider Haggard; "Affinities" and "The Brother of the Shadow," by Mrs. Campbell Praed; Edmund Downey's "House of Tears," and many others less noticeable. And now there comes a fresh outburst in Florence Marryat's "Daughter of the Tropics," and F. C. Phillips' "Strange Adventures of Lucy Smith." It is unnecessary to mention in detail the literature produced by avowed theosophists and occultists, some of whose works are very remarkable, while others are positively scientific, such as S. L. Macgregor Mathers' "Kabbalah Unveiled," and Dr. F. Hartmann's "Paracelsus," "Magic, White and Black," &c. We have also to note the fact that theosophy has now crossed the Channel, and is making its way into French literature. "La France" publishes a strange romance by Ch. Chincholle, pregnant with theosophy, occultism and mesmerism, and called "*La Grande Pretresse*," while *La*

Revue politique et littéraire (19 Feb. 1887, *et seq.*) contained over the signature of Th. Bentzon, a novel called *Emancipée*, wherein esoteric doctrines and adepts are mentioned in conjunction with the names of well-known theosophists. A sign of the times!

Literature—especially in countries free from government censorship—is the public heart and pulse. Besides the glaring fact that were there no demand there would be no supply, current literature is produced only to please, and is therefore evidently the mirror which faithfully reflects the state of the public mind.

II.—OUR TRADUCERS: THE VALUE OF ATTACKS

True, Conservative editors, and their submissive correspondents and reporters, still go on slashing occasionally in print the fair faces of mystic spiritualism and theosophy, and some of them are still found, from time to time, indulging in a *brutal* personal attack. But they do no harm on the whole, except perhaps to their own editorial reputations, as such editors can never be suspected of an exuberance of culture and good taste after certain ungentlemanly personal attacks. They do good on the contrary. For, while the theosophists and spiritualists so attacked, may view the Billingsgate poured upon them in a true Socratean spirit, and console themselves with the knowledge that none of the epithets used can possibly apply to them, on the other hand, *too much* abuse and vilification generally ends by awakening the public sympathy for the victim, in the right-minded and the impartial, at any rate.

In England people seem to like fair play on the whole. It is not *bashi-boozook*-like actions, the doughty deeds of those who delight in mutilating the slain and the wounded, that can find sympathy for any great length of time with the public. If—as maintained by our lay enemies and repeated by some *naïf* and too sanguine missionary organs—Spiritualism and Theosophy are “dead as a door-nail” (*sic, vide* American Christian periodicals),—aye, “dead and buried,” why, in such case, good Christian fathers, not leave the dead at rest till “Judgment Day”? And if they are not, then editors—the profane as well as the clerical—why should you still fear? Do not show yourselves such cowards if you have the truth on your side. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit*, and “murder will out,” as it always has, sooner or later. Open your columns to *free* and fearless discussion, and do as the theosophical periodicals have ever done, and as *Lucifer* is now preparing to do. The “bright Son of the morning” fears no light. He courts it, and is prepared to publish any inimical contributions (couched, of course, in decent language), however much at vari-

ance with his theosophical views. He is determined to give a fair hearing in any and every case, to both contending parties and allow things and thoughts to be judged on their respective merits. For why, or what should one dread when fact and truth are one's only aim? *Du choc des opinions jaillit la vérité* was said by a French philosopher. If Theosophy and Spiritualism are no better than “gigantic frauds and will-o'-the-wisps of the age” why such *expensive* crusades against both? And if they are not, why should Agnostics and searchers after truth in general, help bigoted and narrow-minded materialists, sectarians and dogmatists to hide our light under a bushel by mere brutal force and usurped authority? It is easy to surprise the good faith of the fair-minded. Still easier to discredit that, which by its intrinsic strangeness, is already unpopular and could hardly be credited in its palmiest days. “We welcome no supposition so eagerly as one which accords with and intensifies our own prejudices” says, in “Don Jesualdo,” a popular author. Therefore, *facts* become often cunningly concocted “frauds”; and self-evident, glaring lies are accepted as gospel truths at the first breeze of Don Basilio's *Calumnia*, by those to whose hard-crusted pre-conceptions such slander is like heavenly dew.

But, beloved enemies, “the light of Lucifer” may, after all, dispel some of the surrounding darkness. The mighty roaring voice of denunciation, so welcome to those whose little spite and hates and mental stagnation in the grasp of the social respectability it panders to, may yet be silenced by the voice of truth—“the still small voice”—whose destiny it ever was to first preach in the desert. That cold and artificial light which still seems to shine so dazzlingly over the alleged iniquities of professional mediums and the supposed sins of commission and omission of *non-professional* experimentalists, of free and independent theosophists, may yet be extinguished at the height of all its glory. For it is not quite the perpetual lamp of the alchemist philosopher. Still less is it that “light which never shone on sea or land,” that ray of divine intuition, the spark which glimmers latent in the spiritual, never-erring perceptions of man and woman, and which is now awakening—for its time is at hand. A few years more, and the Aladdin's lamp, which called forth the ministering genius thereof, who, making three salutes to the public, proceeded forthwith to devour mediums and theosophists, like a juggler who swallows swords at a village fair, will get out of order. Its light, over which the anti-theosophists are crowing victory to this day, shall get dim. And then, perhaps, it will be discovered that what was claimed as a direct ray from the source of eternal truth was no better than a penny rush-light, in whose deceitful smoke and soot people

got hypnotized, and saw everything upside down. It will be found that the hideous monsters of fraud and imposture had no existence outside the murky and dizzied brains of the Aladdins on their journey of discovery. And that, finally, the good people who listened to them, had been all the time seeing sights and hearing things under unconscious and mutual suggestion.

III.—SUGGESTION : SCIENTIFIC SORCERY

This is a scientific explanation, and requires no black magicians or *dugpas* at work ; for "suggestion" as now practised by the sorcerers of science is—*dugpaship* itself, *pur sang*. No Eastern "adept of the left hand" can do more mischief by his infernal art than a grave hypnotiser of the Faculty of Medicine, a disciple of Charcot, or of any other scientific *light* of the first magnitude. In Paris, as in St. Petersburg, crimes have been committed under "suggestion." Divorces have occurred, and husbands have nearly killed their wives and their supposed co-respondents, owing to tricks played on innocent and respectable women, who have thus had their fair name and all their future life blasted for ever. A son, under such influence, broke open the desk of an avaricious father, who caught him in the act, and nearly shot him in a fit of rage. One of the keys of Occultism is in the hands of science—cold, heartless, materialistic, and crassly ignorant of the other truly psychic side of the phenomenon : hence, powerless to draw a line of demarcation between the physiological and the purely spiritual effects of the disease inoculated, and unable to prevent future results and consequences of which it has no knowledge, and over which it has, therefore, no control.

We find in the "Lotus" of September, 1887, the following :—

A French paper, the *Paris*, for August 12th, contains a long and excellent article by G. Montorgueil, entitled, *The Accursed Sciences*, from which we extract the following passage, since we are, unfortunately, unable to quote the whole :—

"Some months ago, already, in I forget what case, the question of 'suggestion' was raised and taken account of by the judges. We shall certainly see people in the dock accused of occult malpractices. But how will the prosecution go to work? What arguments will it bring to bear? The crime by 'suggestion' is the ideal of a crime without proof. In such a case the gravest charges will never be more than presumptions, and fugitive presumptions. On what fragile scaffolding of suspicions will the charge rest? No examination, but a moral one, will be possible. We shall have to resign ourselves to hearing the Solicitor-general say to the accused: 'Accused, it appears from a perquisition made into your brain, etc.'

Ah, the poor jurymen! it is they who are to be pitied. Taking their task to heart, they already have the greatest difficulty in separating the true from the false, even in rough and ready cases, the facts of which are obvious, all the details of which are tangible and the re-

sponsibilities clear. And we are going to ask them on their soul and conscience to decide questions of black magic! Verily their reason will not hold out through the fortnight; it will give way before that and sink into thaumaturgy.

We move fast. The strange trials for sorcery will blossom anew; somnambules who were merely grotesque will appear in a tragic light; the coffee grounds, which so far only risked the police court, will hear their sentence at the assizes. The evil eye will figure among criminal offences. These last years of the XIXth century will have seen us step from progress to progress, till we reach at last this judicial enormity: a second Laubardemont prosecuting another Urbain Grandier."

Serious, scientific, and political papers are full of earnest discussions on the subject. A St. Petersburg "Daily" has a long *feuilleton* on the "Bearing of *Hypnotic Suggestions* upon Criminal Law." "Cases of Hypnotism with criminal motives have of late begun to increase in an ever progressing ratio," it tells its readers. And it is not the only newspaper, nor is Russia the only country where the same tale is told. Careful investigations and researches have been made by distinguished lawyers and medical authorities. Data have been assiduously collected and have revealed that the curious phenomenon,—which sceptics have hitherto derided, and young people have included among their evening *petits jeux innocents*,—is a new and terrible danger to state and society.

Two facts have now become patent to law and science:—

- (I) *That, in the perceptions of the hypnotised subject, the visionary representations called forth by "suggestion," become real existing actualities, the subject being, for the moment, the automatic executor of the will of the hypnotiser; and—*
- (II) *That the great majority of persons experimented upon, is subject to hypnotic suggestion.*

Thus Liébeault found only *sixty* subjects intractable out of the *seven hundred* he experimented upon; and Bernheim, out of 1,014 subjects, failed with only *twenty-six*. The field for the natural-born *Jadoo-wala* (sorcery-mongers), is vast indeed! Evil has acquired a play-ground on which it may now exercise its sway upon many a generation of unconscious victims. For crimes undreamt of in the waking state, and felonies of the blackest dye, are now invited and encouraged by the new "accursed science." The real perpetrators of these deeds of darkness may now remain for ever hidden from vengeance of human justice. The hand which executes the criminal suggestion is only that of an irresponsible automaton, whose memory preserves no trace of it, and who, moreover, is a witness who can easily be disposed of by compulsory suicide—again under "suggestion." What better means than

these could be offered to the fiends of lust and revenge, to those dark Powers—called human passions—ever on the look out to break the universal commandment: "Thou shalt not steal, nor murder, nor lust after thy neighbour's wife?" Liébeault suggested to a young girl that she should poison herself with prussic acid, and she swallowed the supposed drug without one moment's hesitation; Dr. Liégois suggested to a young woman that she owed him 5,000 francs, and the subject forthwith signed a cheque for the amount. Bernheim suggested to another hysterical girl a long and complicated vision with regard to a criminal case. Two days after, although the hypnotiser had not exercised any new pressure upon her in the interim, she repeated distinctly the whole suggested story to a lawyer sent to her for the purpose. Had her evidence been seriously accepted, it would have brought the accused to the guillotine.

These cases present two dark and terrible aspects. From the moral stand point, such processes and suggestions leave an indelible stain upon the purity of the subject's nature. Even the innocent mind of a ten year old child can thus be inoculated with vice, the poison-germ of which will develop in his subsequent life.

On the judicial aspect it is needless to enter in great detail. Suffice to say that it is this characteristic feature of the hypnotic state—the absolute surrender of will and self-consciousness to the hypnotiser—which possesses such importance, from its bearing upon crime, in the eyes of legal authorities. For if the hypnotiser has the subject entirely at his beck and call, so that he can cause him to commit any crime, acting, so to say, invisibly within him, then what are not the terrible "judicial mistakes" to be expected? What wonder then, that the jurisprudence of one country after the other has taken alarm, and is devising, one after the other, measures for repressing the exercise of hypnotism! In Denmark it has just been forbidden. Scientists have experimented upon sensitives with so much success that a hypnotised victim has been jeered and hooted through the streets on his way to commit a crime, which he would have completed unconsciously, had not the victim been warned beforehand by the hypnotiser.

In Brussels a recent and sad case is well-known to all. A young girl of good family was seduced while in a hypnotised state by a man who had first subjected her to his influence at a social gathering. She only realised her condition a few months later, when her relatives, who divined the criminal, forced her seducer to make the only possible reparation—that of marrying his victim.

The French Academy has just been debating the question:—how far a hypnotised subject, from

a mere victim, can become a regular tool of crime. Of course, no jurist or legislator can remain indifferent to this question; and it was averred that the crimes committed under *suggestion* are so unprecedented that some of them can hardly be brought within the scope of the law. Hence the prudent legal prohibition, just adopted in France, which enacts that no person, save those legally qualified to exercise the medical profession, shall hypnotise any other person. Even the physician who enjoys such legal right is permitted to hypnotise a person only in the presence of another qualified medical man, and with the written permission of the subject. Public *séances* of hypnotism are forbidden, and they are strictly confined to medical *cliniques* and laboratories. Those who break this law are liable to a heavy fine and imprisonment.

But the keynote has been struck, and many are the ways in which this *black art* may be used—laws notwithstanding. That it will be so used, the vile passions inherent in human nature are sufficient guarantee.

Many and strange will be the romances yet enacted; for truth is often stranger than fiction, and what is thought fiction is still more often truth.

No wonder then that occult literature is growing with every day. Occultism and sorcery are in the air, with no true philosophical knowledge to guide the experimenters and thus check evil results. "Works of fiction," the various novels and romances are called. "Fiction" in the arrangement of their characters and the adventures of their heroes and heroines—admitted. Not so, as to the *facts* presented. These are *no fictions*, but true *presentiments* of what lies in the bosom of the future, and much of which is already born—nay corroborated by *scientific* experiments. Sign of the times! Close of a psychic cycle! The time for phenomena with, or through mediums, whether professional or otherwise, is gone by. It was the early season of the blossoming, of the era mentioned even in the Bible;* the tree of Occultism is now preparing for "fruiting," and the Spirit of the Occult is awakening in the blood of the new generations. If the old men only "dream dreams," the young ones see already visions,† and—

*"It shall come to pass that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions" (Joel ii. 28).

†It is curious to note that Mr. Louis Stevenson, one of the most powerful of our imaginative writers, stated recently to a reporter that he is in the habit of constructing the plots of his tales in *dreams*, and among others that of Dr. Jekyll. "I dreamed," he continued, "the story of 'Olalla' . . . and I have at the present moment two unwritten stories which I have likewise dreamed. . . . Even when fast asleep I know that it is I who am inventing." . . . But who knows whether the idea of "invention" is not also "a dream"!

record them in novels and works of fiction. Woe to the ignorant and the unprepared, and those who listen to the syrens of materialistic science! For indeed, indeed, many will be the unconscious crimes committed, and many will be the victims who will innocently suffer death by hanging and decapitation at the hands of the righteous judges and the *too innocent* jurymen, both alike ignorant of the fiendish power of "SUGGESTION."

GHOSTS AND ASTRAL BODIES

In *Harper's Magazine* for November, a man vouched for as holding an important position in a leading American university recounts, under a pseudonym, his experiences during four months' residence in a haunted house. It had been built nine years before but he and his wife were the first tenants. The phenomena were all auditory and were observed not only by the writer but also by his wife, and some of them by house guests, one of whom was a confirmed materialist and sceptic. They ranged from frequent clicks and taps to distinct sounds of footsteps upstairs and down, the sound of falling and moving objects, and a crash apparently loud enough to have been heard a mile away, recurring at intervals. The case is by no means an isolated one. Parallels are cited in Charles G. Harper's *Numerous Haunted Houses*, notably the famous Wesley family's ghost,—whose activity along this line was distinctly more marked.

It is a sad commentary on the tenacity with which fears are cherished that the writer should have felt it necessary to protect his professional standing by narrating his experiences under a pseudonym. It must be admitted that the treatment meted out to past witnesses to like occurrences amply justifies the precaution. The writer says, "I do not believe in ghosts, though I am of course aware that we have no final evidence against them," but he insists that "something strange was loose in that house" and wishes he could discover what it was.

The explanation is forthcoming from Theosophy. In *Isis Unveiled* (I, 69), Madame Blavatsky refers to well-attested apparitions of "unrestful 'souls,' hovering about the spots where they were murdered, or coming back for some other mysterious reasons of their own". She reprints an account of a similar case, except that it was visible whereas the professor's "ghost" confined himself to sounds in his attempts to draw the notice of the "living". She says that it "was doubtless a genuine elementary apparition, which made itself visible of its own free will . . . for aught we can tell it might have been the real personal umbra of the 'spirit,' persecuted, and earth-bound, either by its own remorse

and crimes or those of another person or spirit." The troublesome visitant to the professor's house in all probability was drawn to the spot by some attraction of association.

Sceptics still scoff while proofs accumulate of the existence of an inner, unseen realm. Eastern Psychology and Theosophy present the explanation, but they cannot give ears to those who will not hear, or force those who prefer to remain blind to see.

Here is one such piece of evidence. The novelist, Mr. William Gerhardt, has had a psychic experience and also had the courage to admit it in the *Sunday Express*. On five occasions he has been objectively conscious while his physical body lay asleep, and has travelled a little in the vicinity of where it lay. He describes his own sleeping body.

It was myself, not dead, but breathing peacefully, my mouth slightly open.

My cheeks were flushed, as if I must have felt hot under those blankets and eiderdown drawn over my shoulders.

My hair, lifted by the pressure of the pillow, presented an aspect of my face not familiar to me, never before having seen myself asleep.

The face, lying sideways and deeply sunk into the pillow, was pathetic and touching in its vacant innocence of expression; and here was I, outside it, watching it with a thrill of joy and fear.

I was awed and not a little frightened to think that I was in the body of my resurrection.

So that's what it's like? How utterly unforeseen!

But I was not dead, I consoled myself; my physical body was sleeping peacefully under the blankets, while I was apparently on my feet and as good as before.

Theosophists can ignore his gratuitous fling at their literature, which he admits he has never read, and his consequent prejudice against the term "astral," which leads him to employ the word "luminous," its exact equivalent! Perhaps he has heard of the peregrinations in the astral body of so-called invisible helpers described in pseudo-theosophy—which are sheer wild fancy. During sleep the average man is in a subjective state.

Those interested can study the subject in *U. L. T. Pamphlet* No. 11 and for further information go to H. P. B.'s answers in the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*.

But we particularly wish to stress the importance of such a piece of evidence. Many difficulties of modern science will be solved and its knowledge come into line with that of ancient soul-science if the existence of this Astral Body becomes an established fact. It is the veritable missing link in the evolutionary theory of modern science. H. P. B. once wrote in her *Secret Doctrine* (II. 149).

The whole issue of the quarrel between the profane and the esoteric sciences depends upon the belief in, and demonstration of, the existence of an astral body within the physical, the former independent of the latter.

STUDIES IN THE SECRET DOCTRINE

III.—THE PREPARATION AND SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

It must be left to the intuition and the higher faculties of the reader to grasp, as far as he can, the meaning of the allegorical phrases used. Indeed it must be remembered that all these Stanzas appeal to the inner faculties rather than to the ordinary comprehension of the physical brain.—S. D. I. 21.

The inner spiritual eye of the seer, and the faculty which manifests through it is not clairvoyance as ordinarily understood, *i.e.*, the power of seeing at a distance, but rather the faculty of spiritual intuition, through which direct and certain knowledge is obtainable.—S. D. I. 46 f.n.

Buddhi is the faculty of cognizing the channel through which divine knowledge reaches the "Ego," the discernment of good and evil, "divine conscience" also; and "Spiritual Soul," which is the vehicle of *Atma*.—S. D. I. xix.

There are only two classes of people who will take to the study of *The Secret Doctrine* seriously.

One, the intellectually curious who want to learn something about Theosophy as expounded by its greatest teacher in her *magnum opus*. Some of these use the information obtained in order to fling ridicule on the book and especially on its writer; others appropriate the teachings without due acknowledgment; a very, very few find their way to practical Theosophy—which means a life of study and of service.

The second class is composed of those who are already students—either those with ready-made deposits from past lives in the shape of memory and character, etc.; or those who having contacted Theosophy take to the study of the monumental work.

The hereditary enemies of Theosophy, or the beneficent White Magic, also use the book, as best they can, for their own nefarious purpose—the enslavement of the human mind, thus creating the soulless entity which acts like a corpse in their hands.

As these studies are meant for the earnest and sincere student of Theosophy aspiring to become a pupil-teacher under the guidance of the Gurus of H. P. B., we shall deal with them, leaving the rest of the above-mentioned intelligences to their own tasks and their own Karma.

In the last study we saw what are the obstacles within man himself which the student must guard against and ultimately overcome. Here we must learn what virtues and faculties are necessary for a real, growing comprehension of *The Secret Doctrine*. In the three quotations given above a thorough answer will be found. It must not be, however, thought that a study of the two volumes is not possible without a previous development of the faculty of intuition. This fact must be impressed on his consciousness by the student: *The Secret Doctrine*, regularly studied, in a proper fashion, develops intuition. Paradoxical as it may sound, the persistent study of the book unfolds the very faculty without which its contents cannot be comprehended. H. P. B. has said that since "this work withholds far more than it gives out, the student is

invited to use his own intuitions" (S.D. I. 278); and he will do well to remember her statement elsewhere that "True knowledge comes slowly and is not easily acquired." With humility but with self-confidence the student should begin his task, but he must persevere in his communion with the book regularly and punctually day by day.

In the old Upanishadic traditions references are made to the right manner and approach by which the enquirer and the aspirant were wont to come to the Sages and their Wisdom. Here also a true approach is necessary: a quiet fresh mind free from moods, unconcerned with other views and sundry knowledge but steadily active in receiving impressions from the ideas of the book—not for blind acceptance but for intelligent grasp, to be assimilated later on when they are perceived to be true. It has been said that *The Secret Doctrine* should be regarded as a book of reference, a kind of Theosophical encyclopædia—this estimate is false. *The Secret Doctrine* is a book to be read and studied, not only to be referred to. It is a book by which the student can and should evaluate other teachings, but he should not use it to amplify or advertise the views and opinions of other books. Then, it has been said that *The Secret Doctrine* is too profound, too deep, too complex and intricate a book to be read and studied by the ordinary man. The alarm thus caused is false. Let not the student be glamourised or daunted either by the false estimate of the book, or by the false sense of alarm roused. Why was the book written? For whom? The dedication gives the answer and the lie to the false estimate and the alarm. What H. P. B. said of *The Key of Theosophy*, (p. xiii) is, however, true of *The Secret Doctrine*.

To the mentally lazy or obtuse, Theosophy must remain a riddle; for in the world mental as in the world spiritual each man must progress by his own efforts. The writer cannot do the reader's thinking for him, nor would the latter be any the better off if such vicarious thought were possible.

Putting aside mental laziness and rejecting false

estimates of the book, the student must try to assimilate, for practical purposes, the significance of the following statement :—

Only those who realise how far Intuition soars above the tardy processes of ratiocinative thought can form the faintest conception of that absolute Wisdom which transcends the ideas of Time and Space.—(S. D. I. 1-2 f.n.).

The book deals with metaphysical ideas ; with moral laws functioning in a living universe ; with historical events which are regarded as reflections of spiritual occurrences ; with psychological processes taking place in human consciousness, which must be experienced to be understood ; and so on. These truths cannot be understood by passionate minds, i.e., by minds held in its service by Kama. Once freed from greedy desires, however unlearned the human head may be, it has within it the power to embrace wisdom from all sides. False knowledge is a hindrance, and “even ignorance is better than Head-learning with no Soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it,” says *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 28).

In the human consciousness, burnt in, as it were, is an impress of wisdom, which acts in man as intuition—this was the work of the “Solar Angels,” the Agnishwatta Pitris—“the Endowers of man with his conscious, immortal ego” (S. D. II, 88). “This ‘Conscious Entity’ Occultism says, comes from, nay, in many cases *is*, the very entire essence and *esse* of the high Intelligences condemned, by the undeviating law of Karmic evolution, to reincarnate in this manvantara” (S. D. II. 248). Its influence and action are absent to-day because human consciousness is overlaid by non-spiritual longings and mortal impresses. The task of the student is to utilize the “gift quickened by the ‘Lords of Wisdom,’ who have poured on the human *manas* the fresh dew of their own spirit and essence” (S. D. II. 411). This idea well grasped will make it clear to the student as to wherein lies the true preparation for his approach to *The Secret Doctrine*.

The Esoteric Philosophy explains the great differences in human character and reasoning faculty as being caused not only by the process of reincarnation, but also by the difference in receptive capacity of the various classes of non-self-conscious intelligences belonging to the kingdom of men, i.e., men in form but not men in mind. Men and women belonging to what are generally called the educated and civilized classes possess within their consciousness that Impress of Fire which manifests as the Voice of Divine Conscience, as Instinctive Intuition, as sense of moral responsibility, as self-awareness.

The functioning of these is usually vague and indefinite, but differs in different people ; it begins

to become definite in the persistent student of *The Secret Doctrine* who earnestly tries to lead the life. In the process the student receives further impresses on his own Egoic consciousness ; for, the work of the Host which lights up the *Manas* latent in man is not finished. Its beneficent labour continues, but, it may be said that this is confined to that class of human souls which aspires to learn the Higher Wisdom. Self-redemption through self-control and self-induced and self-devised ways and methods is the ideal of that class ; what each unit in that class attracts to itself depends on the assiduity in devotion which he or she manifests.

The remaining factor in right preparation is the choice of subjects and sections of the two volumes of over 1500 pages. The great temptation is to get at the occult “titbits”. To succumb to this would be fatal, for those “titbits” are indigestible without a previous familiarity with the basic ideas, principles and fundamentals of the book. The scientifically inclined student of Theosophy is apt to chafe at the philosophical and mythological digressions of *The Secret Doctrine* ; the mystically and philosophically inclined is likely to murmur against “all this scientific stuff,” and so forth. Long experience and contact with the book has strengthened the conviction that H. P. B. has not been extravagant in the use of words, that there are no useless digressions, that the attacks of 1888 on science and theology offer principles of attack even to-day, just as her explanations and instructions provide soul-nourishment week by week.

A beginning, however, of the right type is necessary. The ordinary student’s mind, as it is constituted to-day, in the East as in the West, may gain quicker and better comprehension if it is aided in the selection of pages to be read. While the following plan may not suit all, it has been found useful by a fair number during the last twenty-five years and more.

- (1) Vol. I, pp. 272-73. Item I (Texts for Theosophical Meetings p. 1).
Vol. I, pp. 297-99.
- (2) Vol. I, pp. 13-18.
The Three Fundamentals (Texts for Theosophical Meetings p. 3).
- (3) Vol. I, pp. 269-80.
U. L. T. Pamphlet No. 2.
- (4) Vol. I, pp. XVII-XLVII (Introductory).
- (5) Vol. I, pp. 1-24 (Proem).
- (6) Vol. II, pp. 1-12 (Preliminary Notes).
- (7) Vol. I, pp. 303-325 (Symbolism etc.).

A careful perusal of the above pages will give the student a very fair idea of what to anticipate ; it will also familiarize him with the method H. P. B. used in writing, compiling and recording her message.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

"Let us compare all things, and, putting aside emotionalism as unworthy of the logician and the experimentalist, hold fast only to that which passes the ordeal of ultimate analysis."—H. P. B.

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्गुवा ।

गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु चिन्तनसंशया : ॥

"Ah! the wonder of the Banyan Tree. There sits the Guru Deva a youth, and the disciples are elders; the teaching is silence and still the disciples' doubts are dispelled."

Q. A genuine student of Theosophy is called upon to give up more than one personal habit, such as practised in social life, and to adopt some few ascetic rules. But this brings him criticism and that reflects on Theosophy. Should not the student avoid this? Secondly, as asceticism is discouraged in more than one place in Theosophical literature, what rules would be the correct ones to adopt?

Ans. The student of Theosophy need not fear adverse criticism, which is bound to arise in a world steeped in selfishness and superstition.

His inner attitude and outer behaviour towards events and people form a very important part of his discipline as an ascetic.

He should not court criticism by imprudence, such as talking about the principles of conduct he is trying to observe or about the discipline of life he is trying to maintain. Then, he must also guard himself against interfering in the concerns of others, trying to improve or discipline them. Thirdly, he should not allow his zeal and enthusiasm to so carry him away that he neglects his *duties* to others; in determining those duties he must not allow his own desire, even the desire to live the higher life to sway him, any more than allow others to influence him to break his discipline. These three precautions enable the student to avoid pitfalls; in themselves they are factors of discipline.

For the rest, he should learn not to mind if he is criticised for controlling his own thoughts, purifying his own speech, sweetening his own disposition, refusing to be greedy in his own interests because he is trying to guard the interests of others, freeing himself from the shackles of creedal and communal superstitions, and so on. The student should not give way in keeping his discipline to please others, nor break it under provocation—meeting intolerance with irritation, or anger with sarcasm, or ridicule with wrath. These are also factors in the discipline.

Theosophy deprecates false but insists on the practice of true asceticism, namely, the control of the

psychic nature, Kama-Manas, first and not observance of mere bodily habits and exercises. Just as mere physical bathing which cleanses the body fails to purify the mind and the heart, so mere bodily discipline fails to bring about a reform in the psychic nature. The rule to be kept in mind is that when the psychic nature improves it brings in its train naturally opportunities and possibilities for physical reformation. The lower nature is neither the gross nor the astral body but Kama-Manas. Its main characteristic is Egotism, the student's greatest foe, and it takes innumerable shapes.

The action of Kama pollutes the astral body—making its magnetism impure. The student is called upon to purify and improve his magnetism. No physical means will do it; though bodily cleanliness, right diet, total abstinence, living in a pure place, company of pure people, will aid the task, provided the preliminary step is taken. What is that step? Evil magnetism *directly* results from erroneous beliefs, even though they be sincere. One's beliefs, religious practices, social habits and unrecognised superstitions attract hundreds of foreign influences, living entities, powerful agents, around one.

The subject of magnetic purity is very important and the student has to learn to distinguish between bodily and magnetic cleanliness. For example, bodily odour is not always amenable to hot water and soap, because there is a psychic root to it in the astral body. Just as wicked conduct creates malign magnetism so wrong beliefs create unspiritual magnetism. A man may be pure as the world knows purity and yet attract to himself elementals which are undesirable. Even though they may not be harmful in ordinary life they positively injure the true practitioner. On the subject of magnetic purity the student's attention is called to pp. 19-21 of *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, by H. P. B.

Side by side with the control of the psychic nature, the student has to cultivate the Noetic nature. By study of metaphysics, by meditation on the Universal and Impersonal Spirit, not only is the personal Kama-Manas subdued, but Buddhi is made active and intuitive perception is developed.

So "ascetic rules" are of two types—(a) those which purify the psychic nature, and (b) those which activate the Noetic nature, and jointly they help the aspirant to become an Adept.

Unity always gives strength : and since Occultism in our days resembles a Forlorn Hope, union and co-operation are indispensable. Union does indeed imply a concentration of vital magnetic force against the hostile currents of prejudice and fanaticism.—MAHATMA K. H.

THE FIGHT IS IN THE MIND

H. P. B. reiterates the occult truth that the events in the material world are shadowy reflections of events in the super-material or astral world. Happenings in the life of the individual or of humanity have their roots in the invisible world of causes and what is visible is the effect, in part or in full. The phrase which the student often uses, "precipitation of karmic effects," is a fit subject for study and meditation.

The world of mind is a reality. Yet, one of the most striking examples of the working of the principle of Maya or Illusion is connected with that world. We are deceived into believing that this world of deeds, tangible and visible, is *the* reality. Actions which have evil or weak motives pass for good deeds; people and movements are dubbed wicked or dangerous without any attempt to ascertain their hidden motives, which may be and often are good and noble.

To-day everyone is again talking about the war which must come, but who perceives that it is already going on? When the scientist of one country is endeavouring to outstrip his confrère in another in the search of more and more powerful poison gases, they are not preparing for a future war; they are actually engaged in one. When manufacturers of armaments are busy they are actually participating in a war. The fierceness of the struggle to come is blossoming now, for those who have eyes to see. Just as in actual war on the physical plane, the generals behind the scenes are greater realities than soldiers in the field, who are puppets moved by the strings the generals pull; more, just as the War Offices command in their turn the generals themselves, so always and ever the controlling cause lies behind the visible effects and produces results both as regards space and time. War is raging now on the plane of mind; what will eventually transpire in the visible world will be its effects, and they may take one shape or another. Financiers, politicians, economists, with the aid of professors and scientists are now engaged in a world war; the visible results will come, must come, in some form or another. The activities of the minds of to-day will precipitate the activities of the body to-morrow.

The Theosophical student and aspirant is familiar with the functioning of this occult law. But he too is often glamourised and falls under the dominion of Maya. We seek many times for the causes of karmic precipitations in the deeds of former lives, instead of looking for them in the mind processes of the present incarnation. Every deed is a visible body which has its invisible principles—its mould, its vitality, its desire and thought principles; every deed is either soulless or soul-full. And

H. P. B.'s remark that we elbow soulless men all the time is equally true of deeds. Our streets and cities are full of soulless deeds—evil or useless—affecting others to their fall. Soul-full deeds of soul-full people bring instruction and inspiration to others. Often we speak of purely kamic action or purely personal action; these are but the results of purely kamic or personal, *i.e.*, soulless, people. Such soulless people are active kama-rupas, and may be fitly compared to drifting elementals or nefarious elementaries, according to their nature. Such human beings exist—that, the student of Theosophy knows. What he does not often recognize is that he himself may bring himself for a short while to that state. In depression or in anger, in fear or in jealousy, the student becomes soulless for a minute or more. This state is precipitated from within outwardly. He will use his reason and his knowledge to regain his lost balance, but unless he goes to the region of his lower mind, kama-manas, and eradicates the roots of such precipitations they will occur again and again. It is little use to say, "I will not come into this awful state again"; he will, unless when in a calm and soul-full condition he proceeds to seek out the roots of evil and destroy them. Fancy and imagination are potent and beget results on the visible plane of deeds. Moods are children of personal and kamic thinking and the mothers of methods of mischief. Clear thinking is thinking cleansed of kama; clear vision is vision freed from kama. So our ordinary moods, fancies and day-dreaming have to be not only avoided but killed altogether.

How shall we do it?

Two beneficent forces enable us to accomplish this task.

First, by study of metaphysical and impersonal truths we purify the mind. There is no other remedy equally so good for the purification of the mind as the study of metaphysics, of philosophy, of science. But that metaphysics must not be merely a juggling with words and expressions; that philosophy must not be merely speculative; that science must not be devoid of ethics. Theosophy is superior to, and more practical than, what ordinarily passes under the titles of metaphysics, philosophy and science. These branches of study have each a great value, but unless they are related to the problems of daily existence they remain unpractical. So a study of Theosophy, which is the great philosophy of the impersonal but which offers clues and keys to every person to better himself, is the very first step. And in revealing the truth about the precipitation of karmic effects from the plane of mind to the plane of brain, senses, and the body it offers the right instruction to be practised by the aspirant,

Secondly, the student of esoteric philosophy is called upon to control his faculty of criticism—not to kill it, not even to deaden it, but to control it. To find flaws in other personalities is as easy as finding shells on the sea-shore. We have to learn to look for pearls and they are hard to find and are never on the sands. We have to enter deep waters. Living as a personality in the world of personalities it is easy to pounce upon flaws, real or imaginary. Acting as souls, *i.e.*, acting as soul-full personalities, we dive deep to the plane of souls behind personalities and find every time that there is a pearl of hidden beauty. Personalities have their defects and limitations; to try to see purity in impurity and truth in untruthfulness is foolish. What is necessary is to go behind impurity and untruthfulness and seek if there be a core of beauty of some kind in that personality. If the Self is in all men and women, behind and beyond the uglinesses there must abide some aspect of the Self which is ever the Beautiful. We are always advised to seek the Self, to see the Self, to act as the Self, for the Self. It does not mean that pettiness and selfishness and cruelty and ugliness do not exist or that we must be blind to their existence. The manifestations of kama are as real as are those of Atma, and the smoke of the former ever accompanies the Fire of the latter. The person who sees evil in another and talks about it while he is ignorant and unable to help, instruct or enlighten his brother, himself is rooted in evil, very probably in the same type of evil, and sees it in his neighbour because he is consubstantial with it. The Adept also sees flaws and mistakes but is capable of making adjustments according to His own methods.

Because we live personally in the world of personalities we see the cause of our troubles, worries and limitations in other personalities. Even students who theoretically accept the doctrine that Karma is the Law of Laws fall prey to this illusion. The fight is not with other persons, the fight is with our own personality; the warrior within is the Buddhi, mind is the field, and the fact to note is that kama provides the host of soldiers and is in occupation of the field. By activating Buddhi we have to clear the mind of kama, free the field of its occupants, and then the grass and flowers will begin to grow where the heavy-footed soldiers have been.

THE TWICE-BORN

In a significant contribution to *The Aryan Path* for August 1934, the Theosophical theory of life is described as based on the fundamental premise that the Self in man is one with the Cosmic Self. This consciousness can be realised only if and when

the individual has effected the conquest of his lower nature and is born into the Kingdom of Spirit. A man must undergo a revolution within himself and produce such a rebirth (*dviġatva*) in this life. Re-incarnation of the Soul is as natural as the passage and growth of man from childhood to youth, and from youth to old age, says the *Gītā* (II, 13). The second birth is not the birth of a new body but means a new stage in one's mental and moral growth, resulting in the acquisition of a new set of spiritual qualities in this very life. With every "rebirth" there is an "Inner Awakening" (*Aryan Path*, February 1934), a rise in the scale of spiritual values.

The Sanskrit word *Dviġa* means a bird, as well as a member of the three higher Hindu castes. The first stage of a bird's life is its confinement in the egg; then it breaks through its shell and takes wing. The shell which covers the chick is really not a part of its life, yet it is required until the bird is hatched. It is an inert (*jaḍa*) frame that only serves to conceal from view the real life to be brought into being. The wings that are developed are but symbolical of the qualities and faculties of bird-life, the efficiency and utility of which is experienced only by the full exercise of their function.

In the life of man, childhood up to the stage of the Thread-ceremony (*Upanayana*) is like the life of the chick within the shell. The second birth takes place at the investiture with the sacred thread and the girdle of muñja grass. These are the symbols of the higher qualities of the "Twice-born," and the boy is no longer a *dviġa* if he loses his sacred symbols. The very knot that binds together the strands of thread is dedicated to Brahman and known by that Name. As the purpose of a bird's life is fulfilled only by the bird winning the freedom of light and air, so the purpose of a man's life is his gradual realisation of the individual with the Infinite Self.

What are the traits of character that a man may be supposed to acquire which makes of him a twice-born? The *Mahābhārata* contains a short conversation between Yudhishthira and Nahusha (who had been cursed to crawl as a serpent in the forest), in which is given the definition of a "twice-born" (Brahmana). The Pāṇḍava says :—

Honesty, charity, integrity, patience and good conduct, forbearance and meditation, it is these that make a Brāhmana. A Brāhmana is not to be known as such merely by his name or from the accident of birth, nor is a Sūdra by his. Where virtue and goodness prevails, there is the Brāhmana. A Sūdra is he who is without these.

We read elsewhere in the Epic :—

Not birth, not sacrament, not learning, make one *dviġa*, but righteous conduct alone makes it,

He that serves as a raft on a raftless current (of *samsāra*) or helps to ford the unfordable, certainly deserves respect in every way, be he a Sūdra or a member of any other class.

These ideas accord well with the meaning given to the word Brāhmaṇa in the *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra* :

He who does not injure living beings in thought, word, or deed is a Brāhmaṇa ; the Brāhmaṇa does not speak an untruth from anger or even for fun ; by one's actions one becomes a Brāhmaṇa, Kshatriya, Vaiśya or Sūdra.

We read in the *Dhammapada* :—

Not matted hair nor heritage of birth
Can prove the Brahman ; nay, but sterling worth
And truthfulness and inward purity.
What boots your sack-cloth and your tousled hair ?
On outward things, poor fools, ye lavish care !
Ye who are rotting, rotting inwardly.

If even in the period of the *Mahābhārata* there was the fear that society was drifting from its proper moorings in the matter of moral conduct, and a necessity was felt for a re-statement of spiritual values, how much more should the need be felt in this modern age for a "rebirth" which will bring into being the possession and exercise of those qualities that are a first condition for the realisation of the union of the separate self with the Universal Spirit.

The soul is engaged in the body like a chick within its shell. Both are *in* their respective frames but not *of* them. Deliverance comes for the bird by the bursting through the shell, and for man by the breaking of his bonds. As the bird coming out of the shell, learns to do the work ordained for the winged kingdom, and wins the freedom of life ; so does man seek to conquer his baser nature, extricate himself from the shell of his ignorance (*avidya*) and begin to realise his proper place in the cosmic Scheme. But this inner conquest can be effected only by a faithful discharge of one's duties in a spirit of devotion to the Lord of the Heart. To have become a *dvija* is to have taken the *first* step in the evolution of this Cosmic Consciousness. The Supreme Spirit can be realised only by the individual being again and again reborn. The principle of rebirth (*dvijātva*), by which a man becomes "re-generate" in a single life, may be thought of as an extended application of the doctrine of Reincarnation in the evolution of the Soul. The twice-born encompasses in one single incarnation the protracted experiences over many lives of the ordinary human soul.

In the Christian Gospel of St. John, (III, 1-10) the same teaching is to be found :—

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews :

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God : for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old ? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born ?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be ?

Jesus answered and said unto him. Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things ?

And how many great Brahmanas are there to-day who like the great men in Israel know not what it is to be born again ?

RAYS OF HOPE

[The following article is penned by a student of Theosophy in Holland, a country small in area, but great in culture. We gladly make room for this contribution because such expressions as the writer quotes and comments upon have an interest for all Theosophical students. We hope our colleagues and friends in other countries will send for our use and publication such news, notes and comments.—EDS.]

In these days, when all countries are suffering from overproduction, when stocks are deliberately destroyed and at the same time so many people are suffering from destitution ;

When there is far too much for the few, and not even work enough for the many ;

When in the country of Boehme, Paracelsus, Hegel, Kant, Schopenhauer, Goethe, Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and so many others, healthy spiritual growth is endangered by an edict, as it were, to conform ;

When in our country* a number of less progressed have fallen prey to their seething animal emotions and have had to learn, through a corresponding display of power,† that human society cannot evade by either hollow devices, or labour unions, or government control, the progress of nature and the justice of the iron law of causation or retribution, according as it is on the material or moral plane ;

When one sickens of the hollow, trifling and dishonest phrases used to whitewash that which is in reality unclean and worthless ;

Even in these days we can find people who are unperturbed by this turmoil, and see in it an oppor-

*The writer is a Hollander.

†Mob riots in Holland on account of reduction of government doles.

tunity to draw up a balance sheet of their life experiences, and to bear testimony to their deepest convictions.

It is a good and hopeful sign to listen to a Leyden professor who was bred in the age of extreme scientific materialism by which the souls of so many nations are still obscured. Looking back over his life's work, he tells us that even if one could demonstrate "the interplay of the osmosis in a continuous osmotic complex of any extension, this would not shed any light on the great mystery of an all-controlling and realising factor which shapes the cell tissues and arranges the physical and chemical energies, working in them and synthesising them into a harmonious whole".*

This "all-controlling and realising factor" is the Cosmic Mind. It harmonises display of power and manifestation of form, and acts as the one controlling basic principle from which results a Universe of law and order.

In the very same week another Leyden professor, addressing an audience of present and former students, compared the venerable and monumental steeple of St. Martin's Cathedral to the "Great One," that is, to the Permanent which lies behind all that is transitory—the One Reality, the Absolute, the Fountainhead from which this Cosmic Mind springs and without which there could be no mind-power at all.†

And still another Leyden professor has shown that one attribute of the harmonious, controlling and realising power of the Great Unknown may be discerned amidst all the changes of our material existence. This attribute is "ever-recurrent activity in time of space" (cyclic law, periodicity); "the symbol of the serpent swallowing its tail stands for this rhythmic repetition."‡

A Universe which in its deepest sense is periodical implies that the realising mind also becomes manifest at intervals: manifestation, realisation and withdrawal in eternal repetition.

What else is this eternal coming forth and withdrawal but the completion of the doctrine of Science regarding "evolution" of the so-called "living beings": the eternal involution and evolution of the cosmos to stern law that works through the periodically active cosmic mind, as if it were the outbreathing and inbreathing of the One.

"This leads to the conclusion," to use the words of Lorentz, "that the spiritual and the material are

indissolubly interconnected; that they form two aspects of the same thing; that the material world is the manifested form of a World-Soul, that even the smallest particle possesses a 'soul.' "§

If this be granted, but one step is needed to the inevitable conclusion that the gradual manifestation of "living" forms and their continuous differentiation in the material world of sensuous perception is but the reflection of an also gradual and simultaneous unfolding of the Cosmic Mind—a spiritual evolution.

If this were really understood with all its implications, science would wake up once again to a consciousness of her moral responsibility,† which has been obscured by poison gas, hyperexplosives, etc., etc. It was against this moral delinquency of science that still another Leyden professor gave a serious warning to his students in his inaugural address.‡

The present egocentric conception of life which is part of the heritage of the scientific materialism, would be completely destroyed by an evolutionary doctrine which had as its goal the elimination of separateness and the identification of the individual with the Universal. For the acceptance of such a conception by the leading minds would morally convert in them the pole of egocentricity to that of altruism. The masses would then be led out of the labyrinth of historical materialism and class struggle into an open social life in which there would be sufficient for all. And this would happen because the leading elements of such a society, by reason of their profoundest thought and deepest conviction, would discipline their own personal desires and needs, and act for the good of *all*, not for one particular community or sect. Then there would be no place for a dual morality; one for the state, another for the individual.

There are rays of hope. In the opinions we quoted from thoughtful men, we can see traces of the process of the sublimation of the consciousness of the personal self to the Self Impersonal. If our Universities would be saved from compulsory conformity, they also must take part in this process of sublimation—not because of what they are now, schools of knowledge concerning the objective world, but because of what they are to become, schools of Spiritual Wisdom.

*Valedictory address of Prof. F. A. Schreinemakers to his colleagues, pupils and students.

†Address of Prof. F. Muller on the occasion of the lustrum of the Students' Corporation at the Groningen University.

‡Prof. L. M. G. Baas-Becking, *Geobiologie*, p. 108.

§Letter of the late Prof. H. A. Lorentz to one of his colleagues and published after his death in "Handelsblad," May 5th, 1928.

†Compare "Science and the Path of the Soul," *The Aryan Path*, September, 1931, (Vol. II, p. 585).

‡Prof. F. A. F. C. Went, Inaugural Address, May 25th, 1934.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

It is for students of philosophy to lead a bewildered and suffering world into the serene paths of rational understanding.

Thus Sir S. Radhakrishnan, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, in his welcome address to the Tenth Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress held at Waltair, South India, during the last week of December. Dr. Radhakrishnan did not refer to philosophy as it is studied in colleges and universities, nor had he in mind students whose interest in the subject does not outlive the obtaining of a degree. Unless the students of philosophy are also aspirants after a purer and nobler life and unless true philosophy is distinguished from the intellectual cobwebs woven for their own sake, "the suffering world" to which the speaker referred will continue to suffer—no matter how many students study philosophy, how many universities teach the subject, and how many Congresses are held in its name. It is the separation of philosophy from actual life which has brought about, not only in India but all over the world, a reversal of the natural order of values and things. Dr. Radhakrishnan described how artificial needs are choking the real springs of life :—

Mechanical efficiency and scientific ruthlessness combined with a contemptuous disregard of such imponderables as are manifested by the spirit and will of man are to-day receiving our admiration. The position which was once held by philosophers and theologians is now in the hands of scientists and economists. Thousands of intelligent young men the world over are worshipping at their feet. Mechanised Utopias of cheap food and easy virtue like the proletarian's paradise of Lenin or the universe limited of H. G. Wells, if achieved, will be perfect like Orlando's mare : only they will have the defect of being not alive.

Further Dr. Radhakrishnan draws attention to the famine of spirit which passes unnoticed though famine of food is well advertised and efficiently relieved.

If we could see minds and souls as vividly as we see bodies, we would be appalled at their conditions in men and women belonging to civilized humanity. Many of the minds are of stunted growth, a good number distorted and crippled and quite a few definitely monstrous. When the leaders of thought and practice attempt to reconstruct society, they should be careful to eliminate this process of mangling and dwarfing of souls and help the development of the spirit in man.

But "the leaders" of to-day have themselves "distorted and crippled" minds and therefore they are unable to restore the lost soul to human life which, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, is "the purpose of philosophy." Then he speaks about the Indian philosophical Renaissance for which the philosophers and students of philosophy should now begin to work. But he does not say how exactly they should prepare and labour. It is the active service of humanity, unselfish dedication to the

higher ideals of life that will bring about the philosophical Renaissance. "To reach Nirvana one must reach Self-Knowledge, and Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child." Service as an avenue to the study of philosophy is somewhat of a strange idea both to the philosopher-recluse and to the social-servant. The sociologist needs the aid of philosophy, for without it he is apt to do more harm than good. But the philosopher needs the experience of practical work with human minds and souls, including his own, for without it he can only talk of Reality without touching it, of Maya while absorbed in it, of Avidya while living in it—a man of great learning but little wisdom.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu also referred to the sufferings and sorrows of men and women. Speaking at the Aligarh University Union she said :—

I have travelled round the world several times, and each time I go I am more and more impressed by the common suffering of the world. The only need of the world is to shatter the bondage whether it has come from within or without.

That common suffering which every sensitive nature feels should induce in us an infinite pity for our fellow-men, but we must learn to recognize clearly the source of all this misery and woe. The bondage has not come from without, but always and in every case from within. Man is not a slave to circumstances but to his own lower nature, to his senses, his desires, his selfish thoughts. There lies the hope. If we were languishing in bondage imposed from without, we might beat our hands in vain against our bars. But we have made our chains and we alone can break them. The means?—to bring the personality under control and live as souls.

On the same theme, of Karma, the Rev. "Dick" Sheppard, Canon of St. Paul's, contributed a fine statement to *The Sunday Express* (December 9th), under the caption, "I believe in Hell". But the hell that he describes and says that he has seen and known is here on earth. "When any man cries to evil, 'Evil, be thou my good,' he is in hell."

Sin brings punishment in its train, not because God is vindictive or vengeful, but because the laws of cause and effect operate in the moral as well as in the physical world.

I know that if I run my head against a stone wall I shall give myself a nasty headache. If I wrong my fellow-man, the consequence to myself may not be so immediately obvious, but it is equally sure.

For a time we may flourish like the bay tree ; but in the end there is no escape. . . .

God Himself cannot save us from our own particular hell, if we persist in sinning against the light.

God seems a bit redundant in this clear picture of the working of the moral law. We wonder why Canon Sheppard brings in a Personal God at all. To be consistent and logical, in the moral order of the universe there cannot be God and Law as two distinct entities.

Civilisation starts when men begin to consider other people's rights and happiness, and goes from better to better in proportion as that habit becomes more general. There is nothing better than to cultivate the mind of the good citizen. And thoughtlessness is its chief enemy.

So ends an article on "Thoughtlessness" in *The Manchester Guardian* (November 16th), by its well-known contributor, "Artifex". He was prompted to write it by a correspondent who remarked that "the lack of thought for others is the greatest sin of our time". But is not thoughtlessness towards others but a natural outcome of thoughtlessness in personal existence?

A great majority live thoughtlessly; thoughtless in walking, eating, resting or sleeping. Not trained by education, secular or religious, to think out their problems they blindly accept thoughts of others. In matters of religion or of science, of social customs, or inherited or acquired habits and manners, they act thoughtlessly. Further, there is thoughtlessness in selecting the means of livelihood and in the methods of earning it, the same thoughtlessness in recreation and in sense indulgence. The apex of thoughtlessness is reached when people do not sincerely ask about the whys and wherefores of life, about the meaning and aim of existence, or follow up their enquiries by earnest search. Thus the mind is allowed to become a passive medium and falls prey to exploitation by the Jesuitical politician or the Machiavellian priest. One who is thoughtless in his own life is bound to be thoughtless towards others.

On this subject of mind Kenneth Richmond comments in *The Observer* (2nd December).

Why do we commonly treat our minds as no one in his senses would treat a valued piece of machinery, such as a motor-car? Probably because we have been set, and have set ourselves, a standard of good thinking—attentive, studious, dutiful—which seems to be the enemy of enjoyment. The thoughtful mind is the spoil-sport of life, as long as we associate it with the prig and the pedant. So we cling to our pristine clumsiness of mind, bungle our steering, clash our mental gears, so that at any cost we avoid developing the prig within. Or, in another mood, it is the inquisitor within whom we evade; he makes us feel inferior; and he is modelled on the schoolmaster who asked questions in order to demonstrate that our answers were wrong.

The thoughtful mind of prig or pedant is as far from the ideal as thoughtlessness. The thoughtless

man is caught by every gust of passion or desire and whirled about like leaves before the wind. But he who falls a prey to fixed ideas, who cannot think outside his well-worn grooves, is no more master in his own house than is the thoughtless man. The preconception and the fixed idea are signposts on the road to lunacy. The thinking principle, that should by nature be man's faithful slave, sometimes usurps the throne and rules with rod of iron. The prig and pedant are fast fixed in their thoughts like flies in amber. One of the functions of Theosophy is to break the moulds of men's minds, to set the soul free from its fixed ideas no less than from the dominance of sense. Without an open and virile mind under his firm control, no man can mount the steps that lead to Truth.

Theosophy does show us how to steer a safe course between the rocks of rigid mental concepts and the whirlpool of thoughtlessness. It shows man how to mould his life and thoughts skilfully, deliberately, purposefully. Applying in emotion, word and act as well as in thought "those higher and nobler conceptions of public and private duties which lie at the root of all spiritual and material improvement,"

in every conceivable case he himself must be a centre of spiritual action, and from him and his own daily individual life must radiate those higher spiritual forces which alone can regenerate his fellow-men. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 198.)

In the *Kaiser-i-Hind* (Bombay), in a favourite column (*Free Lance*), the question was raised—Who is truly deserving of the title of Dastur or Mobed—the Bishops and Priests of the Parsi Community? A correspondent Mr. B. F. Bharucha answered it in his own way; we may draw the attention of these Parsi writers to their own sacred book—the *Vendidad* (Farg. XVIII) :—

Him thou shalt call an Athravan, O holy Zarathustra! who throughout the night sits up and demands of the Holy Wisdom, which makes man free from anxiety, and wide of heart, and easy of conscience at the head of the Chinvat bridge, and which makes him reach that world, that holy world, that excellent world of Paradise.

In the preceding verses we are told whom not to call an Athravan.

We do not know of any Parsi priest answering the description of the true Athravan; we should like to know the name, if there be any, so that we might learn from him—to begin with, the real meaning of terms mentioned in the verses.

THE U. L. T. DECLARATION

The policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and it welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire, to be enrolled as an Associate; it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists.

Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance given to Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local lodges. There are no dues of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

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