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OURSELVES.

“WE go right on!” We hope that the many shortcomings of the past year have been but an indication of our endeavours toward a more rounded perfection. Crude and sharply angular our initial effort has been, yet, we hope, not without promise of greater things. Although depending as much as ever on our friends elsewhere for interest and support, we intend to devote more of our attention during the coming year to Ireland.

In this country, perhaps, more than any other, the mutual distrust and intolerance, with which the devotees of the different sects—Roman Catholic and Protestant—regard each other, and the opposition by each, and all, against any attempt to harmonize the philosophy of things have been more marked. The Protestants’ faith and reason, have been aptly compared to boys playing at see-saw on a beam balanced by an immovable bar. Rome, however, does not see-saw at all. It stands solid on its feet; reason thrust down, and held there.

Some one has said, “Rome is a coal bed alike in its Theology, its art, custom, pageant, and ritual,” and here where she holds sway we find less aptitude in the art of competitive production, and the people less disposed, generally speaking, to industrial and mental energy. And why? Because that which was once light and heat, has become fossilized strata, hardened during the pressure of the ages. Protestantism too, that began as an assertion of the right of the individual to think for himself, in so far as it has receded from centralized Rome, has become weak and ineffective. It is noticeable also, that Agnostics find the satisfaction which the religion of Rome affords its adherents, by yielding themselves up to the pleasureable influences of Nature.

Strange as it may appear, through each and all the soul seeks for some fitting expression of itself. Each in a measure indicates the weakness of the other. Now, we think, it is just here where Theosophy comes in. It stands at the meeting of the ways. It recognizes that each system has its uses, but objects to the endeavours made to constitute each a finality. It asserts, that there can be no limits placed on the possibilities of the Soul, and that necessarily, all mental ligatures must be cut asunder, in the advance of wider culture and intelligence. It teaches us to disregard alluring promises, and threatenings of peril, and asks us to seek Truth for herself alone, for “there is no religion higher than Truth.”

As the mission of Theosophy in the world of to-day becomes understood, the old time prejudice will slowly disappear. Already those who were left on the one hand at the mercy of a bleak ecclesiasticism, and on the other, of a barren science,

have felt new joy and satisfaction in the channels of fresh discovery, and the vistas of thought opened up by a study of the old wisdom-religion; old, but ever renewing from that far off time, when "the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy."

It will be seen then, that we but seek to proclaim afresh, the old truths that have been almost obscured and obliterated, and so shed their light and warmth anew upon the many perplexing problems of to-day; to revive again that old joy and beauty through the forms of decay; to call forth the potency and promise of the God within every man. Beyond the warring of many creeds, there dwells harmony—the harmony of that deeper, fuller, song, which is the cradle of Man and of his living Soul.

Theosophy extends to-day over *every land*, but *our* message particularly is for Ireland. We are not without faith in its future. The fires were alight on its towers before England arose from the sea. The spirit of our ancient race still lives; still lives, and breathes. To her, we say, rise then! take your place once more in the van of spiritual freedom—"as beauty veiled like justice, might in thought"—and drink from the antique flagons of wisdom, filled with songs that by the world are heard no more.

Meantime "*we go right on*" full of hope and courage.

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THEOSOPHY IN PLAIN LANGUAGE.

XI. REINCARNATION (*continued*).

WE have endeavoured to show that the popular confusion and want of thought upon the question of the soul's nature, is one great reason why the doctrine of Reincarnation seems improbable and unwelcome to so many. When the modern Theosophical movement was started eighteen years ago, there existed but little interest in such enquiries—at all events of a widespread or general character. Two theories, not always very clearly distinguished, held the field; one that of materialism, which identified the soul with the body; the other that hazy conception of an "immortal something" conferred upon us at birth by God, which is still prevalent amongst the majority of Christians. Now one of the first and most characteristic features of Theosophy has been its analysis of man's inner being into *several* distinct constituents, some present to the ordinary consciousness, others still latent therein. A protest has been made, and an alternative suggested, to the old division, so crude and meaningless, of "soul and body." True, no very exhaustive or detailed account of the nature of the "seven principles" has been given, but the main point insisted on has been, that the roots of man's being extend far beneath and beyond that narrow circle of personal consciousness, of limited thoughts, emotions, desires, which we call our *self*, and that the Soul or Ego, far from being fully contained in and moulded by the physical brain and senses (as most people seem to imagine) is a distinct and complex entity, with subtle consciousness and faculties extending through many planes or realms of Nature besides this solid one of matter. It is therefore held that the real self acts *through* the body as one instrument only out of many; dwelling apart from it yet standing behind the "I" that it contains; and that as such it knows and participates in our actions as if from behind a screen—a screen transparent indeed to the inner vision, though opaque to the perceptions of what we term our "waking" selves.

An unexpected side-light upon this ancient doctrine of the Soul has come in recent years from the renewed interest awakened in the phenomena of somnambulism and kindred states. For often in these conditions, the outer senses being stilled, strange faculties and powers of the mind, an exalted intelligence and

clearness of memory have shone out, of whose presence the "waking" brain had given no sign. The confidence of materialist views of consciousness has received a check. More and more, among students of these things, the conviction has grown, that the brain is not the *cause* of thought but the *instrument* of the real Thinker, who remains behind it, and above its comprehension or perception; that in fact there exist in man two selves, an Inner and an Outer, one changeable, forgetful, perishable; the other calm, watchful, forgetting nothing, treasuring all experience for some mysterious purpose of its own. But whether or not hypnotism leads to or justifies such belief, the teaching is that of Theosophy, and this must be grasped ere the doctrine of Reincarnation can be properly understood, or its apparent difficulties explained.

Thus with regard to the question so often put, as to why we do not remember our past lives, the answer can soon be found in a true notion of what the Ego is who reincarnates. The truth (it will then be seen) is that the former lives are *not* forgotten. Their memory can be and has been recovered by some who have succeeded in reaching (whether by natural gift or by occult training) some unusual degree of union with the Inner Self. Where this is not attained, the outer memory naturally recalls but the doings of the personal self with which it has grown and developed, and only shows its heritage from the past in those special leanings, characteristics or aptitudes which most people exhibit more or less decidedly, from early infancy.

For it is held in the east, and in Theosophy, that what we call *character* is not the mere result of hereditary transmission (though heredity does supply the basis or material through which character works)—but far more the outcome of tendencies set up in past lives—tendencies which when strong enough impress themselves upon the permanent ego, and remain to form the seed, as it were, of new personalities, strictly continuous with those that have gone before. And here we find the *rationale* of the doctrine of *Karma*, or the great evolutionary law of adjustment and harmony which guides the soul's progress, and metes out to each man the opportunities or hindrances which his own hands have made him. Karma and Reincarnation are in fact corollary to one another. Together they afford us that solution of life's riddles, that clue to the enigma of existence, for which the West, with all her intellectual and material advance, feels herself so completely at a loss.

The objection is sometimes raised, that it is not consistent with justice that we should suffer the results of actions which we have forgotten. Perhaps, according to our notions of human justice, there is some force in the objection, which is, nevertheless, superficial, and not wholly applicable to the facts. One may point out, to begin with, that we all (or most of us) enjoy also many pleasures and comforts without in the least doubting our perfect right thereto. Yet if the suffering is unjust, the pleasures must, at least, be equally so. But (it will be answered) happiness is the natural and proper condition of man and requires no justification, whereas pain is *unnatural*, injurious, and wholly evil. Here is the crux of the whole matter. Here lurks the assumption which joined to the other false notion that loss of memory means change of identity, and that the person who suffers, and the person who produced the suffering, are different and distinct beings—underlies all complaints against Nature's just and wise law. Both assumptions are, however, gratuitous, hasty, and indefensible.

We hardly need to go even to the Theosophic doctrine of soul-evolution to find a beneficent office constantly fulfilled by pain. But in the light of such a design and purpose behind life as that doctrine reveals, one begins still more clearly to see that pain, equally with pleasure, is necessary for that deepening and purification of the inner nature that is to culminate in Godhood. So then if we regard all suffering as a discipline as well as a penalty, as a probation no less than as a punishment, the question of injustice no longer appears in the same light, and though we may not at

once arrive at that indifference to pain and pleasure which the Sages counsel, we shall be less ready to cry out about injustice, or to wish to lecture the wise nurse Nature on the faulty systems of education which she has adopted for the upbringing of her children.

As to that other objection that we really suffer, or are rewarded, for the deeds of someone else, because even if the Inner Self recalls the former life and its actions, we, the sufferers, do not remember—all that can be said is, that while such memory might or might not be gratifying, there is no injustice, but in all probability a benefit, in its non-possession at present. It sometimes happens that people lose their memory completely even of past events in their present life. They nevertheless are constantly liable to the direct effects, whether good or bad, of those events. This never strikes us as unjust. On the other hand, how often do we find memory a hindrance rather than a help to the acquirement of fresh faculties, the exercise of energies that we feel within us but have not courage to use. We think we have a tradition to keep up, or the influence of some false creed or culture lies heavy upon us, and life's calls and opportunities pass us by unheeded. Therefore Nature is ever drawing a curtain behind us as we advance, planting us down in new surroundings, setting before us fresh chances and tests. It is all strictly in the way of desert, of course. We reap but what we ourselves have sown. But is it not a possible advantage that we are not (as otherwise we might be) elated or depressed, or confused, or otherwise diverted from the present and its calls, by thoughts and memories of a past whose lessons, though pictured on the mind, might not yet be engrained within the heart?

Still, be it remembered that these memories are not beyond recall. Their secret is known to the enduring Self—that "Pilot" whom all may hope at some time to meet with, face to face, and of whom some great souls, even now, have knowledge. The time is not ripe as yet for most men, but some day, as Paul said, "we shall know, as we are known."

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LOSS AND GAIN.

"And find in loss a gain to match."

We weep and moan for what can never be,
 We raise a golden image of the past
 And bow before it, worshipping. Held fast,
 We know not yet the law that makes us free
 The law of our own being; cannot see
 That we from change to change advancing, cast
 Upon the flame which burns while time shall last
 The garments of the soul. "Come unto me"
 The Christos ever cries. We hear the call
 Even now, with half dimmed ears; to understand
 Is not yet ours. But when that day shall fall
 When we, sad wanderers in a weary land,
 Have found the promised rest, we know that all
 Will then be ours by that divine command.

E. M. D.

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AT THE DAWN OF THE KĀLIYUGA.

WHERE we sat on the hillside together that evening the winds were low and the air was misty with light. The huge sunbrowned slope on which we were sitting was sprinkled over with rare spokes of grass; it ran down into the vagueness underneath where dimly the village could be seen veiled by its tresses of lazy

smoke. Beyond was a bluer shade and a deeper depth, out of which, mountain beyond mountain, the sacred heights of Himalay rose up through star-sprinkled zones of silver and sapphire air. How gay were our hearts! the silent joy of the earth quickened their beating. What fairy fancies alternating with sweetest laughter came from childish lips! in us the Golden Age whispered her last, and departed. Up came the white moon, her rays of dusty pearl slanting across the darkness from the old mountain to our feet. "A bridge!" we all cried, "Primaveeta, who long to be a sky-walker, here is a bridge for you!"

Primaveeta only smiled; he was always silent; he looked along the gay leagues of pulsating light that lead out to the radiant mystery. We went on laughing and talking; then Primaveeta broke his silence.

"Vyassa," he said, "I went out in thought, I went into the light, but it was not that light. I felt like a fay; I sparkled with azure and lilac; I went on, and my heart beat with longing for I knew not what, and out and outward I sped till desire stayed and I paused, and the light looked into me full of meaning. I felt like a spark, and the dancing of the sea of joy bore me up, up, up!"

"Primaveeta, who can understand you?" said his little sister Vina, "you always talk of the things no one can see; Vyassa, sing for us."

"Yes! yes! let Vyassa sing!" they all cried; and they shouted and shouted until I began:—

"Shadowy petalled, like the lotus, loom the mountains with their snows:
Through the sapphire Soma rising, such a flood of glory throws
As when first in yellow splendour Brahma from the lotus rose.

"High above the darkening mounds where fade the fairy lights of day,
All the tiny planet folk are waving us from far away;
Thrilled by Brahma's breath they sparkle with the magic of the gay.

"Brahma, all alone in gladness, dreams the joys that throng in space,
Shepherds all the whirling splendours onward to their resting place,
Where at last in wondrous silence fade in One the starry race."

"Vyassa is just like Primaveeta, he is full of dreams to-night," said Vina. And indeed I was full of dreams; my laughter had all died away; a vague and indescribable unrest came over me; the universal air around seemed thrilled by the stirring of unknown powers. We sat silent awhile; then Primaveeta cried out: "Oh, look, look, look, the Devas! the bright persons! they fill the air with their shining."

We saw them pass by and we were saddened, for they were full of solemn majesty; overhead a chant came from celestial singers full of the agony of farewell and departure, and we knew from their song that the gods were about to leave the earth which would nevermore or for ages witness their coming. The earth and the air around it seemed to tingle with anguish. Shuddering we drew closer together on the hillside while the brightness of the Devas passed onward and away; and clear cold and bright as ever, the eternal constellations, which change or weep not, shone out, and we were alone with our sorrow. Too awed we were to speak, but we clung closer together and felt a comfort in each other; and so, crouched in silence; within me I heard as from far away a note of deeper anguish, like a horn blown out of the heart of the ancient Mother over a perished hero: in a dread moment I saw the death and the torment; he was her soul-point, the light she wished to shine among men. What would follow in the dark ages to come, rose up before me in shadowy, overcrowding pictures; like the surf of a giant ocean they fluctuated against the heavens,

NOTE.—Kaliyuga. The fourth, the *black* or iron age, our present period, the duration of which is 432,000 years. It began 3,102 years B.C. at the moment of Krishna's death, and the first cycle of 5,000 years will end between the years 1897 and 1898.

crested with dim, gigantesque and warring figures. I saw stony warriors rushing on to battle; I heard their fierce hard laughter as they rode over the trampled foe; I saw smoke arise from a horrible burning, and thicker and blacker grew the vistas, with here and there a glow from some hero-heart that kept the true light shining within. I turned to Primaveeta who was crouched beside me: he saw with me vision for vision, but, beyond the thick black ages that shut me out from hope, he saw the resurrection of the True, and the homecoming of the gods. All this he told me later, but now our tears were shed together. Then Primaveeta rose up and said, "Vyassa, where the lights were shining, where they fought for the True, there you and I must fight; for, from them spreads out the light of a new day that shall dawn behind the darkness." I saw that he was no longer a dreamer; his face was firm with a great resolve. I could not understand him, but I determined to follow him, to fight for the things he fought for, to work with him, to live with him, to die with him; and so, thinking and trying to understand, my thoughts drifted back to that sadness of the mother which I had first felt. I saw how we share joy or grief with her, and, seized with the inspiration of her sorrow, I sang about her loved one:—

"Does the earth grow grey with grief
For her hero darling fled?
Though her vales let fall no leaf,
In our hearts her tears are shed.

"Still the stars laugh on above,
Not to them her grief is said;
Mourning for her hero love
In our hearts her tears are shed.

"We her children mourn for him,
Mourn the elder hero dead;
In the twilight grey and dim
In our hearts the tears are shed."

"Vyassa," they said, "you will break our hearts." And we sat in silence and sorrow more complete till we heard weary voices calling up to us from the darkness below: "Primaveeta! Vyassa! Chandra! Parvati! Vina! Vasudeva!" calling all our names. We went down to our homes in the valley; the breadth of glory had passed away from the world, and our hearts were full of the big grief that children hold.

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NOTES ON THE ADWAITA PHILOSOPHY (*Continued*)

Compiled from "Monism or Adwaitism," "Vasudeva Manava," "The Theosophic Glossary," etc.

This spiritual wisdom which annihilates individuality is of two kinds, the indirect and the direct. The indirect kind is that which is gained by hearing the teaching of others, or by reading the sacred books. This kind of wisdom, as the Adwaita puts it, destroys disbelief in the Reality, or as we should put it, it breaks down Atheism or Materialism, and enables the student to realise that God *may* be a Reality. In short it converts an Atheist into an Agnostic. He hears or reads that others have known God, and by that means comes to see that a knowledge of God is not impossible. This, as the Adwaita says, is Hearing, or the first stage. Then after the removal of doubt through hearing, dawns the belief in the existence of the Real

and thus the way is prepared for direct knowledge, the second kind of wisdom, and the only path to final emancipation. This direct knowledge destroys not only Atheism but agnosticism. The indirect wisdom has destroyed disbelief in the Reality. The direct wisdom does more, it brings knowledge of the Reality. As the Adwaita says, "A man becomes firmly convinced of the Reality of the Cause and not of the Effects" (Vasudeva Manava). "It is the dictum of Vedanta that whoever, after due enquiry, becomes conscious of the fact that there is no other Reality in the Universe than Brahman, and that I (the Ego) is only that Brahman—he is freed from the trammels of birth." (Vasudeva Manava).

The Adwaita Philosophy also deals with the study of the evolution of the universe as a help to the acquiring of right knowledge or realising the omnipresence of Atma. The plan of evolution which it sets forth is similar in its main features to that given in the Secret Doctrine, but differs from it in various details. It is as it were another expression of the same set of truths. The best elementary presentments of it are given in "Monism or Adwaitism," and in an article in *Lucifer* for March, 1892. In each of these there is a table or plan of the evolution of the Universe as considered from the point of view of the Adwaita Philosophy, with an explanation in detail in each case. The system is much simpler and easier to grasp than that of the Secret Doctrine, and forms a useful prelude to it. It is possible to grasp it as a whole, and thus get some notion of what evolution means, whereas the method of the Secret Doctrine cannot be grasped as a whole by a beginner.

One of the main features in the Adwaita system is the omnipresence in the material universe of the three qualities or *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*, sometimes translated truth, passion and darkness, sometimes goodness, badness, and indifference; and in various other ways. These three qualities are frequently alluded to in all the ancient Hindu writings. They exist in all men, as well as in all aspects of nature. The Bhagavad-gita says "There is no creature on earth or among the hosts of Heaven who is free from these three qualities which arise from nature." But it also says that to obtain liberation it is necessary to rise above these three qualities, "*to sit as one unconcerned above the three qualities and understand by them.*"

Thus liberation does not mean goodness precisely, but a rising superior to both good and evil, a separating oneself from the acts of the personality, a realising of one's true nature as the Universal Spirit, who takes no part in the affairs of life, but simply watches and directs them. When a man gets into an impersonal frame of mind, ceases to identify himself with the acts of his personality, but merely studies those acts and analyses them as a disinterested spectator, from that time forward he makes no new karma. He is no longer the animal in which he dwells. He directs the animal, but he no longer *is* the animal, and its past misdeeds do not distress him. Then he begins to be independent of blame or praise, for he is no longer the person whom men praise or blame. He is the persons' master, whom neither praise or blame can reach. All the energy which was before spent in useless regrets, in vain desires, in childish self gratification, is now set free for useful work, so that his rate of progress towards the goal rapidly increases.

When the Ego has resolved to throw aside all hope of reward, and has thus ceased to attach itself to results, Karma will work itself out, but the Ego will be free from its effects, and will lay up no more Karma. "There is freedom under necessity. Man is free by his very nature so far as his spirit is concerned, but he is under strict necessity so far as his personality is concerned" (Monism or Adwaitism). The essence of the Adwaita Philosophy may be expressed in the following words from the Bhagavad-gita:—"A man is said to be confirmed in spiritual knowledge when he forsaketh every desire which entereth into his heart, and of himself is happy and content in the Self, through the Self. His mind is undisturbed in adversity, he is happy and contented in prosperity, and he is a stranger to anxiety, fear, and anger."

SARAH CORBETT.

THE GREAT BREATH.

Its edges foamed with amethyst and rose,
 Withers once more the old blue flower of day ;
 There where the ether like a diamond glows
 Its petals fade away.

A shadowy tumult stirs the dusky air ;
 Sparkle the delicate dews, the distant snows ;
 The great deep thrills, for through it everywhere
 The breath of Beauty blows.

I saw how all the trembling ages past,
 Moulded to her by deep and deeper breath,
 Neared to the hour when Beauty breathes her last
 And knows herself in death.

G. W. R.

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UNITY

“That light which burns inside thee, dost thou feel it different in anywise from the light that shines in thy Brother-men.

“It is in no way different, though the prisoner is held in bondage by Karma, and though its outer garments delude the ignorant into saying, Thy Soul and My Soul.”

I have failed ! how often that thought turns peace to pain, and life's sweetness into the very waters of Marah.

In some task bravely undertaken, some deed of mercy attempted, failure instead of success has apparently crowned our effort ; what does it matter if we have failed, if the motive has been unselfish, the work bravely done ? why should we be exempt from failure ? Why should we claim that results often only to be estimated in years to come, should be at once obvious to us.

“Have you heard that it is good to win the day ? I say that it is good to fall—battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won ” writes Walt Whitman ; and it is well to remember that fact sometimes. “In our dark fortnights ” lit by no gleam of intuition ; in the hours of intense weariness that follow repeated and long sustained effort ; in the blankness and desolation that often come after moments of enlightenment ; when the struggle seems endless, and the forlorn hope not worth the battling ; when the tired feet stand still and no advance seems possible, and the helpful hands are folded for a time in despondency—then it is well to call to mind past days when the heart-light shone upon the path ; it is not extinguished ; although dark night envelope us it shines there still behind the clouds.

If the failure is real and not imaginary, what has caused it ? The hand could not accomplish the work the brain planned. True, but what hand ever did. The act has not expressed the feeling of the heart : but the motive was all, the deed nothing. The will has been hampered by the body : but to have willed is in itself surely something ; and we should learn to believe what is written for our guidance, that “each failure is success and each sincere attempt wins its reward in time.”

Let us look at the matter closely : our very words will themselves reveal the cause of failure. “I have failed.” The definitions, the words of separateness, may contain that letter. The alphabet of altruism has no *I* ; while we retain it we have not learned to kill out all sense of separateness, or recognized that before we can attempt

to work for humanity or in Master's name we must be equally willing to stand aside if needs be, and let others do the work.

Or want of harmony may account for it. Some "little rift within the lute" and the music of life is changed to discord; some harsh word repented of as soon as said, perhaps, but which hurt another; some bitter thought swift as lightning that swept across the lake of our consciousness, and ruffled the surface; some rebellion against the good Law; or impatience with our environment; some false note somewhere; at all costs we must restore harmony, accept our Karma, "kill out the sense of separation and erase the *I* from the future record of our life.

To find the place of peace, to be able to help others, to succeed, we must recognize the unity of all. "Thy soul and my soul" is not the language of the True, we cannot help others unless one with them. I fail to relieve my brother's sufferings as long as I regard him as an object of compassion. I read his heart, only when mine beats in union with his, and I suffer in his sufferings through oneness with him.

You cannot raise those whose feet are held fast in the mire of life, if you strive to reach down to them from levels you have reached. It cannot be done. The only place where help becomes possible is where they are. If they find footing there you can. Their sin, their sorrow is yours; until that lesson is learned it is useless to strive to raise them.

Your words of cheer cannot reach other hearts until you learn the heart language. Then only can you "be in full accord with all that lives," and become attuned to every sigh and thought of suffering humanity. The heart language spells one word, *Unity*, and translated means the intense conviction of non-separateness of all. To learn that language in all its fulness, the voice "must have lost the power to wound." If I am my brother I shall not vex him with hasty words, nor shall I strive for supremacy, or fancied rights, or be over careful to take offence at trifles.

Harmony in word and act, unity in all things—if these were attained what might not be achieved? One thing at least; the basis of Universal Brotherhood upon which the long-looked for age of equality and fraternity might rest, would be firmly laid.

Unity alone will make it possible for the gracious influence to flow from other planes to ours, until in the lapse of time peace would lie "like a bright shaft of light across the land."

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K. B. L.

PROOF AS TO MASTERS

(From *Path of October*, 1893.)

ALWAYS since the first proclamation by Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Sinnett of the existence and work of Masters, there has continued a controversy as to the nature and sufficiency of the evidence. Most persons outside the Theosophical Society reject the doctrine and despise the evidence; many within it regard both as having some plausibility, though to be treated rather as a "pious opinion" than an actual fact; a few are convinced that Masters are an evolutionary necessity as well as a certified reality; and a still smaller number have had their belief fortified by a personal experience which is conclusive. To the first, Masters are a chimera; to the second, a probability; to the third a truth; to the fourth, a certainty. Is there any reason to suppose that the assurance of the last can be made to extend to the others, and, if so, by what means and upon what lines? This raises the question of the evidence available in the specific case of Masters.

The asserted fact is that there exists a body of exalted men, with faculties, powers, and knowledge enormously transcending those we cognize, who, though usually unseen, are ceaselessly interested in the well-being of humanity and cease-

lessly working to promote it. It is an assertion of much the same kind as that there are Angels, though somewhat more unfamiliar, and a not unnatural tendency to distrust novelty prompts to exaction of explicit evidence. Such evidence in such a case may be (*a*) direct sight, or (*b*) the execution of marvels impossible to ordinary human beings, or (*c*) the disclosure of truths unknown to humanity on our level, or (*d*) an interior influence or impression upon the soul referable to no other source. And yet it is clear that direct sight would not of itself identify a Master, since his physical body is like that of other men, and also that an interior influence or impression would prove nothing to one not already convinced. Hence the evidence demanded is a visible appearance of a Master, coupled with a conclusive display of Occult power or knowledge.

But even this evidence, in the form of testimony, is pronounced inadequate. Various witnesses have desposed to a sight of Masters—Col. Olcott having had repeated interviews with them, Occult powers have been exhibited, and no small part of the early Theosophical literature is of letters written by them upon matters beyond the ken of any scientist or historian. The triple fact has received evidence copious in amount, more so, indeed, than have geographical explorations which the civilized world accepts as final. It is rejected, however, by very many readers because merely the assertion of others and therefore not demonstrative. “I must see for myself: if I am to believe that Masters exist, it must be because one has Himself appeared to me or otherwise evidenced certainly His power. Testimony is not proof: only experience can be *that*. And so a frequent attitude is of entire incredulity until and because a Master gives direct and visible demonstration to each separate critic.

At this point two questions arise: *first*, to what class of persons have Masters, in fact, vouchsafed proof of their existence?; *second*, with what object? Inspection of the cases shows that they were of individuals avowedly interested in the cause of humanity and actively at work on its behalf; not curiosity-seekers, not scientists examining a theory under test conditions, not indifferent members of the T. S. And the class discloses the object of their selection; *viz.* that they should be equipped with fact needful for their efficient work, be assured that the work was actually fostered by the real Founders, be strengthened and impelled by the consciousness of near relation. To reward for zeal and to endow with certainly was the motive of the demonstration.

If this has been the purport of such evidential disclosures of Masters as have been recorded in Theosophical literature, it is fair to infer that it rules in later cases and will persist unchanged. The primary object is not to furnish tested examples whereby an incredulous world may be coerced into acceptance, or even to satisfy lukewarm Theosophists that there is more in the doctrine than they are yet ready to concede. Whether a scoffer or an indifferentist believes in the existence of Masters can hardly be a matter of moment to Masters Themselves, for the absence of interest makes needless an attempt at conviction. Why should a Master concern Himself with demonstrating a fact for which the recipient is unprepared, for which he cares nothing, and of which he would make no use? Why should any power expend itself on a soil suspicious of it, unwilling to receive it, unfitted to utilize it? And if it be urged that irrefragable proof is the first requirement from agents soliciting an intellectual conviction, the answer is that Masters solicit nothing; if that there can be no blame to doubt unremoved by evidence, the answer is that no blame has been imputed, no criminality incurred. The evidence has been to a specific class, for a specific purpose: no one outside of it has material for grievance.

Since the departure of H.P.B., the exhibitions of Masters' activity in the Society, and even of Their interest in individual members, seem to have increasingly multiplied. In the published writings of those nearer to our Unseen Protectors than are we ordinary members, there are very striking indications of a loosening of reserve, a

freer disclosure, a more explicit statement, than has ever yet been ever supposed possible. Eyes not specially quick to discern have perceived marks of a changing policy, and are prepared for still fuller revelations in a future very near. Nay, on lower levels, in quarters where no favours had been anticipated or even coveted, this enlargement of Adept manifestation has had place. That in certain remarkable instances America should lately have been the scene need surprise no one who remembers H.P.B.'s prophecies of its future. If no proclamation of facts has startled the Section, if no details have crept through the ranks, this means only that the purpose of such manifestation is now, as it was formerly, a reward to faithful workers and an aid to their better work.

Certainly it is conceivable that there are epochs in organized labor and in individual career when extraordinary measures of help are fitting. Crises in work, crises in character, crises in time arise, wherefrom may come a permanent issue for good if all can be guided rightly. It may be that the turning-point means a sudden evolution of energy invaluable in the mission of the Society; or that a wounded spirit, wounded by suffering, needs succour from the Masters of Compassion; or that a group of united workers have reached the stage of fuller union and richer labor. To the Wise Ones all forms of want in Their servants appeal, and in the vast treasury of Adept resource is found every means to meet them. Counsel, sympathy, strengthening, help, revelation of the past and of the future, every necessary aid is at their disposal; and whether it is transmitted in messages or letters, or audible sounds, what matters it if the source is certain and the end secured.

In the more recent, as in the earlier, manifestations of Masters' interest, the recipients and the motive remain the same. It is to Their zealous, faithful servants and friends that the demonstration comes, and it comes as a reward for work, an encouragement, a stimulus to more work. Even if in no one mind had ever moved a doubt as to the assertion "We always help those who help us," there might have been in many a need for help,—and then the help came. But it came on the lines of the assertion.

This very simple truth is filled with a lesson for all Theosophists. There is heard at times a question as to the reality of Masters, or of the sufficiency of its proof, or of Their actual manifestation in the Society. Men say that they will not believe unless they see with their own eyes, and test with their own organs. Very well; let it be so. But then they must furnish the condition to the manifestation. It is not intellectual interest or critical acumen or even open-mindedness to proof; it is that sincere and unselfish devotion to the Theosophic Cause, that continuous and whole-souled labor on its behalf, which identifies them in spirit with Masters and makes relations fitting. When they have demonstrated that identification, and when need arises for distinct disclosure, it will be given. Anyone solicitous for proof of Masters should first test his claim to it, and it is easy to query in himself whether he and They are so far alike in aim and effort that it is proper they should meet. If the life is indolent, indifferent, self-seeking, what have the two in common? Why should be conceded to curiosity what is avowedly reserved for service? But if the searching question shows identity of purpose and of zeal, the community of character is assured and then manifestation in the hour of need becomes a promise. It may not be to the eyes, and it may not be in phenomena or marvel, but it will be abounding and conclusive, and the enriched soul, filled with peace and abiding trust, will rest as upon a rock, doubts and misgivings and forebodings powerless forevermore. "Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." "We ALWAYS help those who help us."

ALEXANDER FULLERTON, F.T.S.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

EXPRESSION OF BELIEF IS NOT DOGMATISM.

To the Editor of the "Irish Theosophist."

DEAR SIR.—In the course of conversation, and of reading Theosophical journals, I have gathered that there is an opinion afloat, that Theosophists should not express publicly their belief in certain tenets—the existence of Mahatmas especially—unless they are prepared to come forward with proofs of their statements; because to do so would be to dogmatise. But I must confess that I do not see where the dogmatism comes in, for I have always understood that a dogma is a proposition *forced upon* people by authority, a very different thing from merely stating one's conviction of a thing, and leaving others to accept or reject it as their reason dictates. Surely, Sir, it would be very prejudicial to the progress of Theosophic ideas, if we were all to abstain from proclaiming our beliefs merely from fear that a few weak-minded persons might accept them dogmatically? I cannot *prove* the existence of Masters to other people, but I do not see why I should be prevented from putting the idea before them for investigation, and from telling them what my own convictions are in the matter. People know the T. S. is not dogmatic, and if they accept my statements as dogmas it is not my fault. Hoping I may have the benefit of your views on this subject, I am, etc.—“NOT ASHAMED OF MY CONVICTION.”

————:O:————

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

THAT pure great light which is radiant; that great glory; that verity which the gods worship; that by means of which the sun shines forth—that eternal divine being is perceived by devotees. The real and the unreal have both the same real entirely as their basis. The being who is the inner Self, is not seen, being placed in the heart. Meditating on him, a wise man remains placid.—*Sanatsugatiya*.

The good is one thing, the pleasant another; these two having different objects claim a man. It is well with him who clings to the good; he who chooses the pleasant, misses his end.—*Katha Upanishad*.

————:O:————

DUBLIN LODGE.

The Discussions at 3 Upper Ely-place, during the following month will be as follows:—

- Oct. 18th—“A Study in Mythology.”
- ” 25th—“Consciousness.”
- Nov. 1st—“A Seventeenth Century Theosophist.”
- ” 8th—“Reincarnation.”
- ” 15th—“The Three Qualities.”

Opened by Brothers Jordan, Roberts, Magee, Varian, and Harrison, respectively.

Good reports of some recent meetings have appeared in the local newspapers. The meetings have been very well attended.

The printing plant is now at 3 Upper Ely-place, and some useful reprints of valuable works may soon be undertaken.

FRED. J. DICK, *Secretary*.