

THE IRISH THEOSOPHIST

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THEOSOPHY IN PLAIN LANGUAGE.

NO. II WHAT IS THEOSOPHY? — FIRST PRINCIPLES.

The word Theosophy may be taken to include any system which teaches that man, by virtue of the divine nature hidden within him, can attain to union with, and knowledge of God. Such is the dominant thought that we find recurring everywhere in the literature that has come down to us from the world's great Theosophists. Whatever the religious phraseology or symbolism employed; however colored by the genius, temperament or tradition of races and individuals, we have always an unanimity of assurance regarding this central truth — that "the kingdom of heaven is within you;" that the unmanifest cause of all manifested things, is not an external, separate abstraction; not a detached spectator; but rather a vital presence instinct in nature, and linked in living union — union that may be quickened, deepened and made conscious — with the soul of man.

From Lao-Tze in the far East to Plotinus, Bœhme and other *illuminati* of the West; from ancient veda and Egyptian hymn to the Gnostic writings of the New Testament and the mystic rhapsodies of the Persian sufis — the same great truth is nobly and glowingly presented. Echoes and gleams of it haunt even the sombre pages of our modern poets and thinkers. Schools of occultism and initiation, again, so universal among ancient peoples, have their descendants down to the present day in various countries. So that in one form or another, Theosophy (taking the word in its better and less restricted meaning) has always been before the world to inspire the thoughts of any who had sufficient natural bent, leisure and ethical culture, to appreciate its message.

Of later years, however, the number of such persons has become smaller and smaller. Those who have the leisure have not often the inclination; and very many who are by nature mystically inclined, and who would give all to gain that assurance of spiritual realities, which mysticism promises — find themselves so fettered by cast-iron social laws, or so bound to the wheel of daily toil, that for them the path of occult science is far beyond reach, or its promises seem a mockery — at best a beautiful illusion. Where then is the opportunity, the scope, for the revival of mysticism which is being effected to-day by the Theosophical Society?

We are in what the Hindus call the *Kali Yuga* or Dark Age. "The tide of Faith was once, too, at the full." But now, as a great modern poet has sadly sung, we hear

" its melancholy, lone, withdrawing roar
Down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world."

The strong appeals, the high ideals of antiquity find us callous, unresponsive. "Ears have we, but we hear not." Humanity is passing through a cycle of

evolution during which the brain-intellect is developing at the expense (temporarily) of the direct spiritual intuition of early man. The tasting of the tree of knowledge has brought "evil" into the world (evil, be it remembered "is but undeveloped good"); and it is now, and will be for long, man's painful task to regain with the growing powers of his mind, the divine knowledge and wisdom that are his forgotten heritage. To aid him in this, the old truths must be restated in plainer language addressed to his reason as well as to his inner sense. The language of science must aid the language of philosophy and emotion. This in brief is one great purpose of the present Theosophic revival—the work of messengers of the great occult Brotherhood which, as said before, has always retained unbroken the spiritual birthright of the race. It should therefore be borne in mind, in connection with the descriptions of "planes," "principles," "cycles," and other complex teachings of the Secret Doctrine, that these teachings are rather intended as an attempt to justify "the ways of God to man," than as an adequate statement of the truths of *Theosophy*, the Divine Wisdom residing deep in the soul of every human being, and which has grandly inspired so many ancient scriptures. When the word Theosophy is used in these papers it must be understood in its more limited and popular sense which unfortunately is *not* the right one. But what philosophical term is used in its true original meaning nowadays? The fundamental axiom, the starting point of "Theosophy" may then, perhaps, be stated as follows:—there is only One Life, One Substance, One Reality in the Universe.

Death exists nowhere—only transformation of life. Forms decay and change but there is *that* in all which endures. In man we call it Atma, the Breath or Spirit. As a *living* Presence, it is also called by that readily-profaned word God.

In trying to grasp this supreme and hardly realisable truth, we get some assistance from an unexpected quarter—from modern scientific research. The observation of the method by which different forces can be changed from one to another form has led to the grand conception (stated ages ago by Indian sages) of the conservation of energy, and of "One Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed."

Again see how science has altered the old notion of motionless, inert "brute matter." In speaking of "matter," science is to-day indeed almost more mystical than the mystics. Take an object so apparently lifeless as a lump of clay or stone; what do modern physicists tell us of its real condition? This:—that it is composed of myriads of *atoms*, that these atoms are moving with intense rapidity, and are in all probability but passing manifestations of an almost inconceivably subtle medium called *ether*, out of which all matter has originated. Ether itself, again, must be the outcome of some still finer and more potent energy—so that the "too too solid flesh" with which we identify ourselves so much in thought and practice, is nothing after all, we are told, but a shadow—a mere froth borne upon the eddy of a rushing river of endless Force.

(to be continued.)

THE PERFECT WAY.

There is only one way.

Does your heart throb in sympathy with humanity's pain? Is your voice choked when you strive to speak words of comfort to those on whom the burden of being presses heavily? Does your very soul sicken as you behold the misery, the degradation, the hopelessness of the lives of the toiling masses around you?

Across the seething sea of human passion and misery do you strain tired eyes, hopelessly striving to catch on the far horizon some glimpse of a promised land? Are you convinced that whatever promise the future holds for mankind, that those who weep and suffer and despair now will not see the dawning of freedom's day at least in this life—that existence will continue to be to them in this incarnation one long mystery and misery until death comes to them a welcomed mercy, and they find in the grave the rest life denied them?

Would you help them? Would you lift the heavy burden even from one life, bring sunshine into one dark home? Then I say to you there is only one way by which you can do so.

Eighteen centuries of Christianity have failed; our western civilization of which we boast so much, has failed; the many philanthropic efforts, nobly undertaken have done little. We have seen charity given to the suffering poor through other hands than the donor's; Utopian schemes for the regeneration of the masses that were only beautiful dreams. Men have given wealth, time, thought and in many cases sincere sympathy; yet misery still prevails. The tired work-girl toiling in the fireless attic; the child-beggar shivering in the streets; the hungry unemployed; the spectres of misery and crime darkening the sky and making the earth unfriendly; *these* are in our midst still. Why is it? Because men have failed to recognise that each human unit was their brother, their sister. Money, time, thought have been given to no avail because they have not given themselves.

There is but one way to help humanity; a royal road; a path of suffering. Over its sharp stones, up its weary steep, the great ones of the earth toiled with painful effort; sages, saints, prophets.

The road of self-sacrifice; nay more the road of self-annihilation.

This way Buddha passed; this way the Prophet of Nazareth journeyed with aching heart. The road is still there. Those who seek it can find it. It is narrow and hard; it leads through the bitter waters of renunciation, up the slopes of pain.

No light shines upon the valleys through which it winds; the mists of Maya envelope them; yet beyond, above them there is light, and within you there is light.

Do not fear that the waters will overwhelm you, that the burden of world's misery you bear will cause you to stumble and sink. Every burden is comparatively light compared to the burden of self which you have left behind. There is safe footing; there is a fording-place; and others, who went before you, have trodden down the sharpest thorns on the path that leads to the water's edge.

This is no Lethe stream, but in very truth the waters of Marah; yet by enduring the bitterness you may fill the life-cup of others with the waters of joy.

The mountain slopes are shelving and steep; they rise like a black unending wall before you. What matter! By the light within you, you will see crevices and jutting rocks where your feet may hold; there are niches too, ladder-like, cut in the solid rock. Others have been before you upon that mountain waste.

Do not despair. Through the darkness words of cheer reach you, and your

soul hursts forth into song. Below you too there is a babel of confused sound—those you suffer for are following hard after you. If you would help humanity seek the Path; do not give only so-called charity; give yourself utterly and entirely.

Seek out your toiling brothers and sisters. Clasp their toil-stained hands in Brotherhood; let your arms entwine around your sister and your heart beat close to hers; let your tears mingle with those that flow from her grief-dimmed eyes; let the sufferers feel that they are not alone in their misery, that they are not too lost, too sinful for you to love; tell them and prove it by your life that you are one with them, that your life is bound up with theirs.

Have faith in the future of humanity. Have faith in yourself. Above all have faith in the Masters and you cannot, shall not fail.

What matter if no apparent results crown your efforts! What matter if sometimes weary you stumble and fall! What matter if, when the great brotherhood is an accomplished fact, no one gives a passing thought to you!

Have courage, faith, patience. The future is certain.

Find the path; point it out to others. There is no other way to help humanity.

K. B. Lawrence

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A FRAGMENT.

Oh! Night and Day
Ye are too wond'rous fair—too black and grim
When we are out of sway
With the eternal laws that sing your hymn.

Oh! Night and Day
Ye are a mystery to chase away
The curious hand that would unveil your might,
The curious eye that fain would pierce your light,
Or read the magic of your starry night.

Oh! mind thou art the spiritual part
Of Night and Day and Earth and Air and Space,
And in and with and through them all thou art;
They are the features of thine awful face,
And love through them is but the counterpart—
She smiles or frowns as we the changes trace
Upon thy mirror'd visage in our heart.

R. H. Fitzpatrick

PAGES FROM THE UPANISHADS

[Translated from the Sanskrit, for the *Irish Theosophist*]

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THE MEANING OF OM.

[From the Mândūkya Upanishad.]

The Self depends on the Unchanging; *Om* depends on its measures. The measures of *Om* are as the steps of the Self, and the steps of the Self are as the measures, which are *a*, *u*, and *m*. (8)

Waking life, as earthly fire, *aqui*, corresponds to *a* the first measure, from its acquisitiveness, and from arriving first. He indeed acquires all desires, and arrives first, who understands thus. (9)

Dream life, the astral, corresponds to *u*, the second measure, from being upward, and a uniter. He reaches upward, and is united, nor is born among those that know not the Eternal, who understands thus. (10)

Dreamless life, the intuitional, corresponds to *m*, the third measure, from its being a measurer and a mediator. He indeed measures all this world, and mediates, who understands thus. (11)

Corresponding to no measure indeed, and ungraspable, is the fourth step, in which the expanses have ceased, which is benign and secondless, and is as the *Om*.

The self, self-led, enters the Self, when it understands thus, when it understands thus. (12)

(The end of the Mândūkya Upanishad.)

C. J.

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JAGRATA, SVAPNA AND SUSHUPTI.

While the philosophical concepts of ancient India, concerning religion and cosmogony, are to some extent familiar and appreciated in these countries, its psychology, intimately related with its religion and metaphysics, is comparatively unknown. In Europe the greatest intellects have been occupied by speculations upon the laws and aspects of physical nature, while the more spiritual Hindus were absorbed in investigations as to the nature of life itself; by continual aspiration, devotion, introspection and self-analysis, they had acquired vast knowledge of the states of consciousness possible for man to enter upon; they had laid bare the anatomy of the mind, and described the many states that lay between the normal waking condition of man, and that final state of spiritual freedom and unity with BRAHMA, which it was the aim alike of religion and science to bring about. Most interesting among their ideas, was their analysis of the states of consciousness upon which we enter during sleep. Roughly speaking, they may be divided into two, which together with the waking state, make a trinity of states through which every person passes, whether he be aware of it or not. These states are known as:—Jagrata, waking; Svapna, dreaming; and Sushupti, deep sleep. The English equivalents of these words give no idea of the states. Passing out of Jagrata, the Indians held that, beyond the chaotic borderland, we entered, in Svapna and Sushupti, upon real states of being. Sushupti, the high-

est, was accounted a spiritual state; here the soul touches vaster centres in the great life and has communion with celestial intelligences. The unification of these three states into one is one of the results of Raj-Yoga; in this state the chela keeps memory of what occurred while his consciousness was in the planes of Svapna and Sushupti. Entrance upon these states should not I think be understood as meaning that the mind has deserted its fleshly tabernacle in search of such experience. Departure from the physical form is no more necessary for this than for clairvoyance, but a transfer of the consciousness in us from one plane to another is necessary.

Now as we generate Karma in the dreaming and deep sleep states which may either help or hinder the soul in its evolution, it is a matter of importance that we should take steps to promote the unification of these states, so that the knowledge and wisdom of any one state may be used to perfect the others. Our thoughts and actions in the waking state react upon the dreaming and deep sleep, and our experiences in the latter influence us in the waking state by suggestion and other means. The reason we do not remember what occurs in Svapna and Sushupti is because the astral matter which normally surrounds the thinking principle is not subtle enough to register in its fullness the experience of any one upon the more spiritual planes of consciousness. To increase the responsiveness of this subtle matter we have to practise concentration, and so heighten the vibrations, or in other words to evolve or perfect the astral principle. Modern science is rapidly coming to the conclusion that the differences perceived in objects around us, are not differences in substance, but differences of vibration in one substance. Take a copper wire; pass electrical currents through it, gradually increasing their intensity, and phenomena of sound, heat and light will be manifest, the prismatic colours appearing one after the other. Similarly by an increased intensity in the performance of every action, the consciousness is gradually transferred from the lower to the higher planes. In order to give a point, or to direct the evolving faculties into their proper channel, continual aspiration is necessary. Take some idea—the spiritual unity of all things, for example—something which can only be realized by our complete absorption in spiritual nature; let every action be performed in the light of this idea, let it be the subject of reverent thought. If this is persisted in, we will gradually begin to become conscious upon the higher planes, the force of concentration carrying the mind beyond the waking into Svapna and Sushupti. The period between retiring to rest and awakening, formerly a blank, will begin to be spotted with bright lights of consciousness, or, as we walk about during the day such knowledge will visit us. “He who is perfected in devotion findeth spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously in himself” says Krishna. Patanjali recommends dwelling on the knowledge that presents itself in dreams; if we think over any such experience, many things connected with it will be revealed, and so gradually the whole shadowy region will become familiar and attractive, and we will gain a knowledge of our own nature which will be invaluable and which cannot otherwise be acquired.

REVIEWS AND NOTES.

In "Watch Tower" Notes, (Decr. *Lucifer*.) two extracts are given from Bulls, issued respectively by Pope Clement XIV and Pope Pius VII, suppressing and reviving the Society of Jesus. They are interesting as shewing the different views taken of the order by two different heads of the church.

Signs are not wanting of anxiety on the part of certain priests in Dublin, about some of their "flock" who have become interested in the teachings of Theosophy. But we hasten to reassure them. It is but an instance of a forward movement which asserts the right of private judgment in matters of faith, and which ere long must be faced by the Roman Catholic Church.

There was a hearty response made to the invitation of our staff to an "At Home" at the publishing and printing offices, on Friday the 30th. Decr. It was successful in every way. In one corner Bro. Russell discoursed to an attentive group in tones "strange and mystical," while in another department, dancing was indulged in with much enthusiasm.

It is intended to utilize alternate Wednesday evenings at the Dublin Lodge, 3 Upr. Ely Place, by having meetings for public debate. We venture to hope that the speakers who at the meetings of other Societies invariably begin telling Theosophists their duty by confessing their ignorance of Theosophy will take the advantage thus afforded of learning something of its teaching, and putting its practicability to the test. The first meeting will be on the 18th. inst. the subject for debate being, "Are the methods of Modern Science unreliable?" to be opened by Mr. P. E. Jordan.

The Golden Stairs. By Arthur E. Waite. London. (Theosophical Publi-

cation Society.)

Like all other things, the legends of childhood undergo transformation; the monstrous elements, once thought indispensable, disappear, and the graceful mingles, more and more, with the grotesque. Mr. Waite, in his book of stories, *The Golden Stairs* now offers something purely spiritual and beautiful, while still moving in the wonderland dear to children.

These stories contain truths deeper than which few men can go, though they are put in the fairy-tale fashion, which makes them easy and delightful reading. Here and there, there are passages no child could understand, but perhaps the book is none the worse for that. The haunting beauty of many of the tales might well serve as a stimulus to further study, might give a life-long direction to thought.

"N. B." writes—Christmas Day at Headquarters was spent quietly and cheerily, in spite of the reduced number of the staff, but then what will not a vegetarian plum pudding accomplish!

Mrs. Cooper-Oakley's departure for Australia was unavoidably postponed for a month, but she really left for her long visit to the Antipodes, on the 30th.

News from Mrs. Besant is good, the lecturing tour is "progressing favourably," as doctors say; she had a very rough passage out, and writes that they were actually battered down for two days, the seas ran so high. Chicago has already been reached, and poor Mrs. Besant been subjected to severe cross-examinations from rapacious interviewers. But the interest aroused by her presence and lecture, is thereby all the more heightened and intensified. Schemes of work abound, the soup kitchen has been started, and the Crèche flourishes vigorously.

There is much interesting matter in *Le Lotus Bleu* for Dec. which will repay perusal. Besides several continued articles there is a strong and vigorous plea from the pen of "Philadelphie," for a more rational and liberal system of education than at present obtains amongst us. He points out that people as a general rule leave the education of their children too much to paid instructors, whose main object is not so much the development of the child's special gifts and aptitudes, but the turning out of so many specimens of cramming, which will serve to increase their fame as teachers, or reflect credit on the institutions to which they belong. "The Gods of the Religions" is the title of a closely-reasoned article in which the author endeavours to show that all the gods from time immemorial, have had a real existence, and have been powerful to affect human destiny solely through the aid of human ideation. Starting with the analogy that on the mental as on the physical plane, some things go to form the food of others, and that unless a body is maintained, suited to the plane on which the entity exists, it is powerless to operate on that plane; he goes on to show that, as thoughts are things on the mental plane, all the prayers, sacrifice and worship which have been offered up to the gods, whether to Moloch, Odin, Allah, Jehovah or any of the others, have been the nutriment, so to speak, from which they drew the power to influence human destiny, and that accord-

ing as disbelief in their efficacy has spread, so has their power waned.

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 In Dec. *Path* there appears a short but pithy article entitled "Problems in Psychology" by Dr. Buck. He says—"What consciousness may be *per se*, we know as little as we know the ultimate nature of matter and force. Nearly all of the leading scientists of the day admit that in the last analysis we know really nothing of matter and force. It may therefore be logically claimed, that our knowledge of mind, life and spirit is of precisely the same character, derived in the same way as is our knowledge of matter and force viz, through conscious experience in the process of evolution. Mr. Judge in an article on "Imagination and Occult Phenomena," relates, as an illustration of what he says on the imagination, how H. P. Blavatsky showed him a precipitation in the very act. She looked fixedly at a certain smooth piece of wood and slowly on it came out letters, which at last made a long sentence. "It formed before my eyes" he says, "and I could see the matter condense and pack itself on the surface. All the letters were like such as she could make with her hand, just because she was making the image in her brain, and of course followed her own peculiarities."

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 Mr. Burrowes' article promised in our last issue has been unavoidably delayed. We hope to have it in time for next issue.

OUR WORK.

The annual business meeting of the Dublin Lodge will be held on the 23rd. inst., at 3 Upper Ely Place, when the year's report will be submitted by the Secretary.

On Wednesday the 14th. Decr. D. N. Dunlop answered the question "Is Theosophy unpractical" in the negative, and proceeded to shew his reasons for the answer. He was ably supported by Bros. Russell and Jordan. On the 26th. Decr. Bro. Russell read a paper on "First Steps in Occultism," which led to an instructive discussion. Our article on "Jagrata, Svapna and Sushupti" embodies some of its main points.

NOTICE:— All the back nos. may still be had; subscription for the year 1/6 free. Articles for insertion should reach us by 1st of the month. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, 71 Lower Drumcondra Road, Dublin.