

## **A Summary of Bertram Keightley's Lectures in America**

**by Bertram Keightley**

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[Page 3] WE are all interested in efforts to spread, as widely as possible, the benefits that result from a knowledge of Theosophy. But when these efforts are attended with such marked success as that which has followed the addresses of Mr. Bertram Keighley in the United States it is felt that a permanent record of the good work done will be welcomed. It will, moreover, answer two purposes. In the first place an epitome of lectures delivered to audiences for the most part ignorant of the scope and objects of Theosophy, will be useful to put into the hands of inquirers; in the second it will permit the expression of heartfelt esteem and sympathy with one who has thrown aside all considerations of personal ease to devote himself untiringly to the interests of humanity.

An attempt will be made to put before the reader a complete statement of the ground covered by Mr. Keightley; and only such additions will be made to the lecturer's words, as reported in the American press, as may serve to link together parts which would otherwise appear disjointed.

The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875, by Colonel Henry S. Olcott, and Madame Blavatsky, a Russian. The first is a soldier of eminence, who has held high places of honour and trust in this country, and the second is a lady of rank and family in her native land. It would seem strange that the organization should have taken the name of Theosophy, when it does not accept any of its dogmas. The explanation is found on consideration of the ancient meaning of the word. It was first used in Alexandria, and its fundamental idea was the union of all religions. As the Society is founded on universal brotherhood, it accepts the idea of the unity of religions, and strives to bring them into harmony. The Society is a protest against the materialism of the day, and the aim of its members is to recall to men the spiritual side of life.

The chief principle of the Society is co-operation, and its mission is to establish in the world a true feeling of that brotherhood which binds all men into one common family. The Society has no creed, tenets, or religion. In non-sectarianism it is absolute, and it requires from its members exactly the same toleration in regard to the opinions of others as each claims for his own. In reference to Theosophy, it is an ancient system of thought, embodying an [Page 4] accurate, scientific, and experimental knowledge of those planes of nature which transcend the observation of the physical senses. It is as old as the human race, and its existence can be traced from the earliest time of which we have any recollection. Madame Blavatsky, by her literary works, has been largely instrumental in putting the system into a form suited to our present mental tendencies. Theosophists do not regard her writing as infallible, but as a text-book and guide, to assist the student in his own researches. The endeavour of Theosophists is to follow the rule laid down by Gautama Buddha: "Do not believe a thing because I say it. Do not believe a thing because the Scriptures teach it. Do not believe a thing because others believe it. But believe it only when

you have satisfied your reason in regard to it". Theosophy is not Buddhism, however, any more than it is Mohammedanism or Christianity. It is the essential truth underlying all these, for, in the opinion of Theosophists, religion is merely the science of those planes and states of being which lie beyond the cognisance of our physical senses. Theosophy differs from modern science in that it analyses the universe into three factors instead of two. Materialism regards the universe as built up of matter in motion, and endeavours to trace the origin of intelligence from this matter in motion. But Theosophy recognises three co-existing factors in nature : matter, motion, and mind, or, substance, energy, and intelligence. In its application to human life, Theosophy recognises as its mental doctrine the idea of evolution, though it differs from the Darwinian school in many parts of detail. It teaches the growth and development of the human individual through successive reincarnations or re-embodiments of this spiritual individuality upon this earth. The circumstances and surroundings of each re-incarnation, as well as the inborn faculties, aptitudes and tendencies of the child being the result of his own action in preceding lives upon this earth. As our lives are composed of days and nights, and there are days and nights of the universe of immense duration, and practically infinite to our comprehension, although really only as drops of water in the mighty ocean. The out-breathing of the universe becomes an intelligent power which informs all being and nature. There is no such thing as creation out of nothing. We trace manifestations of ideas, forms, types, species, varieties, and individuals. This process is sometimes referred to as the descent of spirit into matter, for matter is the crystallization of spirit. In stones and rocks, modern science recognises vibrations of atoms, but Theosophy teaches that a consciousness exists in stone or rock which, to our finite minds, is absolutely inconceivable. The material aspect undergoes a change at last, in the return cycle, and ultimately the universal return to the great mother, resting in her bosom till the time comes for the dawn of a new day upon a more perfect scale. .The law of harmony, or the law of equilibrium, is the basis of all form of law recognised by science. For what purpose is all [Page 5] this ? The primary fact is a spiritual monad, which is eternal in the past as well as in the future. It has descended into matter under every form of manifestation. In past cycles the spiritual monad has evolved upward through all stages of plants, and animals, up to man himself. It then crystallizes and acquires immortality. This constitutes the individuality of the true inner man, which is *per se* immortal. Individuality is not the same as personality, the latter being only the experience which pertains to a single physical life, as Mr. Smith or Mr. Jones. The goal of man, or selfless immortality, is directly opposed to selfishness, which is death and destruction. Union of the personal self with the divine self forms what Buddhists term Nirvana, or conscious bliss and rest in eternity. The individual is like an actor who plays different parts on successive nights. The actor is always one and the same, but he identifies himself successively with the various parts he performs. Tonight he is Hamlet, tomorrow King Lear, next Macbeth, and the following, Mark Antony. So the individuality manifests in one life as Mr. Smith, next as Mr. Jones, and so on in another form until it has simulated every type of experience possible on earth. The monad is sexless and androgynous. On our plane it manifests through male or female, the sexes usually being alternate in successive incarnations; though there are some exceptions to this rule. In regard to a human being, Theosophy sees in him seven modes of manifestation. First, his gross material body, which we perceive through material senses; second, his vitality; third, the ethereal form in which, and through which, his grosser or physical manifestation, is built; fourth, the animal instincts and passions; fifth, the mind or intelligence; sixth, the spiritual soul or the most subtle and the highest form in which matter can exist; seventh and last, that divine ray or animation that traverses life after life, through the other six, and finally constitutes all, the sum of previous incarnations.

Re-incarnation means the re-embodiment of the true ego, or the individuality, and this re-incarnation is brought about under known laws, called Karma. It is obvious to everyone who will pause a moment, that one life, even if it be extended a hundred years, is not adequate to experience all the things necessary to beautify and develop the individuality; besides, re-incarnation gives a clear solution of many mysteries in

human nature which cannot be explained by heredity or any other principle. At the present time re-incarnation is the belief of two-thirds of the human race, and in early times it was probably accepted by a still larger proportion. It is a Christian doctrine, as is manifest from the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, the instance of the man born blind, and several other passages in the Gospel. It was held by Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and, to some extent, by St. Augustine. It is the basis of the doctrine of original sin, and sheds light upon the double nature of man, and the continual contest between flesh and spirit. [Page 6]

In a word, that it alone adequately solves the problem of life. Many people object to the doctrine of re-incarnation on the ground that we do not remember any prior state of existence, but Theosophy teaches that is only due to the fact that the physical brain can be conscious only of what has been registered upon it. The physical brain is a new formation in each life, and is in most people not sufficiently sensitive to register impressions proceeding from the spirituality and individuality within man. But what is called the voice of conscience is, in truth, nothing but the impulse communicated to our physical consciousness by our inner selves. As the human race evolves, the physical mechanism will respond more readily to these impressions, and we shall regain the memory of our past lives. There are men living who, by a special course of life and training, have acquired that faculty, and they state that re-incarnation is a fact. Theosophists maintain that the doctrine of re-incarnation may be reasonably accepted by men, because it affords the best and only satisfactory explanation of the inequalities of birth, and of the innate tendencies with which every child is born, and of many other of the mysterious problems of life. But remember that these are not the doctrines of the Theosophical Society, but the conclusions arrived at by many of its members as the result of investigation and research. Certain experiments prove that consciousness can be preserved at a distance from the physical organism; that the greater part of the eternal universe is transcendental to our physical senses, as demonstrated by dream life and somnambulism. Space cannot be eliminated from human consciousness. It must be omnipotent and infinite; lying at the foundation of all phenomena that we see in nature, under the three aspects of eternal substance or matter, eternal motion or energy, and abstract, absolute consciousness. These are not separate things, but one, everywhere present at every point. The personal self is embraced in a larger whole. The true ego preserves all that is highest and best in numerous incarnations. The theory that the earth moves round the sun is accepted because it best explains all the facts observed. For a similar reason the doctrine of reincarnation should be received. It is a matter of recollection to some persons, particularly children.

Theosophy teaches that after death the human ego passes into a subjective condition, and there enjoys the complete fruition of all its higher affections, loves, and aspirations. All the animal passions, impulses, and desires are left behind in an intermediate state before the ego passes into the subjective condition in which the ego is wholly absorbed in the bliss of its present experience. It does not realize the fact that it has left the physical world, and is too fully occupied to reflect upon and think about the actual state, which is like that of the man who is absorbed in listening to a strain of beautiful music. His attention is too completely engaged to permit him to be conscious of anything except the music to which he is listening. While he remains [Page 7] in that condition he is oblivious to his actual surroundings, and will even be unaware that someone is speaking to him. But remember the experience of the ego in the subjective world are real to it, and many times more vivid than are any of the experiences of the earth-life, of which we are familiar. Since the ego is in a subjective condition, it cannot meet and recognise departed spirits in the ordinary sense of the meaning of those words; but all those to whom it has been attached, or whom it has loved during earth-life, will be present as really and actually as if they were still living together in actual life. And this, whether those persons are already dead or still living upon the earth. The

best analogy to guide one in forming a correct conception of the subjective state of existence may be found in the study of our dream-life. In a vivid dream we are conscious, of elaborate scenery and surroundings. We hold long and animated conversations with persons living and dead, or even with strangers, and while we are dreaming, the whole experience is as actual and real to us as our waking life. But, nevertheless, there can be no question that we are ourselves both the creator of the scenery and surroundings of our dreams, and of the personages who figure therein, and we are the inspirers of the thoughts which they express. It is in a manner analogous to this that the ego creates its own objective world, and the personages who play their parts in this subjective life. In this way alone is it possible for the after-death state to be one of perfect bliss. Take, for instance, the case of a husband and wife, when the husband is deeply in love with the wife, but she does not reciprocate that affection. If the husband dies, he certainly cannot be happy without the companionship of the wife he has loved. But should the wife happen to be in love with some other person, she will not want her husband with her. However, when both are dead, the wife will figure as a part of the husband's subjective experience, but the husband will play no part in that of the wife. Supposing a woman has had three or four husbands, and had truly loved each one, they will all play a part in the wife's after-death dream in the same order in which she loved them, and to the extent to which she was attached to them; and similarly, each of the husbands, who had truly loved his wife, will have her as a part of his experience when he passes into the subjective condition. Nature is an absolutely just, yet a kindly mother, to her children, and while she requires at the hand of every man the payment of his just debts to the uttermost farthing, she yet provides for him a long period of blissful rest and refreshment before he is called upon to take up anew the burden of earth-life, and to pay the penalties which he has deserved through his own actions. The larger part of what we term sin and evil proceeds from, and, is confined, to the animal nature and instincts within us, and although these must of necessity produce their appropriate consequences, on the physical plane, in subsequent lives, yet the higher nature of the man is not so deeply stained by them as to render him, [Page 8] as a rule, unfitted for a blissful subjective condition after death. It requires a Satan in human form to deserve a subjective hell. The vast majority of human beings pass into a blissful condition after death, but the intensity of the bliss they experience will depend upon the extent to which the man has developed his spiritual aspirations. Theosophy holds that men are more often sinned against than sinning, and since we suffer personally for deeds done by our egos in past existences, of which we have no recollection, justice requires that the personal consciousness of man should in some way be compensated for the sufferings which his inner self, or spiritual ego, has deserved. Moreover, a large part of our suffering is due to the fact that many of our better and nobler aspirations and longings can find no fulfilment in earth-life, owing to the pressure of circumstances, and it is just these which find their complete fruition in the subjective world.

Theosophy accepts as genuine the phenomena known as spiritualistic, excepting, of course, those cases which are proven to be frauds. But it differs from spiritualism in the explanation it gives of them. Theosophy teaches that the physical phenomena of the *séance* rooms are not produced by the spirits of the departed, with the exception, however, of the occasional intervention of suicides in these productions. With regard to the intelligence manifested in many so-called spirit communications, Theosophy holds that it is derived from the higher consciousness of the medium or one of the sitters present. In reference to the phenomena of materialization, Theosophy says they are produced mainly through the medium's astral body, which oozes out from the left side, and assumes the form of some person whose picture is vividly impressed on the mental sphere of one of the sitters present, or else moulds itself upon the astral corpse, which the ego leaves behind in the subtle world before it passes into the subjective condition. But Theosophy holds that it is possible for the spirit of a living human being to take up the mental vibrations proceeding from an entity in the subjective world, and so to reflect as it were, the mental conditions and surroundings of that ego; but the ego in question is not conscious of such communication

taking place, because in that condition the faculty of self-analysis or self-reflection is dormant. It must be remembered that psychic phenomena existed long before the manifestations in modern times. The Costatics, Swedenborg, Jacob Böhme, and others, gave evidence of abnormal faculties and powers which we term psychic. So, also, Paracelsus, Van Helmont, and the Albigenses, the Pythonesses and Sybils of Greece, The Jews had their schools of the prophets for the training of the faculties. The Egyptian, Persian, and Indian schools had systematic plans of training. What was it that was taught in these mysteries? Every great writer of antiquity has borne witness to the value of the science of nature and man, All the great inventors, teachers, and leaders of men, have taught the [Page 9] same. The Egyptians possessed knowledge of electricity, and probably of steam also. Hypnotism or mesmerism is mentioned in the oldest Vedas and books dating back to the earliest night of time. Pythagoras and Plato spoke of these mysteries in the highest terms. Theosophists maintain that this is the beginning of a more spiritual cycle, and that within the next few years mental evolution will make extraordinarily rapid advancement, supplemented by great scientific discoveries and the demonstration of finer forces in nature. The experiments of the famous Charcot in hypnotism illustrate the scientific awakening to the importance of occult forces. The psychological researches of Ribot and Binet are of equally great importance. The comprehensive philosophy more or less expounded by numerous Theosophic publications is a preparatory course for the esoteric teachings given to her pupils by Mme. Blavatsky, and involves the basic laws of reincarnation and Karma. Much of the superficial literature of the day embodies in a crude form theories promulgated by Theosophists, such as refer to manifestation of the magnetic and electrical forces, to the phenomena of clairvoyance, clairaudience, somnambulism and mesmerism. Popular taste craves the exaltation of the senses thus afforded, and feeds its hunger for the marvellous, but isolated students are making unimpassioned and careful expeditions into the psychological realm—collecting the fundamental laws of biology, and preparing text-books for the coming generation.

Possibly not another century will pass before the attributes of ether will be as familiar to man as those of gas, and his intelligent manipulation may develop cognition of new functions and potencies in himself, fulfilling the ancient prophecy that all nature shall be subordinate to man.

There is nothing mystic in the study of Theosophy; it is simply investigation of natural laws and the development of natural powers, latent though they be in every soul, and in the present state of thought, when the minds of men are in a constant ferment, and the development of new and strange powers and faculties is rapidly taking place among us, a scientific study of the knowledge possessed by our forefathers will be of inestimable value to mankind.

The immediate advantage of the pursuit of Theosophy is the impetus it affords humanity toward self-analysis and self-study — a positive knowledge of the present in place of vague beliefs and useless speculations upon future existence — a just estimate of man's relation to society and his duties to himself; for "the study of mankind is man", and although his life is but an infinitesimal fraction of the whole, it shares with it the attribute of endlessness.

And this brings us to the question of religion. Now, the first point which I wish to say to you in regard to religion is that it must be scientific. Our tenets must conform to strict logic and be capable of rational explanation. We [Page 10] must accept nothing on faith, and must not surrender our minds to bigotry or prejudice. In the search of this rational and scientific religion, the leaders of our organization are teaching now a system of Theosophy, not as a dogma, but as a means of assisting the members of the society in arriving at religious conclusions, which they can formulate for themselves into distinct and logical creeds.

The Theosophist's comprehension of deity is pantheistic, but the ultimate fact is one absolute, unknown and unknowable. Deity is a reality, and of it man does not, nor ever can he know. In order to understand him, it is necessary to be his equal, and it is no use to talk of an infinite knower, for if infinite, nothing can exist out of him, nothing is then to be known.

In the West the good done by the society has been chiefly in giving a standing room for those whose intellectual lives are darkened by the materialistic creeds of the day. It has nothing to offer to the selfish mind. Its principles of co-operation are rather for the altruistic than for the egotistic. It furnishes a congenial companionship for all who are struggling toward a newer and truer light. The individual who attempts to stand alone cannot have that support which is found in the presence of companions. In this, as in all things else, union is strength. The Theosophical Society stands in a better position than any other ever founded, to carry on the war for the intellectual freedom of humanity. Many societies for this purpose have been founded from the earliest ages, but hitherto all have failed.

In considering what the society has done towards developing a spirit of brotherly benevolence throughout the world, we must turn first to the East. In no part of the world has there been so much race and theological prejudice as in India. Here the spirit of caste has separated man from man by a chasm which made united effort impossible, and rendered the country helpless in the hands of every conqueror. In this country the society has already wrought great changes. It has, by inculcating the unity of all religions, brought many of these people into concord with one another, and is enabling them to act together and in harmony for the general good of the country and its people. And not the least part of its work has been to break down prejudices in European minds in regard to the races of the East, and familiarize the Eastern and Western races, and thus make their relations more real and close. One thousand years ago the Hindus were split up into small subdivisions, and no co-operation was possible except among small clans. Since the Theosophical Society commenced its work, men of all four castes meet together and co-operate on the platform in hospitals, dispensaries, schools, etc. The society has brought into co-operation the conquered Hindus and their Mohammedan conquerors; also the Buddhists of Ceylon, who were expelled 800 years ago. Among the Buddhists there have been two churches, as widely separated as Roman Catholics and Protestants. [Page 11] A reconciliation has been brought about between these two churches. In the East men of every creed — Hindus, Parsees, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Chinese and Japanese — all meet together, forgetting their differences, and cooperating in establishing knowledge of the truths of nature.

I may say right here that a part of the good work done by the Theosophists in the East has been to counteract the evils wrought by the missionaries of the established churches of Christianity. These by the example of the missionaries and by the doctrine of vicarious atonement have done much to corrupt the natives. The Christianized people of India have been degraded rather than elevated by a belief which teaches them that they are to be saved not by their own works, but by the atonement of Christ.

In India there are 175 branches of the Theosophical Society, and in Ceylon, also, a great work has been performed, and a new stimulus given to life, which has shown itself chiefly in the advance of womanhood in that island, where there are twenty branches, with an average of fifty members to a branch. The Society is growing rapidly. No proselytizing is done. It is not a matter of conversion; it is a matter of growth and development. When a mind becomes receptive to higher religious truths, it will seek them, and until it does become receptive, there is no use trying to force them into it. During a recent tour of Japan, Colonel Olcott, the president of the Society, lectured before twelve Buddhist sects, and in temples

where no American or European ever before set foot. He went by invitation from the Buddhist sects there. They formed a joint committee to receive him and organize his tour. They sent a deputation to escort him from Ceylon. He took with him letters of credence and introduction from the High Priest of Ceylon, head of the Southern Buddhist Church. He was received royally by the Japanese people, spoke three times a day to native audiences numbering several thousands each, was entertained in temples, and when he left was presented with many rare books, pictures, and manuscripts for the library at Adyar, the headquarters of the whole Theosophical Society. We have in the Society Hindus of all castes and sects, Buddhists, Mahommedans, Parsees, besides Christians of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches of every sect, creed and denomination. Right here in the United States we have lawyers, physicians, generals, railway men, and men at the head of large commercial enterprises. All these have their individual beliefs, but are active members of the Society. Our rules permit the broadest and most varied individual beliefs, and require only that all shall unite in working for the cause of universal brotherhood, and that each shall exercise the same toleration towards all that he expects to receive for himself. Remember that Theosophy is not the creed or religion of the Theosophical Society, since the Society has, and can have, no creed or religion whatever. [Page 12]

On the other hand, it is not a school of magic, and has nothing to offer to those bent on purely selfish ends. Yet it must not be supposed that we expect the Theosophist to be free from selfishness at the beginning of his membership. There are three stages of his life. We find in the first stage students who have joined through finding in Theosophy a clue to much that is dark in the Western system of metaphysics; students of science who have joined for the sake of light on the genesis of man and the elements, on the relation of the moon to the earth and kindred topics; together with others who have joined through interest in its teachings as to religious symbolism. These find in one another's society sympathetic and elevating influence, yet they gradually become satiated with intellectualism, with words and phrases, and come to think that they are making no headway, and that Theosophy is all empty talk. They are to blame for this satiety. When a man has taken in a certain amount of knowledge he cannot receive more without giving out some of his store. When they come to understand this truth and to act upon it they progress to the second state.

In this state the Theosophist desires to experience a love of the universal brotherhood of mankind, and, therefore, wants to serve his fellows, and to learn how best to do so. To this end it is that he who seeks for broader knowledge. And just as he works for others does he improve spiritually. His sympathies quicken, his grasp of spiritual truth grows firmer, and his consciousness of spiritual joy grows more acute. Then it is that possibilities of usefulness to the human race productive of pure delight, superior to worldly wealth and honours, open more and more clearly to his view. The most of our members are in this state, and for them the dawn of spiritual perfection has come.

The results of the Theosophist's life in this stage are calm self-study, growth of charity, increase of tolerance, and a readiness to take truth wherever found. With the deeper insight into spiritual law comes less resentful feelings as to the trials and sorrows of the world. Hope grows as he comes to see the true path more clearly, and there comes, besides, determination to so prepare conditions as to increase his usefulness to others in the lives that are before him.

Progressing, he passes by self-study into the third state, where the main object of life is not his fame, fortune, family, or the like, but the service of the whole human race, life being dedicated to duty.

In this stage the Theosophist must neglect no duty to his fellows, even to promote his own spiritual welfare. Few have yet attained to this stage, and few of the few — perhaps only one or two — have ever reached true unselfishness, which is the desideratum of Theosophy. But in the recognition of the high ideal, a man places himself against the stream of modern thought in every form. [Page 13] If he is beaten down, who shall wonder or complain? The man who breasts the tide is the man who knows how strong the current is. I hope that when the day comes for the record to be written there will be not a few who will desire the epitaph which Mrs. Besant formulated: "We have tried to follow truth".

And to this goal all the teachings of his philosophy lead him, for he is taught "If the 'Secret Path' is unattainable this 'day' it is within thy reach tomorrow", and the doctrine of Karma serves as the strongest incentive and untiring effort, for this law is simply the law of cause and effect on the moral and spiritual planes of nature, and runs through all lives and connects them, so that absolutely what a man sows that shall he also reap. This is an immutable law, and in connection with re-incarnation explains the apparent injustice and inequalities which prevail in life. The conception of Karma renders a man self-reliant and self-dependent, because it teaches that he is what he has made himself by his own actions in other lives, and that his present acts determine his future. In this you see there is no room for vicarious atonement, or a death-bed escape from the consequence of one's own actions be they good or evil. Absolute justice is the keynote of nature.

The circumstances and environment of each path as well as the innate tendencies, faculties and aptitudes of a new personality are determined by Karma, which teaches man's absolute responsibility for his every action. If this is not a superior precept to the doctrine of vicarious atonement, we have mistaken the truth, for we believe that more good will result to the human race from the eradication of this erroneous conception than can be readily conceived. More harm has been done by causing men to believe that they can escape from the consequences of their own acts by shifting those consequences on to the shoulder of some other being than from any other single source. This idea weakens and demoralizes men, enfeebles their sense of personal responsibility, and holds out delusive hopes of escape from the operations of the laws of nature.

Treating of social problems, Mr. Keightley told how his heart leapt within him when he read "Looking Backward". He felt that the right chord had been struck, the people's ear gained. But could the dream of Edward Bellamy be at once carried out, that process would not of itself radically change human nature, since human nature changed but slowly. Yet, to institute a system of living, whose object lessons taught helpfulness rather than intensified selfishness, would accelerate progress. It would, too, clarify the atmosphere render it more healthful. The passions, emotions, thoughts of man were real forces in nature, producing physical effects. How different the physical atmosphere of a home where the members worked harmoniously together from one where this was not the case! [Page 14]

All human beings are fundamentally one, and it is absolutely impossible for the individual to rise without raising the whole race. The great struggle in which man has been engaged is between the divine and the animal. Theosophy is self-forgetfulness. Self must be subdued and conquered and replaced by universal co-operation.

If anyone, laying aside all prejudice, would inquire into the ancient histories of China and other countries, they would find there had been co-operation; but, unfortunately it had been overthrown by the internal



decay of corrupted greed and not from any external cause.

Looking at Christianity, it would be found that at first it was purely unselfish, but, holding companionship with human selfishness, it fell into decay by allowing a number of persons to remain as they were, while becoming nominal members of the church.

Selfishness is self-destructive. It is human, but it is greatly aggravated by our present evil system of competition. Give a man a sound basis to work on, with congenial surroundings, and he will steadily work forward, till ultimately the millennium is reached.

Co-operation may be urged as the solution of the pressing problems of humanity, and you naturally appeal to the selfish element of humanity; that is, under co-operation, how much better off you will be; and that no one will then suffer as they do now. But, after all, you leave untouched the brutal selfishness of humanity. You simply substitute one form of selfishness for another. Theosophy, however, takes up this selfishness and attempts to eliminate it, it holds that men are one; that there is a unity in humanity, and that it is impossible for the individual to leave the mass or advance alone without the whole of humanity advancing. You oppose competition by the spiritual or divine law of co-operation. Theosophy does the same. But Theosophy is more; it is the elimination of selfishness. One of the greatest obstacles to co-operation has been religious differences. There has been no greater impediment since the commencement of the Christian era. Before this period there was no such opposition as there has been since — to go no further back than the Roman Empire, an organization of various tribes in a single State. The gods of other nations were adopted, and the religions of subjected nations were recognised. Strange to say, the change which has come from the Middle Ages is due not to Christianity, but to Judaism, which has rendered Christianity what it is. Dogmatism, which has burdened Christianity since the days of Constantine, has paused wars, persecutions and exclusiveness. It has checked co-operation, and rendered impossible the unification of mankind. It is the systematic growth of individualism as opposed to co-operation. The fundamental idea of salvation is a conception more opposed than any other to solidarity of the race.

Now, latterly, as dogmatic religion has lost its hold on the Western mind, we have witnessed an enormous growth of materialism. There is supposed to be nothing beyond matter known to the physical senses. The ancient conception was that each nation had a right to its own religion. No religion was believed to be superior to any other. All religions were acknowledged to be forms of one and the same truth. Plato and Pythagoras studied nature under Egyptian priests. *Appollonius of Tyana* was instructed by Brahmans of India. All thoughtful men recognised the idea that the gods were various conceptions of facts in nature.

The moment a man begins to think, he says that all cannot be right. A few minds have grasped the conception that the number of men who have attained salvation along the generally accepted paths was an infinitesimal fraction of mankind. You have only to read the lives of saints of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, and also the lives of Mohammedans, Brahmans, Buddhists, and Chinese to find that every form of religion has had sincere devotees, whose lives have been miracles of devotion.

The spirit of materialism is found opposed to co-operation because its whole tendency is centralization

upon self; with no larger or more permanent hope, no future, no punishment, no reward. The tendency is to live for the moment only, increasing the growth of selfishness and individualism. The history of the last fifty years is a demonstration of this statement, although men are often better than their beliefs. Many materialists have been the examples of the purest of Christians. To oppose this growth of selfishness by sound philosophy, the Theosophical Society was founded in New York in 1875. Its fundamental idea is co-operation, the first object being to formulate a nucleus of a universal brotherhood. There is no requirements of its members except that they should exercise the same toleration towards others which they claim for themselves. The essence of the Theosophical Society is intellectual co-operation along certain lines. Our founders chose as a basis the intellectual or spiritual field, rather than the political or social platform. Ideas rule the world. If men think aright, they are sure to reach universal brotherhood sooner than by any other way. Although the churches today have given up burning people at the stake, they have not abandoned social ostracism.

We have, however, in America at this age the beginning of a new race. How different this race is from the old is shown by the success achieved by faith cures, metaphysical healers, Spiritualists and others. The success of these things in this country proves that the American has undergone some deep-seated physiological changes rendering his nature susceptible to finer vibrations and more mystical influences than those of the people of Europe. There are a greater number of psychics in America than in Europe. In the Eastern States there are probably ten times as many sensitives as in Europe, [Page 16] and in California twice as many as in the Eastern States. It is not so much the " glorious climate " as the result of the mixing of Spanish, Indian, and other bloods. These are the forerunners of another race, the sixth sub-race of the Aryan stock. By the development of this new race we hope to arrive at a psychic stage which will enable us to make scientific tests of the super-physical world which lies everywhere around us.

Any reform to be permanent must be deeply laid in its basis or it will not stand the test of time. All students of history have noticed that development and progress have been the watchword of mankind. The family is the first step in co-operation; then the tribe is formed; then the city is organized by the tribe; and finally the nation is formed by tribes of the same blood. Next we find the race, and eventually the larger and nobler idea of humanity as a whole.

But ambition and a desire for power is an inherent idea in human nature, and if the struggle for existence is removed, it does not remove selfishness. The only thing which has been removed is that which keeps ambition down, and humanity will have more chance to gratify ambition under a system of cooperation than now.

Human nature only changes slowly, and is influenced above all things by the ideal. If that ideal is simply selfishness, all the animal characteristics of humanity will work out, and your system will fall to pieces.

Mr. Bellamy recently pointed out that Christianity is essentially co-operative, but it made a compromise with selfishness in the early days and fell into decay. It soon became permeated with the worst forms of selfishness.

The study of Theosophy will show men that selfishness is self-destruction, and that the only true way to happiness is through the practice of altruism. This being translated into action from generation to

generation will bring about a change in human nature. Then the noble goal of self-renunciation shall be reached and the ambition of man shall be to live among men, for men, with men, and through men, till at last the soul may enter upon other cycles and universes, having fulfilled its lower existence, and having from man become God.