

Thoughts on Theosophy

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"Of what use are devotional rhapsodies of transcendental aspirations,
unless to nerve you for the work of life ? "

From "Problems of Hidden Life" p. 5.)

MUCH has already been written about Theosophy; weekly and monthly theosophical literature is spreading its broad, deep principles before numerous readers. Being one of these, I want, in my turn, to say a few words on this inexhaustible subject.

First of all the French saying: " Qui a bu, boira ", is thoroughly true when applied to Theosophy. Whosoever has once tasted of the waters from that clear, vivifying fountain, wants to taste of them always, for though the thirst may be relieved, yet it is never quenched.

Karma satisfies your thirst for justice to all, gives you strength to try to do what is right, crushes out love of self, and though it sends you into the midst of the battle, you cannot murmur because you know that all is right.

Reincarnation is the way to attain the far-off goal; however wearisome the knowledge may be of living innumerable lives, it is the only logical means of reaching it.

At the same time that these principles change your old self, driving away all hope of an undeserved reward, and straining to the utmost the will to do the right thing, your understanding and intelligence are developed with every theosophical paper or book you read.

How simple and yet how broad are the thoughts they call to life in you! "As above, so below" — mighty sleep, death and finally the "conscious rest in omniscience", or Nirvana; earth's winter-sleep, planetary obscurations and Pralaya; rebirth for all and everything in the Manvantara..... Was ever so much told in so few words ? And, inseparably linked to these chief conceptions is the urging to do whatever your hand finds to do; no forgetting or disdaining of daily, microscopical duties, or you go backwards; the effacing of self always, everywhere; the obtaining of will-power by conquering your will.....how difficult, how impossible it seems to be.

Fancy yourself sitting alone, with some work or other to occupy your busy fingers, say the knitting of a pair of stockings for the poor. That making stitch after stitch till the last is done, reminds you how, hour after [Page 19] hour, your life goes on spinning itself till its close in the last hour. As your woollen thread, so the silvery one of your existence will be severed. You go on thinking till the work falls on your lap, everything around you disappears before your intent yet undiscerning gaze; and while you sit motionless, your inner self is far away. For how long you don't know, time and space are obliterated. Suddenly the door opens and your vision is disturbed. The first feeling is often, too often, that of annoyance or anger at being rudely brought back to *unreality*. Yet this is the moment to conquer yourself, to fulfil the daily duty you are reminded of. It is perhaps the woman to whom you promised the pair of stockings. . . . Yes, but why did she come just now! : . . . But "to live to benefit mankind is the first step", [The Two Paths] and so you go towards her, and when you part from her you feel you did the right thing. You know that what you said to her did more than what you gave; it poured a little warmth and courage into her dark life; it will perhaps do her good during some hours of the day, and, maybe, that poor creature's husband and children on coming home will find the humble fare better prepared, and the room somewhat cleaner than before, and they, too, will derive the benefit of momentary comfort.

Was not that worth your being disturbed in your blissful thoughts ? Alas! our spirit touches the mountain top, but our feet are attached to the earth.. Whatever we may think, we must act, and act alone. We must tread the up-hill path alone, unflinchingly, step by step, under the sun's rays, or the icy north gales, or through the ankle-deep mud. We may not linger and lose our time in heeding the flowers on the road, they are hidden dangers, they make us tarry, and time is precious. Precious to us, yes, but to others also. Yet, if you meet a wayfarer still more burdened than yourself, go to him, wait for him, stretch out the helping hand; shift his burden so that his step is lightened, and urge him forward. As soon as he recovers his strength he will leave you and proceed alone, as you must do. Being once more free, you stride briskly on to make up the seemingly lost time, but you will find that your kind act, instead of having cost you some precious moments, is rewarded by letting you forget your own weariness.

These principles, thoughts, and acts are nowhere stated with the same strength and clearness as in Theosophy. Therefore it is the only philosophy which can be used successfully against the deadening materialism of the present time; where self is enthroned above all, injustice towards the suffering class has reached a fearful height, and self-indulgence kills all feeling of humanity and brotherhood.

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HYMN TO THE STARS

THE FUMIGATION FROM AROMATICS

With holy voice I call the stars on high,
Pure sacred lights and genii of the sky.
Celestial stars, the progeny of Night,
In whirling circles beaming far your light,
Refulgent rays around the heavens ye throw,
Eternal fires, the source of all below.
With flames significant of Fate ye shine,

And aptly rule for men a path divine.
In seven bright zones ye run with wand'ring flames,
And heaven and earth * compose your lucid frames:
With course unwearied, pure and fiery bright,
For ever shining thro' the veil of Night.
Hail twinkling, joyful, ever wakeful fires !
Propitious shine on all my just desires;
These sacred rites regard with conscious rays,
And end our works devoted to your praise.

From "The Orphic Hymns", translated by THOMAS TAYLOR

* And heaven and earth etc. It is an Orphic and Pythagoric opinion that the stars are inhabited; on which account they are called in this hymn, earthly. But the greatest geniuses of antiquity were of the same opinion; such as Anaxagoras, Aristarchus, Heraclitus, Plato, etc., and among Platonists not a few, as Alcinous, Plotinus, and Plutarch. Thales, too, is said to have called the stars earthly, by which it is probable he was of the same opinion.

As the lesser mysteries are to be delivered before the greater,
thus also discipline must precede philosophy.

Pythagoric Sentence from Iamblicus