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# THE LIGHT OF MEN

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JOHN BASS



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THE LIGHT OF MEN



# THE LIGHT OF MEN

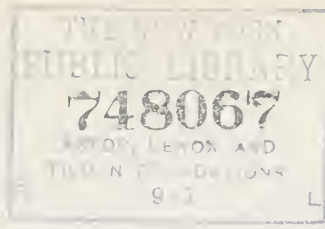
AN INTERPRETATION

BY  
JOHN BASS



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*“Sempiterna Lux! Nec divitias, nec  
honores peto; me modo Diviniæ  
Lucis radio illumines.”*



## FOREWORD

This book is not offered as a scientific treatise, in the sense in which science is accepted here in the Occident, but as a personal interpretation—exactly as Schuré's *Jesus* and Renan's *Vie de Jésus* are personal interpretations. It has been written after years of deep and reverent study, not only of our own Scriptures, but in comparative religion, and above all of the great Ancient Philosophy of the Orient—that science of the soul which reaches back to the very horizons of Aryan civilisation.

It is the conviction of the writer that our own Christian Revelation, interpreted in the light of the illuminating mysticism of the east—one may indeed call it the universal mysticism—takes on a more satisfying significance, a more glorious power. Phenomena now mistakenly called supernatural, cryptic truths in these days brushed aside

and discredited as superstition, will, seen with the clearer, more sublimated vision, fall into their natural and inevitable sequence and take on a revealing light.

There are a great number of persons in our day who have discarded allegiance to any formal theological teaching, but to whom modern science offers only a stone to the passioning soul which asks for bread. Neither does the so-called "religion of humanity" satisfy that inward craving which outward activity fails to fill.

It is to these that this book is dedicated, in the hope that it may bear to some of them a message — the same message that the studies which have led up to it have borne to the writer.

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I

THE DAWN





## THE DAWN

The world is very, very old.

Innumerable races of men have appeared, dominated for a time, and passed from it like clouds across the heavens, leaving as little permanent trace behind them. Mighty civilisations have arisen and again decayed, and today we may only guess at the scope and manner of their greatness by such few and imperfect remains as have come down to us. The face of the earth is one vast historical, ethnic and moral palimpsest, inscribed and re-inscribed with the characters of human effort, one record swallowed, overlaid, obliterated by another, as the stupendous, unstaying wheel of circumstance revolves upon its course.

Whenever there has arrived, in the course of the world's evolution, a crux of human principles, the great leader which the stress of the time demanded has never been want-

ing. He has arisen almost it seems as by the touch of an enchanter's wand; but in reality, if we examine the evidences, we shall see that he is the express outcome of the universal need — the flower of a universal outreaching for more light.

It becomes the sheerest presumption to assume that Supreme revelation has been vouchsafed exclusively to any single epoch or people; and that this age-worn world, teeming for millenniums with life and the presumable ardent upreaching of such life, should have been left without revelation until so recent a period as the opening of our own Christian Era, is untenable. God reveals as much of His Mystery and Majesty as the development of the special age or race at that time demands or permits; and there have been races before us who, though they may have been lacking in that enormous mastery of material agencies which marks our present day, had reached a spiritual ideal from which we may well humble ourselves to learn. Indeed some of the very earliest traditions we have hint of a spiritual

attainment so high that one pauses in awe and wonder before them.

Always The Light has been in the world. Never for a moment has it been, or could it be, absent. Eons ago God spake and said, "*Let there be Light!*" — and there *was* light; that Light which is the very essence of the Ineffable, that Light which is the source and fulness of all being; and never since for a single instant has it failed to shine. True there fall seasons when, to the perversity of men, darkness seems to be upon the face of the deep; but the heart of faith knoweth that forevermore the Spirit of God *does* move upon the face of the waters. For even as the material sun, which furnishes the life and light of the terrestrial globe, becomes at times obscured to men's vision by clouds or drifting fogs — vapours bred of the earth's own atmosphere, not of the sun's — so, between the soul of man and that ineffable and unending Life, which, whether we cognise it or not, forever feeds us, there rise miasmas of perversion and materialism, fogs of a self-centred egoism and skepticism,

potent storm-clouds of delusion and despair. At these periods it will seem to the eclipsed spirit as if life presented no adequacy, no ultimate meaning, no goal. Creation looms a hopeless maze without a clue. Human existence takes on the aspect of an arbitrary and relentless juggle of mere circumstance. And so it comes about that at certain vital crises there proceeds mysteriously from the bosom of the Ineffable a *Holy Breath*, a Living Wind as it were, to sweep away this clogging veil which keeps the vision of man holden so that it does not behold its Sun, and to fling open once more avenues whereby the races of men may come again into consciousness of their divine source and destiny. We have called these spiritual influxes *Great Breaths*, but they are specifically traceable to Living Presences — glorious Spirits of the Light who, at special epochs of the world's need, clothe themselves with garments of the flesh, take on the fetters of earth-life, and descend to mingle among men, that they may rekindle in the human heart those moribund embers of spiritual

consciousness, and cause them once more to leap upward in a vital and purifying flame. And to these *Living Presences* we give the Sanskrit name of *Avataras* (*English*, Avatar); literally *Incarnation of Deity*. Another beautiful eastern term for them is *Lords of Flame*.

One may not define precisely the nature of an Avatar. Glorious perfected souls perhaps — perfected eons before in other universes, and made one with the Father, or perhaps direct emanations from the Supreme Source, set apart for special ends; who can say? We may not analyse. It is enough to know that they are uncontaminate Spirit, one with the Unspeakable; temporarily, and *in appearance*, separate, in reality never for one instant separate; that they are the living expression of the All in all, and that they bring to earth the Spiritual fire. And the message which every Avatar brings to man is always the same. It may express itself in differing terms, or clothe itself in varying symbols, but substantially it is the same. Creeds differentiate; cults arrive and fall;

but religion in essence is one, and has been from all time; for finally all creeds resolve themselves into one Reality.

There have been many Avatars. Certain radiant names shine out like blazing stars through the night of a vast past, as from time to time, through the long evolution of the world, they have appeared among men. Osiris, Krishna, Orpheus, Gautama; these are a few of the names. Why enumerate them? They are familiar to every student of comparative religion. And, beside these great fixed stars, there shine lesser luminaries — lesser messengers of the Divine Wisdom. Illumined men are these; great prophets, great seers, great high-priests, great kings; not infrequently the last two offices united in one person. The pages of history and tradition are bright with them. It is largely by means of such illumined men that primitive society has been moulded, instructed, developed, and pushed forward into finer possibilities.

Infant races are in the main very like children; lusty, free, strong with an expand-

ing vitality, but without the intellectual and rational powers which are the stamp of advanced civilisations; wayward too with a waywardness born of their very exuberance; not easy to coerce, but easy, through the quick play of emotion, to be led by the magnetism of some dominating personality. Like children also they are extremely receptive, extremely psychically sensitive, with a sensitiveness which disappears at intellectual maturity. The *Mystery* is very close to them; so close that they are apt to confuse the facts of the seen and unseen worlds. They do not reason about that which they perceive, though it is vital to them. Many things which we are too prone to class as superstition are merely the workings of the spirit within crude material; hence Nature worship — man's first concept of God — and the worship of the sun and planetary bodies  
Is not God immanent in all his universe?

The appearance of an Avatar is coincident with the emergence upon the theatre of the world of a new race, of fresh social forces. Given an infant race, comes always an Ava-

tar to awaken and direct its aspirations. Jesus of Nazareth, the Avatar of the new dispensation — that dispensation which we call Christianity — entered the world at a momentous hour. Ancient civilisations — with the exception of the small but important Greek peninsular, all Asiatic or northern African — were decadent, crumbling in the dust of their own exhaustion. New civilisations were about to arise, new continents to be exploited. The centres of power were to be shifted westward, and ever further westward. Europe itself — in large part still a *terra incognita* of barbaric and semi-barbaric tribes — was presently to emerge into prominence, to become the theatre of the new activities. The last waves of the great Celtic race — the fourth sub-race of the still greater Aryan division of mankind — were about to gather to flood in the mighty Roman Empire, bearing upon their flux unimagined flotsams to waiting shores of which they could not then even dream. Coëvally the great fifth sub-race — the Teutonic, with its many ramifications — was nationally at birth, and was



presently to sweep like a cyclone down upon the Roman civilisation, seemingly to annihilate it, in reality to assimilate it, to vitalise it with the new impulses of a young people, to transform it to new issues which they were to push to the farthest limits of the earth.

It was Alexander of Macedon who prepared the way for Europe and the modern world; and it was Julius Caesar who potentially established it. Both these great generals, primarily actuated by personal ambition, unconsciously let loose forces which had far-reaching results. Alexander in a sense unified the old world, the world upon the shores of the Mediterranean, by implanting everywhere Greek ideals, Greek modes of thought, Greek culture. It was a simple matter for Rome, traveling upon his trail, to take over materially and intellectually the fruits of these varied civilisations, and to carry the animus of them to farther limits. The conquests of Caesar over the half-wild European tribes conduced to the rendering of all Europe more homogeneous, since the synthetic method of the Roman dominion

tended to stamp upon the lands which they conquered the Roman instinct for system, for law and order, and for lucid, if sometimes crude, processes in the pursuit of knowledge. It was this wide dominion of Rome which, when the time came, rendered possible the rapid and extensive spread of Christianity. As, if one should put a torch to a vast train of accumulated inflammable material, unknowingly laid ready to the hand, conflagration must be the outcome.

Christian apologists would have us believe that the period preceding our Era was an age of prohibitive darkness and obscurity out of which flashed the revelation as a meteor springs across a night-black sky; but this was far from being the case. Obscurity there certainly was in the world, plenty of it; but there were, scintillating through its veil, a myriad stars of mystic promise; a scattered and more or less eclipsed luminance, if you will, which the coming and plenitude of the Master drew to a focus.

All world-culture is an evolution. It grows out of, and because of, previous conditions;

and we of today might be surprised if we could know to what extent we are indebted to remotest times. One cannot claim for any civilisation that it has entirely evolved itself from within, because all civilisations are in degree subject to cultural influences from without. Initiative for advance of course comes from within, but it is never safe to predicate the extent to which such initiative is stimulated by anterior conditions.

The subject of religious origins is always one of much complexity; and therefore we are constrained to look upon the Christian revelation rather as a culmination, a high-water mark as it were, of a seething and wide-spread flux of spiritual tides. Three main streams, themselves composite, contributed to water the soil in which were planted the seeds of the new faith — or, more correctly, the new spiritual impulse, for faith is as old as life — Greece, Egypt, Jewry; and of these the Greek animus of course supplied the larger element.

One is not accustomed to consider the peoples of ancient Hellas as a conspicuously

spiritual race. Religious they were, but not after the profound introspective manner of some older civilisations — the Hindu for example. A young, free, virile race, full of the lyric joy of living, the very blood in their veins pulsing in swinging rhythms, and gifted with an exotic imagination, it is natural that the national expression should be in terms of poetry rather than in those of metaphysics. That clairvoyant sensitiveness of adolescent races already referred to would make them more or less aware of intangible forces, of uncomprehended effluences, around them, and the idealising tendency of their intellects would translate these mysterious phenomena into symbols of power and beauty. Hence we get a presentment of Nature-worship the most æsthetic which the world has ever known. Every corner of the land, every heroic, moral, or intellectual attribute was invested with its tutelary deity. An evocation of ideal Presences dreamed in every stream, through every forest, upon every desolate mountain even; and these Presences became

the objects of fear or adoration, as the case might be.

To her pan-theogony Greece poured libations and built temples; in the day of her artistic and national maturity reared such sublime monuments, both plastic and architectural, as have been the delight and the despair of the world ever since. And yet these do not seem to bring us that breath of spiritual fragrance, of an indwelling mystery, which the less perfect remains of some other lands do. There are, in fact, two kinds of mysticism which are often confused with each other, but which are by no means the same. There is the mysticism of the fire-touched soul — of inter-communion — of the heights above the heights and the deeps beneath the deeps; and there is a pseudo-mysticism of the subtle, or psychic senses, touched with an awareness of other planes of consciousness than the physical, but not penetrating beyond the realm of the astral for its experience, and satisfying itself with religious expressions of sensation and emotion.

To this latter class the religion of the Hellenic peoples (taken by and large) would seem to have belonged. It was, in effect, a religion of Beauty, objectively pagan, but with the thought floating as it were betwixt external and internal worship. Ancient Hellas was however not without her revelation. In the shadowy adumbrations of the Orpheus tradition we trace the outlines of a true Avatar; and the Orphic fragments which have come down to us are hymn-bursts of a high order, well comparable to the glorious Vedic hymns. The specific teachings of Orpheus are however lost in the fogs of time and myth.

As we approach the golden age of Greece, names of great schools of philosophy, of great individual philosophers, confront us. How far these were schools of speculative science, and how far they shrouded a real mystic core, is a question. No doubt they did sublimate the forces of Nature; but it is in studying the career of Pythagoras alone that we recognise the true mystic spirit. We know of Pythagoras that he drank of the

esoteric fountains of India and of Egypt, that he was an Adept of a high order, and that he greatly inflamed and stimulated the aspirations of men in his day. Without doubt Mystery cults had long existed in some form, but he endued them with a new life. The Pythagorean following was extensive, but, as the generations went on, it inevitably dwindled. Indeed so drastic was the probationary training for initiation into these orders that it is likely there would not be any great number of young men of a fibre and ardour to undergo it. Mystery initiations officially remained, but by the time Greece emerges into the glare of authentic history they were greatly shorn of their pristine significance, and had degenerated into more or less of a class privilege, void of the exalted meaning and power of the true Mystery. When in Plato's time we find *all* citizens of a certain social standing admitted, as a matter of course and by way of an educational finish, to initiation into the Eleusinia — the most solemn and occult of the Greek Mystery cults — we must deduce that these initiations

could neither have been superlatively profound, nor the probationary training for them particularly exacting.

After the death of Aristotle, if not before, we find philosophy entirely detached from religion. The keen, subtle Greek intellect occupied itself with dialectics, with scientific speculation, with metaphysical negations. Restless and eclectic, it evolved upon the one hand the philosophy of the Stoa, which sought by a process of intellectual hardening, an inhibition of human emotion, to render itself invulnerable to the storm and stress of earthly life; and upon the other, the philosophy of Epicurus, which, by a sublimation of the æsthetic sense, sought in another way to provide an anæsthesia against all mortal pangs. But neither school offered any food for the passioning soul. The world became indifferent — skeptic — materialised. The popular faiths lost their hold upon men. The gods were indeed still worshipped, but they had lost their potency.

Yet mystery perished not utterly. In hidden corners and overlooked sanctuaries the



cryptic truths were cherished and guarded by the chosen few. In the period preceding the Christian Era there was a recrudescence of the Pythagorean fires;— a wave of Neo-Pythagoreanism, which reached its zenith in the person of the great Adept, Apollonius of Tyana, and which, transmuted into that wonderful movement which we know as Neo-Platonism, swept far on into the first three Christian centuries. And Neo-Platonism, quite as much as early Christianity, embodied the flower of the best Greek spirit.

In Egypt, in the period forerunning the Christian Era, we find very much the same social conditions obtaining— but with a certain difference. Egypt, the Sibyl of eld, the Sphinx-land, the Mother of Wisdom and of Mystery, had fallen from her high estate. A stupendous Empire of unparalleled longevity, with monuments of far greater magnitude and import than any others of which we today have any record, she preserved through many vicissitudes and cyclic shocks a spiritual profundity and majesty unapproachable. But the longest-lived, either of men or of na-

tions, cannot live forever. The attrition of much contact with, and subjection to, cruder peoples, together with a radical decay at the core, precipitated the inevitable desuetude.

From time immemorial Egypt had taught wisdom to her neighbours, and for countless centuries numberless generations of men had resorted to her to drink from her carefully-guarded arcane springs. But in the vast social disintegrations which took place in the land, these springs became clogged, and no longer yielded the ancient flow. Long dynasties of impotent monarchs emasculated the inherent spirit of things, while the dominance of the arrogant and corrupt Thebaid priesthood hardened the national faith into an iron dogmatism, smothered in pompous ritual, but empty of the ancient inner light. Upon this decadence swept the whirlwind of the Persian conquest, and held the land in a tyrannous thrall, paralysing to any spiritual flowering. From this bondage the further conquest of Alexander delivered Egypt, and under the beneficent rule of the Ptolemies she took a new lease of life; but the race was too

old and too spent for any autochthonous revival, and Ptolemaic Egypt is a Hellenised Egypt, stamped with the peculiar animus of the Greek peoples. The brilliant intellect of the Greek, blending with that brooding spirit of mysticism inherent in the land and exhaling from the very soil, produced a culture of a new order, partaking of the quality of both elements. And in Egypt the Greek genius took a final and glorious flight. Alexandria, Alexander's foundation, became the centre of the world's learning. To her schools resorted the students and mystics of all lands; and it was Alexandria which became, when the time was ripe, the hot-bed of the new religion of Christianity.

The religious systems of ancient Egypt have their roots far back in the abyss of time. This is not the place to treat of them; the subject is too vast. It stands recorded in innumerable monuments and documents wherein the Egyptologist may run and read — as he may. In every great root-religion there has been, and ever must be, a dual presentment, an exoteric teaching and an esoteric

teaching. For the multitude, not fitted to receive the more august knowledges, there will be parables, symbols, ceremonial forms; while the unveiled truths, the wisdom of worlds invisible, are reserved for the initiate few. That Egypt had her secret doctrine, not understood of the people, and that it was entirely hieratic is clear. What this innermost teaching was it would not — in spite of endless documents and endless commentators thereupon — be possible to declare with any certainty, because the higher Mystery-teaching has, in all lands, been in the main oral; passed in secrecy from initiate group to initiate group; or, when committed to definite record at all, so cryptic, so veiled in figures as to be unintelligible without a key — the key of a cognate knowledge.

In the last five hundred years B.C. we find developing alongside of the official religion of Egypt, but quite apart from it, a very singular phase of personal religion. This was known among the Greeks as the teaching of Hermes Trismegistus — Thrice-greatest Hermes. Hermes Trismegistus was

for a long time regarded by the western world as a person, but it is now well known that the name is generic, and was given to a large body of literature extending over centuries — even into the Christian Era. A great deal of the Hermetic literature has been lost in the revolving wheels of time; but not a little has been preserved to us; some practically entire, some in precious fragments, some imbedded like jewels in other literatures. They embody the outward expression of an inward light, and are documents of inestimable value. These tracts — now called Sermons — have recently been rescued from a variety of sources, collated and dated (approximately) in accordance with their own internal evidence, and nobly rendered into English from the Greek and Latin texts by a prominent English scholar.\* While these teachings vary somewhat in character — as phases of the same thought in any school individually vary — they are in the main homogeneous, and point to one central system for their origin. The

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\* G. R. S. Mead.

earliest of them carry a distinctly Egyptian colouring; later ones are tinged with oriental modes of thought, with Greek modes of thought, with nascent Christian thought; and ever, as they advance down the centuries, heightening in spiritual significance. These "Sermons" treat of many things. Of cosmogenesis, of "Divine Mind," of human life, of the nature of being, of wisdom, of vision, and of personal conduct. In their breadth, purity, and exalted character we may put them beside our own gospel of St. John, and feel that the same spirit of ultimate mystery pervades them both. It has been suggested that these Hermetic tractates belonged to the Arcana — may be part of the sacred scriptures in fact — of those remarkable esoteric recluse communities prevalent and coëval with them in point of time, and called by the names of Therapeut, Essene, and others. If so, we hold in our hands a key to the earliest aspect of the Christian Religion.

Mediterranean Asia has from the most ancient of times formed the battle ground of many and varying forces, both of the mate-

rial and the immaterial worlds. Lying as it were at the feet of those potent seats of Ancient Wisdom — Egypt, Mesopotamia, Iran, with mighty India not so far — and being in the track of perpetual commercial traverse from the places of the far east to those of the then-known west, it could not escape becoming a species of reservoir for the many-coloured streams of thought which poured into it through the ages. The whole story of Asia Minor and of Syria furnishes interesting study; but we only concern ourselves here with an infinitesimal strip of land — the south-westernmost littoral; that land settled long ago by a few tribes of the Semitic race, and known to us today as Palestine.

The Jews from the moment that they appear in history, although but a handful of men, make a peculiar and indelible impress upon it. Again and again conquered by their stronger neighbours, more than once carried into captivity, nothing could quench or eradicate the intensity of the racial spirit. From the bondage in Egypt and the captivity in Babylon the Jews brought much tradition,

inspiration and esoteric lore, which moulded the simple but narrow pastoral mind, and gave it its final trend. The traditions derived from these ancient sources they appropriated to themselves, wove into their own destiny, and adapted to their national glorification.

Narrow, fanatical, the Jews certainly were, and narrow, fanatical they always remained; but their concepts achieved a singleness, a dignity, and an austerity which carried them steadfast through many vicissitudes, and which contrasts sharply with the complexities of cult about them. Neither Pantheism nor the worship of images found any hold in their economy. Their eyes were turned to Jahveh, the one, indivisible God; but in spite of the fact that they had a secret doctrine enshrined in their Kabalah, which the sagest among them must have understood, the Jews as a people never progressed beyond anthropomorphic concepts of deity. God was a great and even terrible *person*, a wrathful and jealous God, capable of mercy but prone to anger, to be placated by



rites and sacrifices. He was furthermore the exclusive Lord of the remnant of people who thus worshipped Him. Israel was His chosen people; an obsession which gave the Jews throughout their many misfortunes a sense of being set apart from other races, and engendered in them an expectation of some great destiny in store. From Zoroastrianism they had derived the idea that some day there was to appear on earth a saviour for the race; an idea which they adapted to their personal needs, and the authority for which they sought to find in corroborative extracts from their own sacred writings; although, as we now know, many of these passages were in no way prophetic, but had reference to purely local happenings. This saviour they conceived of as a material leader and liberator, a puissant prince of this world, who was to lift the foreign yoke from the necks of God's chosen people, and to establish in their midst a mighty kingdom. Such ideas as these would be natural enough in a small people — proud, exclusive, but numerically weak — which, by reason of these very quali-

ties, had constantly been the victim of the lustier nations around it. A condition of subjection, however mild, is always morally enervating, and the Jews were no exception to the rule; but through all chances, with an irrefragable tenacity, they held to the expectation that there was to arise one to set them free.

The question naturally suggests itself: why did the new Avatar incarnate as a Jew? The alternatives would lie between Jewry and Greece; those two nations being upon the threshold of that new world about to open. Beside the cultured Greek the Jew was ignorant, prejudiced, crude. Furthermore, as the history of Christianity now lies open to us, the teachings of Jesus — conspicuously non-Jewish — took comparatively little hold upon the Jewish mind. Only a limited number of Jews embraced the new faith. It was essentially the Greek genius which was to carry the gospel light forward into the coming centuries; and it was from the passionate schools of Alexandria that was to be flung the torch which should kindle the whole

world. Why then was the new Avatar not born a Greek? May it not be that the ethically austere tradition of the Jews and their uncompromising monotheism furnished perhaps a sturdier primary stock upon which to graft the new faith, which was to spread and flower and fruit far beyond any kenning of the parent stem?

One other stream from the sources of the Ancient Wisdom must be mentioned here, for, although it is not apparent that it had any direct influence upon early Christianity, indirectly it may have done so. I refer to the *Mithriaca*, or *Mysteries of Mithra* — Mithra being the Iranian name for the sun. This cult appears to have been a recrudescence of the Magian doctrines of the time of the Achæmenid Kings of Persia, or, what is more likely, a blend of that with other cults. In the period of ferment following the Macedonian conquests it seems to have sprung into great flame in eastern Asia Minor, and to have been at its height under Mithridates Eupator, King of Pontus. If this prince had succeeded in his dreams of European

conquest, the religious history of the western world would have been quite other than it is. To the imagination of the conquering Roman legions, this splendid cult of the God of Light and of Victory appealed dazzlingly. It was enthusiastically embraced, and carried back to their own land, where it was to spread like wildfire, and, for the first four centuries of the Christian Era, to oppose a formidable rival to Christianity itself.

It remains to treat more specifically of the Mystery cults, and of those who conserved them; who constituted as it were so many altar lamps — trimmed, burning, and ready — within the great temple of the Spirit, where into the Hierophant, when he arrived, had but to enter and take possession.

Mystery cults appear to have been of very great antiquity. They are said to have been established as a means of spreading the training of the inner teaching to the most advanced souls among the laity. Egypt is often referred to as the “Mother of Mystery”, but the facts probably are that she was only one of many mothers, with whom

she was coëval, or who antedated her. In the remote past we find myth, religion, and history inextricably commingled; and it is not right to treat myth as the product of the imagination. Rather is it a faint, unfocused shadowing-forth, a penumbra as it were of some long-past Reality whose sun has sunk too far below the horizon of time for us to catch any true outlines of it.

All of the great peoples of antiquity held to the idea that there was an *exact science of being* which might be learned; and that it was possible by specific systems of training for a man so to uplift himself, so to refine his vehicles, that he became able to penetrate the unseen world, to master some of its shrouded secrets, and at least to glimpse that goal of the spirit toward which the "pure in heart" ever strive. Doubtless in early days enormous occult powers were vested in the priesthoods. They would be the naturally-appointed guardians and dispensers of the sacred fire; but in order to enter the arcanum of higher wisdom, in order to become an Initiate, a man would need to pass through an

experience of entire regeneration, of utter purification of the carnal man, of austere and undeviating dwelling "upon the mountain tops," both in consciousness and conduct. If he should derogate from this lofty ideal, if he should sink into the valley levels of egoism, the Sun of Life could not shine upon him, and he would forfeit these transcendent powers. This is probably what by degrees came about, as great religions crystallised into formalism and outward pageant. The pure flame of faith became clouded, obscured, overlaid by sacerdotalism. Corruption crept in through the seeking on the part of the celebrants for temporal dominion rather than for spiritual enlargement. The higher powers would forsake them, and then be simulated in order to deceive and corrupt the masses; and as the arcane knowledge and power declined in the official hands, the mastery and the conservation of the true secrets would pass into other hands, more purified and selfless, and thus more fit to be its guardians.

From very early times we find existent in

many lands communities of *Initiates*, the circumference of their influence expanding at the times of high tides of popular feeling, and again contracting as the people fell away, but ever inviolately guarding their sacred wisdom. At the time of the birth of Jesus there were many such communities of mystics. Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor were fairly honey-combed by them. Even Greece was not without its ascetic groups — men and women surrendered to holy living, and known generally as “Orphics,” or those leading “the Orphic life.” Initiates were bound by the most solemn vows to divulge nothing of the higher secrets, therefore exactly what the innermost life of any of these communities was we do not know; but we do know that they were composed of individuals of a lofty type, who led a life of discipline, of contemplation, and of devotion to spiritual ideals, and who were able to achieve mentally a higher vibration than ordinary men, which enabled them to enter at will into a state of superconsciousness, in which they might receive direct influx from the higher currents

of spiritual truth. They were celibates, and lived secluded from the world, often forgotten by it, but keeping extended toward each other—that is, from community to community—the right hand of fellowship, both giving and receiving from each other's spiritual stores. Beside these inner schools, and correlated with them, there were lay-communities who were not celibate, and not admitted to the higher initiations. The members of these followed the ordinary avocations of life, intermarried among themselves, but held more or less intercourse with the outer world, by whom they were respected for the simplicity, serenity, and purity of their lives.

In Egypt these mystic communities were known by the name of *Therapeutæ*, or healers, because they practised the healing of bodies as well as of souls. In Syria and Palestine we find the *Essenes*,\* the *Ebionites*, the *Nazorites*, and others. The general name given to all of them by the Greeks was *Gnostics*—or *knowers*.

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\* For Essenes see note 2.



Philo, the Hellenised Jew (about the beginning of the Christian Era) in his treatise, "On the Contemplative Life," gives a circumstantial account of the outward life in a Therapeut Community near Lake Mareotis, of which he was a lay-brother. Most likely this description would serve in general as a type for all.

Ancient mysticism is a subject of great complexity; therefore, in suggesting that the various schools mentioned above were influenced by infiltrations from each other, as well as from further sources, we must never lose sight of the fact that, fundamentally and in essence, Mysticism is *One*. The specific manner of approach may indefinitely vary, but the goal is always the same; viz, The Vision — that a man may learn to lose himself in Infinity; and therefore there is a certain deep rhythm running through all the apparent differences.

All of these transcendental groups had an enormous influence upon nascent Christianity. It becomes evident that it would be a simple and natural matter for them to take

over the new dispensation and graft it upon the old; to catch up the fresh, vital impulse, and cause it to fan the fires upon the old altars into a soaring flame. This in point of fact is what did take place. What these communities knew about the Being of God, of the being of man, and of the Mystical relation of man to God, was the substance of what, veiled in metaphor, set forth in allegory and parable, Jesus had taught broadcast. And the ethics promulgated by the new Avatar — humility, unselfishness, purity, probity, brotherly love — were those which their own doctrines enjoined upon men, and which, in their own persons, they had always practised. The first form then which Christianity took was Gnostic — the old, old, eternal, imperishable truths, *plus* the quickening and irradiate personality of Jesus the Christ.

Whether we regard Jesus from the standpoint of the theologian, or from that of the free-thinker, he remains forever the grandest, the most majestically mystic figure in history. As we approach this figure the grandeur greatens, the mystery deepens and

dazzles. He as it were recedes into it. It engulfs him like a luminous cloud. The final personality eludes us, and doubtless, to the limited vision of finite existence, always will. Yet to those to whom the life of the spirit is the real life, the all in all, this august Presence will always be the central object of absorbing and reverent study. To explain this personality objectively, as simply that of a perfected — possibly inspired — *man*, is obviously not tenable. The light which radiates from it is too overwhelming. Is he not the Revealer — the Bringer-near? — the personified Presence? Yet who shall adequately explain or interpret this Presence? The Mystery remains.

Human, superlatively human, in all his outward relations, full of tenderness and sympathy for the whole race, forgiving, compassionate, and long-suffering, he stands as the type of embodied Love. By the magnetism of this selfless love he drew men to him; and, in the sense that he is the great exponent of love, Jesus may be regarded by us as our Redeemer, for love is the redeemer of the

fettered soul. Yet upon the subjective side he remains folded in this irradiate effluence which we feel, but cannot plumb. Power was in every word which he uttered, the power of Wisdom, the power of Love, the power of Power itself. We may study them and re-study them, and ever garner deeper meanings. The arena of his activities was small, the scope of the effect of these activities never to be measured. Even as, when one casts a stone into a pool, from the one splash of its impact there will break circles of diverging ripples, and outside of those other circles, and beyond larger circles again, until the wave-stir laps remotest shores, so those incomparable words—making all allowance for the imperfections of early redactions—have come down through nineteen centuries, and wake in us today answering vibrations of aspiration and inspiration.

Religions, like rivers, are purest at their sources. If we would know the pristine quality of a stream, we do not test the waters of the lower levels, where they may indeed spread out, a fair estuary, but where also

they come down charged with silt and detritus, and the complex, subtle pollutions from the many shores they have laved. We follow it back to the fountain-head, where gush the feeding springs, limpid and electric. So, if we would know what the gospel of Jesus the Christ — those “good tidings of great joy” — meant to those men and women who received it, and the generations immediately following, we must go back some nineteen hundred years to the time when it was still quick in the hearts of men. Christianity, in these days, was not even a coherent movement, but a fire burning among scattered groups of men. For the first fifty years or so these groups were not even called Christians, but were known by the old names of Nazoraei, (Nazorites), Ebionites, and others. According to Epiphanius the first Christians were called “Iesesai,” which suggests Philo’s “Esseans or Essenes.” It is perhaps further suggestive that at about this period the Essene communities seem to have disbanded and disappeared, *as Essenes*. The matter of names at this remote time is obscure.

What we do know is that these first Christians—by whatever name they may have been called—were alive with the flame of the spirit; more concerned to live the life, and to gather high spiritual experience than to weld themselves into an organised body. That was to come about later, through more militant agencies. They however formed the nuclei of those “churches” to whom Paul—who himself bears the essential stamp of the Gnostic, versed in the tenets and using the symbology of Gnosticism—wrote his Epistles.

We have already stated that initial Christianity was essentially Gnostic in character; that it was not so much a revelation of *new* truth as a re-awakening, a re-vivifying of world-old truth, of that Ancient Wisdom cherished in the hearts of the *Knowers* from all time. Did not the Master himself declare, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.”? (Matt. V. 17). That this fact was well recognised by the Fathers of the church is attested by many passages

in the Patristic writings; and Augustine states it very succinctly: "That which is called the Christian Religion existed among the ancients *and never did not exist*, from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion which already existed began to be called Christianity."

That "Christian Mysteries" were of the teaching, and that Mystery initiations were practised in the early church, is borne out by numerous passages in the writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers.

Wonderfully pure, wonderfully sublimated, wonderfully Christ-like was life among these earliest Christians; a broad, harmonious expression, nearer to the ideal which the Master endeavoured to establish upon earth than anything which — except sporadically, and always subject to persecution — has been seen since the first two centuries of his Era. Love was the keynote of it; brotherly love the actuating principle toward their fellow men, and exalted devotion to God the fuel which fed the altar fires in the Holy-of-holies

of their own hearts. For reasons presently to be touched upon, very little of the literature of these Gnostic Christians has come down to us; but the study of such precious fragments as we have seems to lift one into another realm, into a rarefied and clarified atmosphere above the ordinary cleavages of mortal thought. Here the white light of spiritual power permeates the being. Heaven seems very near; the veil between the seen and the unseen luminously thin.

Very different all this from the Christianity of that Gregory, called great, under whom the separation of the western, or Romish, from the Eastern church took place, and the firm foundations of a mighty temporal dominion were laid; very different from the fanaticism of the Middle Ages; very different from the rack and torch of the "Holy Office;" very different from the lurid propaganda of Calvin; very different from any reign of bigotry and terror whose records be written in tears, and fire, and blood.

The mind likes to linger over the picture of what the history of Christianity in Europe



might have been had this exalted and gentle form of faith prevailed; but it was not to prevail. It was to go down before the storm of a ranker and narrower presentment. Saintly natures are never militant, never self-assertive. They offer an easy target for the arrogant and the masterful. In its very nature, its purity, its elusive abstraction, one may read the secret of the undoing of Gnostic Christianity. And doubtless—since in the Eternal Economy there is no such thing as chance—that form of Christianity survived which was best adapted to the natures and necessities of the superbly virile, but crude young races which were coming forward. We must believe so.

Almost from the beginning there seems to have existed within the fold of the Prince of Peace another element—an element composed of the more ignorant among the Christ following; narrow, aggressive, self-seeking spirits who, not grasping the real significance of the Master's teaching, translated it to promise personal benefit to themselves. These presently acquired the arrogance of a

faction. Ambition, fanaticism, and the personal lust for dominion sounded the ever-familiar cry of orthodoxy versus heterodoxy. Heated controversies over hair-splitting abstractions rent the fold. Heresy-hunting began in earnest. More than one who had been revered as a saint found himself anathematised as a sinner. In the latter part of the first century there was established in Alexandria a catechetical school called the Didascaleion. It was a school intended primarily for children, but quickly, in the hands of highly trained teachers, it acquired a position of authority. In the Didascaleion were laid the foundations of Catholic Christianity.

It becomes evident that if judgment is to be passed upon men or things there must be established some standard, some fixed code by which they shall be adjudged. Of this fact the "orthodox" brethren were only too conscious. The Cæsarising of the new religion by the conversion of the world-emperor gave the needed opportunity and authority. In the year 325 A.D. the first ecclesiastical council was called together at Nicæa, in Asia

Minor; and what a turbulent gathering this council was is a matter of history. Many momentous questions were settled (!) A certain number of sacred texts were selected from the great mass of writings of the day, and, under the title of the canon of the New Testament, were authorised as the *only* ones. A creed was drawn up and adopted. And, since the real key to cosmogenesis was in process of being lost, *some* scheme of redemption had to be formulated, certain elementary points of dogma were laid down, and served as foundation for vast, amorphous accretion since gathered about them. The famous "Decretals" of a semi-barbaric emperor established final authority, and riveted upon the young religion those chains in which it has travailed — aye, even unto this day.

The narrow, the materialistic triumphed; the idealistic went to the wall. Not only were the Gnostic Christians driven forth from the fold, but their writings, wherever possible, were seized and destroyed; or, what is worse, mutilated and distorted to convey meanings quite other than the originals.

Fragments of Gnostic writings have come down to us embedded in the hostile criticisms of their enemies. Three original mystic codices have come down to us, though not in their entirety. But if we accept the latest Trismegistic literature as pertaining to Gnostic Christianity—for which there is presumptive evidence—then we have a number of early Christian documents of a rare inspiring grace. Very likely others remained pigeonholed in that wonderful Alexandrian library, burned at the time of the Mohammedan conquest, in the year 640 A. D. But the spirit of Gnosticism did not wholly perish. In many small schismatic, and always persecuted, sects (the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Hussites, the Quietists, etc.), in certain secret societies (as the Rosicrucians, the Cathari, the Paterini, etc.), and in numberless saintly and illumined personalities, the old flame has burst forth again and again.

The Nicene Creed (differing somewhat in form however from that in which we now know it) takes precedence in point of time of the two other Christian creeds; at least a

hundred years of the Apostles' creed (so named because of its containing twelve clauses), and considerably longer of the Athanasian (which had nothing to do with Athanasius except to use his name). It was evolved out of certain briefer esoteric formulæ, from the first the property of the Christian inner teaching, which, at the hands of these more ignorant fanatics, received gross misinterpretation and materialisation. Unspeakable mystic truths, to the outer world only to be faintly shadowed forth in symbols, were thus converted by those incapable of rightly understanding and interpreting them into a repulsive materialism. From these misconceptions arose the distortions of Christian theology.

The doctrines of original sin, of a wrathful God, of an omnipotent devil, of an endless hell; and finally of vicarious atonement, are such monstrous perversions that it seems incredible that rational and intelligent men should have held them through so many centuries. The idea of an anthropomorphic god—a great person—separate from his

universe and implacable toward it; a being to be dreaded, and propitiated by offerings and sacrifices, is the idea of the tribal god, born of a crude and superstitious fear, the product of the primitive mind, unable to rise to the level of loftier concepts; and is totally unworthy of an advanced civilisation. Christian theology has invested Ineffable Deity with purely human attributes; qualities of which any well-developed man would be ashamed. But we may not attribute *qualities* of any sort to the Absolute. God *is*. God is *Informing Spirit*, immanent in all things. God has not only created His universe; He *is* His universe. Christian theology has made of Christianity a religion of gloom and fear instead of a religion of joy and inspiration. It has greatly dwelt upon sin—"the mystery of sin." Scientifically considered, sin (in the dogmatic sense) does not exist. Sin is ignorance—shadow—absence of the light. As man evolves and becomes established in consciousness, the lower, more animal instincts are eliminated; they gradually drop away from him, as trees shed

their dead leaves in autumn. There is nothing (in the theological sense) to *atone* for. There is nothing (in the theological sense) to be saved *from*. We are *not* "worms," we are *not* "miserable sinners," we are *not* "children of sin." We are children of the light; and at the core of every one of us is the Divine spark, the great potentiality which shall urge us upward, and ever upward, until we learn to find ourselves in our Source.

We are created creatures of free will, functioning within the scope of the great, fixed, causal laws, that we may by our own choice of good or evil — that is, the higher or the lower — accomplish our own evolution. Thus does the Creator make us participants in His own divine processes. From incarnation to incarnation, through a stupendous evolutionary cycle, ever enlarging faculty, ever expanding consciousness, forging slowly to purer and purer estates, the soul of man gathers that experience by which it is to grow. That misdoing — the breaking of moral and spiritual laws — should bring its own

nemesis is as fixed a fact as that, if we put our hands into fire, we shall get burned. Set in an environment of immutable laws, we are yet, within the scope of these laws, endowed with full choice. We may move consonantly with them, or we may move against them. We may travel the wide path of self-indulgence, or the more stringent one of self-development. We may choose between the good or the evil; but we are finally *our own redeemers, our own judges*. Every act, every word, every thought, every desire even, is *self-registering* upon the impalpable ethers of the Astral; and from its record there is no appeal. Ourselves must face that self-made record in the hour when we slip off this sheath which we call our body. Ourselves must cast up that account—debit or credit, as it may be—and adjust the equation. To advance or retrograde rests with ourselves, now and here. By renunciation in thought and conduct of the lower man, and coördinately the assumption in thought and act of the higher man, we may infinitely stimulate and extend our advance. Equally we may,



by disobedience to the call of the highest within us, wilfully pervert or delay that advance for ages; but we can never stay the action of the fundamental law. Spiritual evolution is as fixed a fact as the forces which govern the orbits of the heavenly bodies.

It is the perversions of Christian theology, with its false premises and falser conclusions, which are responsible for the long schism between science and religion.

The idea is very commonly held that there is some ineradicable antagonism between science and religion. This is a mistake. If it were not, there would be no basis of truth in either. Science and religion are both studying the same thing — *Life*; but one is at the circumference of things, and the other at the centre. In reality science and religion are one. The ancient world found that out ages ago, and the modern world is in process of finding it out. The trouble lies entirely in the conception and use of terms. We are accustomed when we speak of religion to think of it as dogmatic formalism, as a hard-and-fast theology; but religion *per se* is not that.

It is the “fire in the heart” — that upleaping flame which unites with the unseen, and brings down the lightning-flash of illumination. These things are not the product of ratiocination, nor do they come about through any intellectual processes whatsoever. They result from the opening of the hidden sluices of Spirit, revealing the well-springs of Being; and to find them the investigator must turn the search inward. The trouble with modern science is that it looks at things too much from the outside; for there is an esoteric science — a science of things unseen — as well as an exoteric science, and the one furnishes the key to the other. Exoteric science, although it can boast many achievements, is a thing of yesterday. Esoteric science carries the experience of the ages. It has been evolved by investigators of a higher type than any now practising; souls of a more advanced and subtle training, who have been able to penetrate easily to the realm of causation, and to whom therefore the cryptic facts of the invisible world, and the motive impulses of those functionings which we

call Nature, have presented an open book. It is this aspect of science which is one with religion; and, although the two sides of science seem to be out of touch, it needs no unusual perspicacity to perceive that they are approaching each other. Modern science by very reason of its experimental nature is relative, partial, shifting. Each new discovery changes the focus; throws fresh lights, fresh shadows, augments here, erases there. Its facts are only fragments of facts. It gets only a fraction of an arc in its survey of the curving horizons. With religion (we are using the term entirely in its transcendental sense) relativity disappears. It cannot be partial, empyric, or shifting. It stands at the centre and faces The Whole. It knows at first hand;— *it knows*.

Science is standing today acknowledgedly upon the margins of a vast, mysterious, (to it) uncharted sea, seething with possibilities. It recognises that therein it must cast its nets if it would gather further returns. If it would but lay aside its professional egoism and prejudices, if it would be willing to avail

itself of the data of this world-old knowledge—break with one plunge from circumference to centre, what a sunburst—what a widening of horizons! The complex would become simplex; the obscure, transparent; the fragmentary and dislocated, integral and harmonious.

Yea; are we not like children playing upon the shores of life, thinking every rocky pool left by the ebb a world in itself? But behold! Softly, insidiously, the tide creeps—creeps. Nothing can stay it. By littles and littles it lifts—lifts, till the microcosms be all overswept; be swept into the macrocosm; be not even in aspect parts or fragments, but one interacting, stupendous whole. So shall the tide of Spirit sweep; and science and religion shall again, as of old, know themselves as one and indivisible. And perhaps that day is not so far!

In that day the practical, the rationalistic, the scientific minds shall perceive that the founder of the Christian religion is not a myth, not a symbol, not a figment of dogma, not an impossibility of any sort, but an es-

sential and glorious Reality. They will recognise in him the Informer, the Revealer, the Bringer-near. They will know that he took upon himself a human form and came familiarly among men that he might stir afresh the darkling waters of the spiritual Bethesda, so that every man who would might lave himself in the secrets of cosmogenesis, and become a *knower*. Jesus, the Christ, was the archetype of perfection. In his own person he demonstrated to the eyes of men the power and the glory of Sonship; and he called upon all men, as he is still calling upon all men, who would come after him to take up their crosses and follow him; in other words, to purge themselves of the lower self — of the carnal dross which weighs them down; to lighten themselves, even as an aeronaut lightens his machine by flinging out superfluous ballast; and to rise — to rise — to rise, until they too shall enter into consciousness of the Light.

Christianity is not a Mediæval dream. It is not a something vested in dogma, in ritual, in conventional authority of any kind. Chris-

tianity is *Life*; the life of the Spirit functioning through flesh; that white light which shall illumine the darkest corners of human experience. It is simple fatuity to claim, as so many are doing today, that Christianity is exhausted, is a moribund superstition, a passing mist. Except most sporadically, Christianity, for the past seventeen centuries, cannot be said even to have been tried. That the day of dogmatic Christianity, of the warped outlook and inlook of the accepted theologies, may be passing is true enough; and the sooner the better. Only then shall men clearly find in Christianity not a Sacrifice but a supreme Vision.

In some respects the present age offers a certain resemblance to conditions prevailing two thousand years ago. Now as then there is change, disintegration in social conditions, a spirit of iconoclasm, a casting away of the husks of traditional and conventional authority; and above all a burning restlessness in the minds of men. All these things presage a readjustment of ideals; and upon

every side one may read the signs of the dawning of a new era. We are aware of strange quickenings, subtle stirrings, indefinite vibrations of unexpressed power. These are the fore-echoes of the footsteps of the new generations coming forward; the young, consecrate humanity which shall inaugurate a glorious movement both of iconoclasm and of re-construction; which shall break the fetters of society and lead it to nobler achievement than it has ever known. Fearless, self-confident, triumphant, it moves—as the eagle flies—toward the light. It will shake the old earth with the power of a new apprehension, a new sympathy. And upon the gonfalons of this legion are inscribed great ideals; ideals of selflessness, ideals of unity, ideals of brotherhood and the solidarity of man. Are not these the ideals of pristine Christianity? Surely; with one thing more which the new Christianity shall give them; a sense of the Manifest God; a sense of the Immanent Presence in every atom of this pulsing, whirling, dynamic universe. And

shall not this social and spiritual renaissance exemplify that "second coming of Christ," so often prophesied and so blindly expected as a material event; in reality no material thing whatever, but the waking of the conscious divinity in man?

Nothing is done without fire. Ethics alone are not enough. Humanitarianism alone is not enough. Philosophy is cold and leads men, disappointed in results, to Stoicism. Behind and through all we need the pure flame of a living and indestructible faith. We need the quenchless fires within the heart, the glowing heats of eternal passion, the passion for holiness, to burn away from before our feet the chaff of habit, of privilege, of convention, and to fuse the discordant elements of human existence into one irresistible, candent aspiration. Surely, surely this is the religion universal. This is the new — old — religion of Eternal Wisdom. This is the religion preached and taught over the hills and among the vales of far-away Palestine two thousand years ago by the



great Avatar, Jesus of Nazareth. Do not think that the influence of that teaching is exhausted. In its true essence and power it is just beginning.\*

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\* The above passage was written before the rise of the great war-cloud. When that has cleared away it will be found to be doubly true.



II

JESUS OF NAZARETH



## JESUS OF NAZARETH<sup>1</sup>

Some time before the dawn there comes over the waiting earth a strange hush. The wind dies away and a heavy chill falls. The darkness is more profound; the silence more intense. It is a moment between something past and gone and something yet to be — inchoate, unknown, but whose vibrations are already upon the air. It is as if Nature were somehow catching her breath. Even so, in the mighty march of Time, there come moments of pause, of silence as it were, when it would seem as if Life were catching its breath in a strained, mysterious, all-compelling expectancy. In such a silence, some two thousand years ago, there arose the sound of a voice — the voice of one crying in the Wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight!”

A strange, stern, ascetic figure is this of John, the last of the great prophets of Israel,

as he emerges upon the scene, to vanish from it again presently; a figure rudely clad in skins, gaunt with fasting and vigil, on fire with prophetic vision. Jesus himself later said of John: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matt. XI 7-11) By this he meant that John, mighty and inspired soul though he was, was still not so utterly purged as those perfected ones, who having passed every test, compose the inner circle of Radiant Ones and dwell in a spiritual consciousness of which we indeed dream,

but of which we can form yet but little concept. John says of himself: "He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all." (John III 31)

In one of the gospels we are given the genealogy of John. It does not matter. The physical lineage of a great soul is of no importance whatever. The learned of today inform us upon plausible authority that John was of the community of the Essenes<sup>2</sup> because of his ascetic practices, and also because he administered the rite of baptism by immersion, which was in use among the Essenes but which was foreign to the customs of the Jews. It is more than likely; yet it is enough for us to know that "there was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light." (John I 6-8) In the desolate places of his recluse life—a life concerned with the solemn wrestlings of the spirit, with trance,

with visions, and with high communings—the divine command was laid upon this man to go forth into the world as the herald of a new day. And in no uncertain voice he proclaimed it: “Repent ye! for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

It was a voice that shook the stagnant and lax society of the hour to its core, that stirred men’s souls to a quickened self-search, a new hunger. Over the rugged hills and through the sleepy valleys of Judæa rang the call that a new prophet had arisen in Israel; and the multitude responded, as the multitude always responds when a masterful voice of leadership arises in its midst. Restless and discontented hearts, fearful and timid hearts, guilty hearts, hearts keyed to a high aspiration, all flocked to him as the iron filings are drawn to the magnet. “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” (Matt. III 5-6) It was what in these days we should call “a great revival”—a



period of enormous religious ferment and excitement.

The curious, the critical, and the hypocritical came also, and John scored them in burning words. When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees<sup>3</sup> coming to his baptism he said unto them: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." (Matt. III 7-8) Yet, in spite of his masterfulness, very humble in his heart was John. "When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? he confessed and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? and he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? and he answered, No." (John I 19-21) They asked him further, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou are not Christ, neither Elijah, nor a prophet?" And then John answered: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am

not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Matt. III 11) By fire, John meant Spiritual fire; that supreme and vital essence in which all things manifest are vested and held.

And then there came a memorable morning when, slipping unobtrusively through the throngs that crowded the muddy banks of Jordan, a beautiful young man<sup>4</sup> in the very flower of manhood—a strong, serene, benignant figure—presented himself before the prophet. His face was like the morning, and from his presence there radiated power blended with the most translucent purity. And John, with swift spiritual recognition,<sup>5</sup> cried out:—

“I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?”

To which the beautiful young man made answer,

“Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway out of the water: and lo! the heavens were opened un-

to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo! a voice from heaven, saying:—

“This is my beloved son!” (Matt. III 14-17)



Previous to his appearance upon the banks of the Jordan we know almost nothing of Jesus. The story of the Virgin birth we have wholly to discard, not indeed because of its inherent impossibility— for “with God all things are possible”— but because the same legend appears in other, much older world-scriptures, and is in fact not the depiction of an historical event at all, but the symbolism of a cosmic myth.<sup>6</sup> Jesus was born, like any other incarnating Ego, of a human father and mother. If he had not been so considered, why the elaborate genealogical tables of two of the Synoptic gospels?<sup>7</sup> No doubt the vessel selected for this glorious birth was a thrice-purified one. No doubt Mary was herself a rare and developed soul, full of aspiration and inspiration, a soul

possessing the power of communion with the Spiritual Sources. None other could have seemed worthy. No doubt too that in trance or dreams she was made conscious of the high destiny attending her coming motherhood. We can imagine her brooding in a consecrated, almost fearful joy over the approaching event, breathing tender prayers and waiting in rapt surrender till the perfect moment should arrive. And then in a stable, amid the meanest surroundings, the divine child was born to her. This, to every true woman the most sanctified of experiences, must have been to this pure young girl an exalted moment. There exists not in literature a more exquisitely beautiful and poetic passage than the story of the Nativity as it is given in the gospel of Luke. Its absolute circumstantial authenticity matters little; we may take the fervent mystic spirit of it to our hearts.

The advent, incarnate in the flesh, of an Avatar is so momentous, so stupendous an event that the vortices of Nature are shaken to their very depths. Things which we are wont to call supernatural—because we are

not yet sufficiently evolved to understand them and so to find them natural—are of inevitable and prescient occurrence. Sights and sounds, wonderful and inspiring, compel the inward senses. There are strange and vital forces quickening in the unseen, taking form and shape according to the sensitiveness of the percipients. Indeed the glory of the Lord is always shining round about us, but we are too hide-bound with prejudice, too preoccupied with material aims and concepts to perceive it. It is only when the soul is absolutely retired into itself, or when, as in the scene we are now considering, a special fulness and pressure are upon it, that a transient and imperfect vision flashes upon the consciousness and reveals possibilities still beyond our ken.

Simple peoples, especially in the orient, are very much closer to the dim and vast Unseen than we more strenuous and materialistic denizens of the occident. Their psychic, or subtle, senses are nearer the surface. The veil which separates the planes of consciousness is very thin—easily rent.

Night and darkness conducing, as they ever do, to the mystic mood, it is well believable that a company of childlike souls—"shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night"—should become aware of potential Presences, "multitudes of the heavenly host," whose radiant and communicable joy their receptive natures would translate into concrete terms of exalted imagery.

"And lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them: Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." (Luke II 9.)  
"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke II 13-14.)

Was there ever penned a sublimer or more ethereal pæan?

And of the Magi and the star in the east—  
what?

These too are facts, though not circumstantially as handed down to us. All earnest students of the esoteric side of comparative religion are aware that, since the world of men existed, there have always lived here and there certain small groups of illumined men. Different names are given to them in different races and climes. These particular men we know as Magi (from the Latin *magus*)—great; literally *great souls*.

Far from the distracting tumult and stress of sensuous life, recluse and apart, these brotherhoods have dwelt; receiving and instructing such as care enough to acquire the higher spiritual wisdom to seek them out; sending forth, to a world which does not know nor heed, mighty vibrations of life and love; and ever fanning that mystic spark which, without this care, might easily perish from among us.

This particular brotherhood dwelt in Persia; and although it had been revealed to all brotherhoods that, when certain stars should be in conjunction,<sup>8</sup> the time would be ripe for the birth of an Avatar, these seem to have

been the only ones who set out to behold him in the flesh. When the conjunction took place, the Magi knew that the Avatar had been born; and by its taking place in the zodiacal sign of Pisces, they knew that he had been born in Judæa—Pisces being the astrological sign of Judæa. They therefore set out upon their long journey, coming into the presence of the holy child, not, as the record goes, at the period of his birth, but the best part of a year later.

The birth of any soul into the world of matter must be regarded in the nature of a descent. The assumption by any Ego of carnal flesh is, in essence, an assumption of limitations. From its discarnate freedom the spirit winds itself in webs of the material, the illusory nature of which it becomes its laborious business to discover, and, as far as possible, its achievement to break. So does the Ego gather in the Objective experience by which to climb in the Subjective. To use a homely simile, we may imagine an electric lamp bound about with webs, of a denser or lighter texture as may be, but



which must inevitably darken and cloud the radiance of the light within. Yet, in its efforts to shine forth, the heat of it shall more and more consume and disperse its bandages. There shall be weaker places too in them, which, yielding to the inner pressure, shall at moments be suddenly rent in twain. At such moments we are wont to say "scales fall from the eyes."

The new-born infant, spending three fourths of its time in sleep, is not yet fully en-souled — is in fact spending that part of its little life in the realm or plane of the Subjective from which it has come, and its few waking hours in a wondering effort to adapt itself to its new environment of the Objective. As it grows, the balance will dip the other way; so much more time in the Objective, so much less in the Subjective, until the consciousness of the latter dwindles to dreams or fades. Comes next the unfolding of self-consciousness, the correlating of the self with the external; then, as maturity advances more and more, the effort of the rising tide of spirit within to penetrate, sub-

vert, transcend those enfolding webs. Sometimes in the thin places there is a sudden breaking away, a *letting out* of the light of true consciousness. This we characterise as illumination, and the Ego realises that in these flashes it is but taking possession of its own. Thus does the spirit of man *find itself*.

It is in the nature of things that the birth of a baby Avatar should not differ from that of the ordinary child in kind, but only in degree. The assumption of humanity must mean, in a sense, the assumption of the limitations of humanity. How else could he be one with man as well as one with God? But oh! the webs which enfold this radiant spirit are of a far finer and more tenuous character, even as the light within is of a far more powerful effulgence than belongs to ordinary humanity!

Further than the bald fact that he was taken to Egypt and brought back again, we are not told anything of the infancy and the early childhood of Jesus; but we know that very lovely, very joyous, very winsome must have been this gracious little child; full of

an entirely human life and sportiveness; full also of a precocious intelligence and an indefinable radiating magnetism which all about him could feel, yet which none might fathom. Ever and anon he would be overtaken with dreamy hours, when the lambent eyes would grow veiled and absent, and the spirit would seem like a fled bird. We should know too that as he grew the boy would quickly assimilate all that there might be in his outward world to learn. Everything being already potential in the expanding intelligence, it would require but a touch to fling open the doors to the treasure house within. We can imagine with what unspeakable joy and pride his young mother watched this unfolding; with what tenderness she cherished and taught her little son. Deep in her heart too was a certain wonder and an ever-growing awe in the presence of something about him which she could not fully understand.

One vivid glimpse we get of the boy Jesus in mid-growth. He was twelve years of age, and must already have been rarely mature

for his years. We are told that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man," (Luke II 52) and we can visualise the strong, sweet, noble, rational boy that he must have been; easily a leader among his young companions yet indefinitely different from them. The constant expansion of the inner perceptions was setting him more and more consciously apart from them. He was increasingly aware of that inner light, which, springing from the depths of his own being, was ever pressing out, and riving the cloudy films of the external, material senses. Wonderful dreams and trances the boy must have had also; visions in which many things not yet clear to the intellect limned themselves forth in a radiance which he could perceive but not yet correlate. It is more than likely also that he learned truths from learned travellers in those caravans which were continually passing that way from the far orient to Damascus, and that, with the aroma of sandalwood, precious spices, and costly weaves, there were borne to

him hints of mighty knowledges to be gained in the far places of the world.

And then came that momentous journey with his parents to the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem, he being of age now to be admitted to it. To one nurtured amid the peaceful pastoral life of Galilee, what an excitement this long journey with the large body of neighbour pilgrims to this solemn Jewish festival! And then what a panorama the great metropolis opened to his boyish eyes! It was indeed a very microcosm of the whole human world, an epitome of its loves, its hates, its pageants, its vainglory, its oppressions, its miseries, its anguish, its despairs! Mighty contrasts indeed of human society! and it is not improbable that now for the first time there penetrated to his spirit the travailing cry of the human race; the cry of the soul for its lost heritage; the cry which may not be assuaged except by Spirit itself. In the historic high places of worship—sanctuaries which tradition made of the holiest—he would witness an empty

and ostentatious ceremonial, accompanied by hideous blood-sacrifices;—a very mockery of worship. We can imagine the thrill, the excitement, the shock all these experiences would bring to the high nature, until now peacefully shielded from them among his native hills.

But there is another side to the picture. The life of the spirit was not wholly dead in the great Jewish city. Their Scriptures shrouded deep and mystic secrets; and in the more remote courts and chambers of the temple learned doctors made them their life study, expounding orally to those who came to them capable of receiving the treasures thereof. In among the company of these venerable men wandered the boy Jesus—spirit-led, doubtless—and here he remained fascinated, illumined by a touch which suddenly opened the doors to inward chambers of his understanding, and let loose a host of thoughts, ideas, inspirations, of which he had before been hardly conscious.

The spectacular festival week of the Passover being ended, the contingents of guests

from Nazareth and many other places gathered themselves together and took their multitudinous, and we may presume, confused departure. For a whole day Mary and Joseph journeyed before they missed their son, having supposed him to be with friends in some other part of the caravan. In anxious panic they retraced their steps to the crowded city. For three days the agonised search went on; then they came upon the lost boy.

“And it came to pass that, after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.” (Luke III 46)

A wonderful spectacle truly! Among the great teachers of the Law and Kabalah a mere lad sitting—a lad absorbed, rapt, to himself not lost but found—eternally found—and pouring forth question and comment whose penetration and soaring scope staggered his elders.

“And his mother said unto him, Son, why

hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.”

To which the youthful mystic made answer: “How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them, but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.” (Luke II 48-52)

From this period until the moment when we find him with John upon the muddy banks of the Jordan—some eighteen years—the canonical history of Jesus is a blank.

It has been usual to assume that because his father Joseph was a carpenter Jesus also was bred to this trade; indeed we not unfrequently hear him spoken of as “the Divine Carpenter,” but there is absolutely not a shred of evidence to bear out this assumption. Unless as a child he played at carpentering in his father’s workshop, Jesus never *did* use tools. His work was other. The writers of the gospels are silent as to this part of Jesus’ life because they did not know



anything about it. They did not know anything about it because he was *not at home*. Had he been, some record of this, the most crucial period of his development, would inevitably have come down to us. If we needed corroboration of this, it would lie in the fact that, when at the opening of his ministry he began to teach in his native regions of Galilee, he appears not to have been known to the neighbour folk, but to have begun work as a comparative stranger.

The gospel record is a blank, but there exist ancient esoteric traditions which furnish some missing links. Many modern authorities have it that Jesus was sent to be educated by the Essenes, but this is only a part of the truth. After the illuminating experiences at Jerusalem, either because of his mother's conviction that he was divinely called, or perhaps because of some more powerful pressure, Jesus *was* sent to the Monastery of the Essenes at Engaddi near the Dead Sea. He entered this community as a neophyte, but, quickly assimilating all the truths unfolded to him, he rose so rapidly

through the grades of initiation that he soon became a Master there. It has been, and constantly is, asserted by theologians that Jesus was an uneducated man, but the foregoing confutes this. The fact is that Jesus knew everything. To the sum of human knowledge he added superhuman knowledge, which cannot be summed up nor estimated, and the inward light irradiated the outward. After sojourning some years among the Essenes, ever growing in grace and wisdom, the young Master passed on eastward to other, more profound, centres of esoteric learning; and wherever he went the taught quickly became the teacher. Those sages to whom he went could impart the knowledge of hidden mysteries acquired through long years of devoted study, of meditation, of high communings; he could impart the pure stream of Life, drawn directly from eternal sources. Life was an open book to him. Knowledge, wisdom, power were his. He held the secrets of creation, preservation, dissolution, in the hollow of his hand. Yet when, prompted by an inward leading, he turned from wandering

in far lands to inaugurate his ministry in his own Palestine, Jesus, the man, had not wholly found himself as Jesus, the Christ. This was reserved for the mystical experience which followed upon his baptism at the hands of John.

What was the nature of this chrism?

Perhaps we are not competent to form an adequate concept of it, yet one may hazard a reverent conjecture. It would seem that in the burning dazzle of that supreme moment the last impeding thread of the web was dissolved, and spirit met Spirit with a sense of union and a joy scarcely conceivable to us who have not experienced it. The heavens literally were opened. The down-rushing glory and the up-rushing glory intermingled, were fused and at one—and knew themselves as one. The human knew itself utterly divine.

After this great spiritual shock, this illumination as to his real nature, it was inevitable that the soul should seek remotest solitude—should be driven far from the vibrations, the jar and fret of the discordant

world — to polarise itself with Eternal Reality; and we read, “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness.” (Matt IV-1)

There are plenty of wildernesses in Judæa; grim mountain fastnesses and desolate uplands. In some lofty retreat above the haunts of men, above even vegetation perhaps, with nothing over him but illimitable space; the unveiled, parching sun by day, the pavilion of the stars by night; face to face with his own spirit, Jesus spent forty days in the mystic conflict known to us as “being tempted of the devil.” These forty days were probably passed largely in trance, or in a superconscious state.

That this “temptation” was not of a material order, but was a test subjective, fought out in the realm of the Supraliminal, only the occultist may appreciate — and he not fully. It is not to be believed that a Lord of Light should be tempted in the same manner as we, poorer humanity, are tempted. There could be no mortal weakness of the sort which we know; but that, between the limited personal human element and the unlimited

divine Spirit—perhaps indeed, *because* of that very transcendence—a certain terrible struggle passed is clear. Dreams of stupendous dominion swept over him. He was the Messiah. Consciousness of limitless power was his. He might manifest himself as the expected temporal deliverer of “the chosen people,” lift them out of their bonds of servitude, and, kindling by virtue of that power a mighty social conflagration, lead them through it triumphantly to a new empire—an empire as wise as it should be strong. He could consolidate a civilisation which should be far-reaching in its influences, a nobler empire than the world had ever seen. But then that rending, passionate cry of the human race—that cry which was engraved upon his heart? But then that mystic message of liberation which he bore, not to one people, but to all peoples? His message—the message he had incarnated to deliver—was one of Spiritual dominion, the supreme relation between God and man, not one of even the noblest worldly state. No, it could not be. Let the dream pass.

Then unrolled before him the pageant of his brief earthly career; the excitement, the swift popularity, the joy and the acclamations of the multitude; then the waning of that popularity under the spell of sacerdotal jealousy and hatred; the labour, the misunderstanding, the seeming failure; the final ignominy and agony; all was reviewed and promptly and lovingly accepted. This is but a meagre expression of the sacrificial nature of such decision, for in accepting his mission to man, Jesus, the Christ, identified himself with the travail of humanity for all time — for all time, that is, until all men should be “through Christ made free.”

The conflict over, ineffable peace and joy enfolded him. A regnant poise and purpose which could never be shaken possessed him. Ethereal harmonies swept his spirit. “Angels came and ministered unto him;” for the realm of the Limitless is full of incorporeal presences ready to strengthen and cherish every soul who will in trust absolutely surrender to them.<sup>9</sup>

Jesus was then ready to inaugurate his

ministry in his native regions round about the Sea of Galilee.

“And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.” (Luke IV 14)

His first move was to gather about him a small group of chosen men as a nucleus for his new propaganda; and it is significant that these twelve men were selected exclusively from the common people. Some were fishermen, some husbandmen, others artisans, one was the keeper of a public house. They were all simple and unlearned men, doubtless of high character; their very simplicity, childlike receptivity, and absence of dogmatic prejudices rendering them suitable vehicles into which he might pour the inspiration of his divine genius. Jesus did not seek out the learned and high-caste in the land. He knew that the Sacerdotal party were filled with an inordinate sense of their own importance rather than the importance of their responsibilities to others. He knew he could not touch those hide-bound in preju-

dice and self-esteem, and he turned him to the multitude, the "common people," who "heard him gladly."

Companioned by these first disciples, but soon followed by an ever-increasing throng of wondering folk, drawn to him to listen to those words so charged with spiritual power or to be healed of their bodily infirmities, the Master "went about doing good."

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judæa and from beyond Jordan." (Matt. IV 23-25)

There is nothing more conspicuous or appealing to us than the essential humanness



of Jesus. He was no philosopher in the *Agora*; no recluse in the desert. He was not an ascetic like John. His life was a social life. He lived a man among men, sharing their every-day experiences, and infusing into them a new inspiration. He himself has replied to his critics:

“Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets and calling unto their fellows and saying, We have piped unto you and ye have not danced. We have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented; for John came neither eating nor drinking, and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine bibber.” (Matt. XI 16-19)

The relations of Jesus to his fellow-men were characterised by a spirit of sweet and intimate comradeship. He as it were embraced life with both arms. For all suffering creatures he entertained unbounded compassion; for all souls travailing in darkness, an unbounded love. These qualities — this poignant tenderness and sympathy — were

the touchstones by which he opened all hearts. Almost constantly he was surrounded by throngs of people into whose simple joys he entered and whose woes he alleviated. For all he had a gracious word; to everyone he turned a sympathetic ear. Men reposed in him a confidence, an entire faith and trust, born of the inspiration of his perfect manhood. Little children came naturally and joyfully to him, and he gathered them in his arms and blessed them. Upon one occasion when the children seemed to crowd too close about him, and their elders would have pushed them back, he rebuked them, saying:

“Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. XIX 14)

And again:

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. XVIII 10) His rare sensibility rendered him peculiarly sympathetic with, and

appreciative of, women. Numbers of women followed him from place to place, and, to his gracious acceptance, rendered him loving service. In one place we read recorded the names of some who "ministered unto him of their substance." (Luke VIII 3) His mother—the only one of his family who knew his true nature and who believed on him—seems to have been constantly of his company. The sisters of Lazarus were his cherished friends.

For frailty he had a God-like pity and forgiveness. Once, as he sat at meat in a Pharisee's house, there came thither a woman of the street, a courtesan, bearing a box of precious ointment in her hands, and standing at his feet weeping, washed his feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, and lastly anointed them with the ointment. The Pharisee wondered scornfully that he should permit this contaminating touch, but Jesus rebuked him through a parable, and, addressing the woman, said, "Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much."

(Luke VII 47) And it is significant that later it was vouchsafed to this same woman to be the first to greet her risen Lord.

At another time they brought to him a woman taken in adultery; and, wishing to snare him, desired that he should render the judgment of the Law that she be stoned to death. Jesus' reply was:

“He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”

Oh significant judgment, worthy to be taken to heart by every man today!

“And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted himself up, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more.” (John VIII 9)

Very early in his career we find Jesus mingling familiarly and genially in the cele-

bration of a marriage feast. At another time he offends the Pharisaical sense of propriety by dining with publicans and sinners. In two instances we know that his compassion for the material needs of his following induced him to exercise his spiritual powers to supply them with food. Now he is preaching upon a mountain side, holding great multitudes breathless in the spell of an unimagined eloquence. Again we find him sitting in a boat pushed a little way from the shore, that he may command perspective to address the great numbers who flock to hear him. Sometimes he rests with the twelve peacefully within silvery olive groves; at others he strolls with them through whispering fields of bearded grain. For the most part his life was passed in the open, but sometimes we find him in the local synagogues, and more than once he entered the temple at Jerusalem, breathing there words of fiery power.

And so, over the rugged hills of Palestine, among fertile lowlands, through desert uplands; from valley to valley, from village to

village, from house to house wandered, with gentle feet, the Master—a beneficent presence; teaching, healing, comforting, inspiring. And wherever he went he preached the new evangel—the glad tidings of great joy; that God is not an austere deity, afar off, to be placated with sacrifice, but a very Immanent Presence. Yea, that He is Unspeakable Love, and that we have but to reach forth with the selfless trust of little children to find Him. That He is the supreme and tender Father, and that all peoples are his children; one family, one great brotherhood; and that, even as God is Spirit, so are we spirit—of Him, in Him, through Him; of His substance, if we can only rise to the realisation of such truth and claim our heritage.



We read how Jesus was wont often to withdraw himself from all companions, and retire into some silent, secluded spot, there to spend the night rapt in meditation and communion. He “went apart to pray,” are

the recorded words. In silence and in solitude he drank at the ineffable Springs of Being.

This withdrawal of the spirit from activity was in a sense a necessity for its renewal and refreshment; not that the spiritual consciousness could ever fail, but, upon the human side, it could suffer a certain laceration.

Even so we, would we preserve and nourish the Inspiration at the heart of us, must withdraw into silence and solitude and commune alone. For it is only in perfect inward calm that there come high moments when the spirit surrenders itself to the Mystery.

The inhibition of active thought, the closing of the senses to outward impressions, is corollary with the flinging open of the doors to the subjective world, permitting us to pass into the higher consciousness. For consciousness is not sensation nor definite thought, but something beyond either; nor does pure consciousness supervene until sensation and thought are stilled.

Our ordinary life in the world is as if one

should sit habitually in a room upon one side of which there are windows open to a noisy city thoroughfare, and, upon the other side, a door into an inner chamber wherein beautiful music is being played. We could not hear the music for the uproar. The windows to the street must first be closed. The coarser vibrations of the material world, with its trivial pursuits and sordid aims, set up great barriers between the planes of consciousness, and shut out the finer harmonies; and if we do not often withdraw ourselves and surrender the spirit in utter stillness and receptivity, the barriers are like to grow ever more adamant, until we cease to catch even the echoes of the music. For it is not in the whirlwind nor the tempest, nor the fire; not in turmoil or excitement, but in the still small voice that God can be heard speaking to us.

For him, the perfect one, there could indeed arise no barriers, but the uproar of the world could not fail to be a more or less disturbing element. For him too prayer did not mean supplication—the striving of a



hope—as with us. He had but to put a touch upon the avenues of sense to find himself at once and wholly within the inward world, in that illimitable suffusion of spirit for which one finds no name.

Upon one momentous occasion when he went apart Jesus took with him his three favorite companions that he might make to them a revelation of his being.

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John, his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain<sup>10</sup> apart, and was transfigured before them: And his face did shine as the sun,<sup>11</sup> and his raiment was white as the light. And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter and said unto Jesus, Lord it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud which said, *This is my beloved son; hear ye him.* And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face and

were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes they saw no man save Jesus only.” (Matt. XVII 1-8)

In these few verses is recorded, almost baldly, the most profound, mystical and wonderful happening in the Master’s life upon earth.

It has been customary for Christian theology to focus upon the crucifixion as the crux of the history of Jesus, but does this crux not lie rather in the transfiguration? It is not so much that Jesus, the man, *died* for us which unendingly counts, as that Jesus, the Christ, *lived* for us; that he assumed in his own person the burden of the human race, and forever broke its fetters. Jesus, by living, opened anew for men the consciousness of the channels to the Infinite Source; and in the apocalypse of the transfiguration in his own person he exemplified to a chosen few, who might apprehend it, the mystery of union with the Divine, not only

as a possibility for himself, but as an eventuality for the whole evolving race.

It is difficult to translate a stupendous abstraction into the concrete terms of sense, for who may adequately interpret the unspeakable? Symbols fail; language is beggared; yet observe the connotation.

“His face did shine *as the sun.*”

No man has ever really looked upon the sun itself. Science postulates the sun as an incandescent body; but finally the sun remains a mystery. What we behold and call the sun is but the radiation—the luminous envelope in which the Central Solar Core shrouds Itself. Even upon this envelope the human eye may not steadily gaze without searing itself.

No doubt Jesus threw the disciples into trance, and opened the eyes of their subtle, or inward, sense to the Supraliminal; regions flooded with the unearthly and ineffable subjective light. Worlds upon worlds of light; circles upon circles of glory; illimitable, scintillating refulgence; inconceivable,

incommunicable splendour; light—light—light everywhere—a very sublimation of light! And in this fiery glory, this unimpeded interplay of spirit, the Master swept up, suffused, clothed with dazzling majesty and power; the Supreme Effluence pouring through his person; shown forth as Light of Light—the Ever-living Son of the Ever-living God! No wonder that the disciples were dazzled, blinded, overwhelmed. No wonder that, in trembling awe, they fell upon their faces and were sore afraid. They had looked upon *That*, which (unless by supreme privilege) no man can look upon and live.<sup>12</sup>

“As they came down from the mountain Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead;” (Matt. XVII 9) but it is evident that the disciples were too stunned by the magnitude of their vision to grasp its entire significance. That only came later, when full spritual consciousness had descended upon them.

In the hour of the transfiguration the earthly career of the Master may be said to have reached its zenith. From this time forward the skies grew darker above him, the inevitable storm clouds gathered, and events hastened to their tragic conclusion. Already, by his immense and swift popularity, the astounding cures which he had made, and the great spiritual hold which he seemed to have gained over the people, he had incurred the jealousy and enmity of the sacerdotal party; but the superhuman phenomenon of the raising, after entombment, of the dead Lazarus pushed their excitement and rancour to the highest pitch. They feared for their own ascendancy before the fluent power of this dangerous young reformer, which seemed to be sweeping the land like a tidal wave. Yet for a long time they did not see their way to make headway against him.

Jesus also on his part began to change his methods. He realised that his time was short, and that he must concentrate upon those things which he desired most to unfold. Therefore he abstained somewhat from the

phenomena which had occupied so large a part of his efforts, and devoted himself more exclusively to inculcating those principles of life which, ultimately, it was his mission to establish. Also he declared himself—his real person—not only to the immediate disciples but to the world at large, that they who had ears to hear might recognise the true meaning of his personality and its relation to the lives of men.

Already he had questioned the twelve: “Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?” and they had answered, “Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias or one of the prophets. He said unto them: But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him: Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. XVI 13-17)

Wonderful words in these days spake the Master to his followers; discourses of such

eloquence, such sublime beauty and power, that they move the deepest spiritual emotion in us. Even now, with two milleniums of interpretation (much of it how false!) upon them, we can scarcely extract the utter kernel of the esoteric meaning, although we are beginning to do so better than, since the end of the second century, has generally been done. That the disciples did not at the time fully grasp his meanings is evident. The fact is that they understood mentally more than they could assimilate spiritually. The message was too stupendous for them. They were not quite ready. Therefore it is that in general he clothed his teaching in hyperbole, veiling himself in figures and symbols which, to the Oriental mind, make the immediate appeal. As for instance when he speaks of his body as "this temple." In such passages as that in Matthew XXIV 29-31, the cloudy imagery is intended to shadow forth the new birth, or the coming of the Christ-consciousness into a human soul; which, through conflict and tumult, rises into the higher regions of pure spirit. Again

such a portentous passage as Matthew XXV 31-36 must be construed hyperbolically, as symbolising the *reaping of the sowing* of man's objective life. Jesus uses the simile of sheep and goats to express the higher and lower qualities in man; the latter eventually to be outworn, cast off, and consumed as dross, the former to enter (to "inherit") the kingdom prepared for the purified soul. Our Lord of Light knew well that there is no place or condition of *eternal* torment, but that *all* souls are permitted, through successive incarnations, eventually to purify and to perfect themselves.<sup>13</sup>

From the tranquil hills of Galilee, where he loved to linger, and where a great part of his work was done, with the burden of his destiny upon him, the Master began to turn his steps southward — to fulfil it. His disciples sought to dissuade him.

“Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?” (John XI 8)

Jesus thereupon unfolds to them the courses of his destiny.



“Behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.” (Matt. XX 18-19)

“Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us go also, that we may die with him.” (John XI 16)

Jesus, had he so willed, could easily have escaped his fate. It would have been a simple thing to use his mighty thaumaturgic power for his own protection and for the confusion of his enemies; but we remember that during that forty days' conflict in the wilderness he had once and forever renounced the employment of these for his own personal advantage. Again, if he had remained quietly in some corner of these fair upper lands, or even retired with his disciples to some secluded spot over the Syrian border, he could have lived out a life of peaceful spiritual ministry without attracting overt attention or molestation from the

authorities; but in this case his message could not have received its final, its consecrating crown.

“The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matt. XX 28)

Jesus knew that for the full fruition of the seed which he had been planting the law must be allowed to take its course. Therefore it was that he turned his steps once more toward that seething sea of hostility and treachery — Jerusalem.

First comes the thrilling narrative of the raising of Lazarus at Bethany, and a little later the triumphal entry into Jerusalem; for there must surely be a triumphal entry. Must not the Messiah — the Deliverer — ride triumphing into the city of his kingdom? Every Jew expected this.

“And when they were come nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethpage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied and a colt with her: loose them and

bring them unto me. And if any man say aught to you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. . . . And the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and the multitudes that followed cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, this is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." (Matt. XXI 1-11) Oh sublime triumph of a sublime Deliverer!—beautiful, touching, supreme!—the spiritual triumph of humility, surrender, and purest abnegation!

Even now the enemies of Jesus did not for the time being molest him. The cabal

against him in the sacerdotal party was for the moment arrested by the rekindled enthusiasm of the people. "When they sought to lay hands on him they feared the people." (Matt. XXI 46)

Long before this the Sanhedrim had decreed his downfall, yet hesitated as to the method. At one time they sent certain Pharisees to entangle him in his talk, but the subtle simplicity of his answers put them to confusion, so that "no man was able to answer him a word." At another time officers were sent to apprehend him, but the wonder of his speech disarmed them, so that they returned empty handed; and told the chief priests, "Never man spake like this man." Now it would seem as if his enemies held him in the hollow of their hands, "but no man laid hold on him, for his hour was not yet come." More than once we read how, when hemmed about by the infuriated mob, Jesus escaped mysteriously out of their midst. (See John VIII 59. Also John X 39)<sup>14</sup> Yet Jesus had thrown down the gauntlet to them without

disguise. From the beginning he had opposed formalism of all sorts, and thereby incurred the bitter hatred of the priesthood and chief Jews. Many of their religious observances he had set at naught, many of their conventions he had deliberately broken. He had transgressed the law — the law which in their eyes was more immutable than even the Solar system itself. Now he adopted overt measures, and, boldly entering the temple, he overthrew the tables of those who commercialised the holy places, while in scathing diatribes he arraigned the hypocrisy, avarice, and false pride of the Scribes and Pharisees who permitted all these scandals to be; yet, “because his hour was not yet come,” they did not take him. It required the consummate treachery of one of his trusted ones — one of those nearest to him to betray him into the hands of his enemies.

The last days of the Master were spent in instructions to his disciples; exalted mystical expositions to the chosen few who were presently to be hated of all men for his sake, and

whose privilege it was to carry on into the dim and troubled future the tradition of his kingdom.

And then came the last gathering with the twelve.

“Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? And he said; go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, the Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples.” (Matt. XXVI 17)

Very wonderful — very solemnly, sacredly wonderful were those last hours together. It was as if the Master strove to condense into them the final essence of his spiritual message to man; to render them so rich in substance that, in the memories and consciousness of those who listened to him, they would ever shine like fixed stars.

The custom of sacred communal meals is a very ancient one. Mystics of all time have thus been wont to share their simple food, consecrating it by solemn formulæ. The

singing of hymns (cf. Matt. XXVI 6-30) or of sonorous chaunts were a feature of these repasts, and had an occult significance. It is not generally understood, but is well known to all mystic Initiates, that there exist such things as "words of power."<sup>15</sup> That is, that certain sounds — special arrangements of vowels and consonants in conjunction with certain rhythms — have great occult power; and that, when chaunted with spiritual fervour and intensity by a number of voices, they will awaken in the vast spaces of the unseen answering rhythms of far-reaching potency. They stir, attract, and bring down<sup>16</sup> mighty spiritual vibrations, always potential around us, but not always in activity. They pour upon the celebrants as it were a stream of spiritual effluence which quickens them with inspiration, and lifts them out of themselves into states of higher consciousness. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. XVIII 20) In using the term "I" Jesus speaks in the cosmic

or universal sense. He did not mean that he, the personal Jesus, even in his aspect of a Christ, would specifically be there, but that the stupendous potencies of Immanent Spirit, with which he was one, would overshadow and inspire them. In their outward aspect these sacramental meals, or love-feasts as they have often been called, ("Holy banquets" is Philo's name for them,) typified brotherhood, the sharing of the common good, the unity of all men; and it was doubtless in this spirit that Jesus sat down with the twelve, all of them oppressed and overstrained, but only one — the Master — knowing clearly the immediate and imminent reason. Yes, one other — the traitor who was about to betray him.

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it and brake it, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat: this is my body." (Matt. XXVI 26) (Compare with, "And the *Word* was made *flesh*, and dwelt among us." John I 14.) "And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them,



saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament (covenant) which is shed for many." (Matt. XXVI 27-28)

The events of the Last Supper embody a profound symbology, an almost inexpressible abstraction. Jesus utilised the ancient ceremonies of the Paschal feast, its bread and wine and its terminology, to illustrate the inner significance of his own mission to man, and of the Immanence of Spirit in man as well as in him. The disciples were to become partakers with him in this knowledge. They were to "eat of his flesh." Through the reception and quickening of an "inward and spiritual grace" they were to enter into consciousness of the mystery of Son-ship.

"I (the Spirit) am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." (John VI 48-50) "If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is *my flesh*, which I will give for the life of the

world.” (John VI 51) “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”<sup>17</sup> (John VI 53)

For “the Lord’s body” (for *body*, read *substance*) is the fire of the Living Spirit: and to “eat and drink of it,” is to be touched by that Spirit. “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him.” (John VI 56) The Christ-substance is the “living manna,” as well as the “wine of God”; and, even as of the material food which we eat, the vital elements are absorbed to the growth and strengthening of the material body, so, to eat of Christ’s “body,” to drink of his “blood,” is to absorb, to become saturated with, that Spirit of which he was the incarnate expression; in other words, to become transformed — regenerated — born anew. And this transformation is simply an *expansion of consciousness*.

The supper over, Jesus gave his disciples an example in humility and brotherhood.

“Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God: he riseth

from supper and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." (John XIII 3-5) From one astonished and reluctant follower to another went the Master in his lowly task, demonstrating to them in his own person that service to man consecrates and cannot derogate, and that pure love is, and must be, ancillary.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him." (John XIII 14-16)

Memorable words spake Jesus to the eleven on that parting night. In the gospel of John there are five chapters of unapproachable beauty devoted to them. And could Love breathe a diviner benediction? "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give

unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John XIV 27)

The dark hour was at hand. The Master's earthly ministry was concluded. No longer he tarried. "Arise, let us go hence," he says to them.

"And when they had sung an hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives," (Matt. XXVI 30) to pass the heavy intervening hours.<sup>18</sup>

Into the silence and darkness of the brooding midnight is projected the tumult of an approaching multitude; trampling of many feet, hoarse cries, clanking of mail, the flare of torches; and, in this lurid uproar, the traitor approaching to betray his Lord.

The scenes in the sacred tragedy now hasten to its close. Event follows event with overwhelming rapidity. The seizure, the dragging into the presence of his priestly accusers, the haling before the Roman governor—who would willingly have released him—the condemnation to death, the scourging, the crowning with thorns; then the drag-

ging of the Divine Man — non-resistant<sup>19</sup> — through the streets like a criminal; he staggering, fainting beneath the weight of his own gallows, amid the insults, the curses, the taunts, the revilings of the surging fickle mob — that mob which only a few days before had been screaming itself hoarse with hosannas; and, last, Golgotha — and the supreme catastrophe! Except for the purgation of one's soul, one does not willingly linger over these harrowing scenes.

The hour in which our Lord of Light shed his mortal sheath and resumed spiritual freedom was characterised by tremendous cosmic and psychic disturbances.

We have already noted that the entrance into the earth-plane of an Avatar sets up throughout the Cosmos a stupendous sympathetic vibration. Even so must there come a cyclic shock at the passing of an Avatar from the earth-plane, and even so it is recorded. Ominous storm-clouds gathered, pile on pile. The sun became obscured, and a weird, lurid, greenish gloom pervaded the atmosphere. "Now from the sixth hour there was dark-

ness over all the land unto the ninth hour.” (Matt. XXVII 45) Heavy thunder-mutterings were heard — far-rolling — then nearer. Shrill, sinister gusts of wind arose, shrieked across the naked hills, and died away into a boding breathlessness. Birds fled in frightened flocks to shelter; cattle huddled together in their byres. Nature seemed holding herself for a moment in hideous and portentous syncope.

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having thus said he gave up the ghost.” (Luke XXIII 46) <sup>20</sup>

At the same moment, in blinding flashes of livid lightning, reverberating thunder-peals, and shrieking winds, the most baleful tempest ever known broke over the land. And the earth, in consonance, heaved and shuddered, shaken to her deeps by earthquake. Walls toppled, great rocks were torn from their bases, fissures yawned suddenly in the ground, while, in direst panic, men fled all ways at once.

“And behold the veil of the temple was

rent in twain, . . . and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." (Matt. XXVII 51)

Strange apparitions were seen. "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves, . . . and appeared to many." (Matt. XXVII 52-53)

This is not strictly literal. The body in the grave is no more than the cold ashes upon your hearth; the fire is not there. The "saints" who "appeared to many" were disembodied spirits, and appeared not in their material forms but in their *astral bodies*—the envelope in which the spirit remains clothed for some time after the dense, or physical body is shed.<sup>21</sup> The astral body is the exact counterpart of the dense body, only more ethereal in substance; but to the clairvoyant vision it appears the same. It is quite likely that these spirits often pervaded this locality, but were not perceived. The intense elemental disturbances attending the crucifixion doubtless quickened the sensitiveness of many persons who were not ordinari-

ily psychic, and rendered them for the nonce clairvoyant, so that they were able to perceive these appearances.

So, amid tumults and portents, the curtain fell upon the sacred drama. Cherishing hands took down the inanimate body from its bloody tree, wrapped it in a linen garment, and laid it in a new rock-hewn sepulchre; then, sorrowing, and with lacerated hearts, left there the mortal part of Jesus of Nazareth.



We read that the people who came to listen to the teaching of Jesus “were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.” (Matt. VII 28) Many precepts for conduct he gave them, adding thereto the final commentary, “Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven (of the Spirit); but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall



be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”  
(Matt. V 19)

The ethics of Jesus are unequivocal. They are an expression of those principles of abstract virtue which we find rooted within all of the great religions which the world has ever known. Ethics are not *per se* religion, but they are religion translated into conduct. Ethics underlie, fore-run, and also accompany spiritual enlightenment. They are the stepping stones by which a man rises into his higher nature; for virtue *is* a principle, and not a convention. Man's sense of his responsibility toward God and toward his fellow man has varied from age to age, but that in no way affects the fundamental principle; even as the condition of a man's optic nerve — the amount which it is enabled individually to perceive — in no way affects the flood of light which the sun is forever pouring forth.

Those teachers of modern economics who advance the postulate that morals are the man-made products of experience; not fixed principles but fluctuant expediencies, se-

lected from age to age or race to race, as generally best adapted to a particular period, are stating only half — the smaller part — of the proposition. They leave entirely out of account that vital something underlying ethics which has prompted their evolution; viz, the *spiritual impulse*; first operating only as an instinct, later evolving into conscious self-direction. Without this underlying principle man would never have evolved any standard of conduct at all, but would have remained a ravening beast. Ethics then are *not* crystallised social conventions, nor regulations of temporary expediency, but are fixed principles founded upon the bed-rock of spiritual law; and an individual, or a community, or a civilisation, in proportion as it be spiritually developed or the reverse, will carry a high or a low standard of moral conduct. Our conduct may thus vary, but the incentive, the command to virtue is an abstraction which never varies.

Let us examine some of the precepts for conduct formulated by Jesus.

“Judge not that ye be not judged, for with

what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." (Matt. VII 1)

"First cast out the beam in thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matt. VII 5)

"Judge not according to appearances, but judge righteous judgment." (John VII 24)

"When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." (Matt. VI 3)

"If thy right eye offend thee (causeth thee to stumble), pluck it out, and cast it from thee. . . And if thy right hand offend thee (causeth thee to stumble), cut it off and cast it from thee." (Matt. V 29-30)

"I say unto you, swear not at all. . . Let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Matt. V 34-37)

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." (Mat.. V 42)

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures up-

on earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal.” (Matt. VI 19)

“Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.” (Matt. VI 34)

“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.” (John VI 27)

“Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark VIII 35-37)

“Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul.” (Matt. X 28)

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matt. V 44)

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all

thy mind. . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. XXII 37-39)

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you that ye also love one another." (John XIII 34)

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John XIV 15)

"Abide in me and I in you." (John XV 4)

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. V 16)

These are living principles, a grand code for a man to live by; not altogether easy of attainment;—no, certainly not easy of attainment; but then nothing worth the having *is* easy of attainment. Have you ever climbed a great mountain? The upward path is difficult—steep, and it may be rocky and broken. The feet become weary—wounded perhaps. At moments resolution flags, and the effort seems scarcely worth while, but something urges one on. The

breath of the higher altitudes grips one. But when the summit is attained, when the vision breaks, what an uplift! We remember no more the weariness in the joy of attainment. The rarefied breezes sweep us refreshingly. Our eyes roam transported over an immensity of perspective. The whole being dilates with an exhilaration for which one finds no name. For upon the mountain top desire becomes aspiration. Even so the path of righteousness is a mountain climb; and it is well worth while.

But our responsibilities do not end with outward conformity to the canon; the debasing inward impulse must be stamped out because the thought is father to the deed. Hath not the Master said:

“Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart”? (Matt. V 28) So with all the passions. The heart itself must be made pure; the thought, the word, the desire.

“Not that which goeth into the mouth de-

fileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man," he admonishes us. "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man." (Matt. XV 11-20)

We can keep no compromise with ourselves. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." (Matt. XXVI 41) We must not vacillate between two allegiances, for then each will be false. We must be drastic in rooting out the weeds which poison our inward fragrance, not in part, but absolutely. For if we indulge ourselves in cherishing the tiniest shoot, lo! in a little it again springs high, and the flowers of grace droop before it. And it is this spirit of compromise which puts in default so much of our effort. Jesus has pointed out to us very plainly that "no man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else

he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. VI 24)

The call of our Master demands of those who would in any sense be his disciples both to *know* and to *do*. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John XIII 17) "If any man will come after me, let him *deny himself*," (Matt. XVI 24) he commands. The self-indulgent can never find the divine trail of the Master's footsteps. And this much is true; a certain amount of asceticism is indispensable for the growth of the higher faculties. Yet Jesus preached not so much abstinence as an elevated temperance; a state of poise, not where the senses have to be fought with and subdued — though that is a real enough preliminary training — but where they no longer hold any seduction for us because of that wide horizon of the higher consciousness which opens before us. Impulses of the lower man drop away from us because they have lost their significance. The outward lure becomes less and less real; the inward promise



burns with a deeper and deeper brightness. The true disciple therefore is not conspicuously ascetic; he is only superlatively simple, observing everywhere a quiet and cheerful austerity.

By this self-subdual then do we climb. By this discipline are we fitted for grander things; an enlarged manhood, higher faculties, finer perceptions, nobler aims, and an ever-widening and inspiring horizon of human possibilities.



Jesus taught extensively by means of allegories and parables. He says to the disciples: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear and not understand." (Mark IV, 11-12) And again: "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they, seeing, see not, and, hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand." (Matt. XIII 13) He clothed his deeper

meaning in figures of speech, knowing that to the untrained mind such images appeal with a more vivid pertinence, and that those capable of a mystical interpretation would find, within the more obvious story, the kernel of mystery which he had placed there. Each mind would draw from it the quality of lesson for which it was individually fit and prepared. Thus do men go to the well to draw water, but each carries away only so much as the vessel which he has brought may contain.

Superficially the parables seem very simple of interpretation, so that he who runs may read; but, studied carefully, we find that beneath the obvious exoteric meaning there is a profounder esoteric significance.

Many of them are brief allegorical presentments of the relation of the lower self to the higher self; and thus the drama is an interior one, played out in the depths of a man's soul. In the allegory of the Prodigal Son it is the Ego's lower nature which, wasted and starving through the satieties of the senses, turns at last to its only true

home—the higher Self, or divine “Light-ray,” burning ever at the final centre of consciousness. The Spirit is ever pressing from within, calling for recognition. (The Father runs to meet him.) The Light-ray suffuses (i.e., *rejoices* over) the lower man with spiritual consciousness. (He prepares a banquet.) All true enlightenment comes from within. A similar interpretation may be put upon the story of the woman who found a piece of silver (i.e., *found herself*); and there are many more.

There are many figures relating to the kingdom of heaven. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in three measures of meal;” etc. “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking goodly pearls,” etc. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net which a man took and cast into the sea,” etc. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king who made a marriage for his son,” etc. And finally we are specifically told that “the kingdom of heaven is within you,” and to the centre of being we must penetrate if we would find it. “Ask,

and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." It is in the depths of our own souls that we find "the Indwelling Light," and recognise Primal Truth; not because of the authority of any written scripture, nor yet because of the persuasion of the individual experience of any other person, but because in the innermost centres of being there comes an indefinable moving by which absolutely *we know*.

The kingdom of heaven is within us — and it is the Light-Kingdom. Again and again, in a multitude of forms, under many and varying similes, this is insisted upon — is the very noumenon of the teachings of Jesus. At the very outset we find it set forth in those marvellous Beatitudes, which, if we look well, we shall discover are all presenting one and the same idea — the greatness of this spiritual finding.

The aim of all spiritual teaching of all time being toward the end that the recipient shall develop in himself the consciousness of the Mystery within, and ultimately the power of mystical union with the Supreme Source,

we naturally find Jesus in this, his initial discourse, emphasising the necessity of unworldliness as a preliminary to any such development. The pursuit of material objects, the gratification of all desires which are rooted in the senses, cannot, and never does, bring either real or permanent happiness. Even as we grasp it, like the irised foam of the sea, it melts beneath our touch. Its twin is pain: its aftermath is ashes. It is only when we centre upon higher things, when we choose that "better part" which shall not be taken away from us, that we taste that pure joy which is blessedness.

"He opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

The poor in spirit are those who have discarded the cravings of the world, and its attendant restlessness and discontents. This sense of freedom with regard to worldly things comes from transcending the lower, or material self-consciousness, with the higher, or immaterial self-consciousness; which is in

turn the losing of the sense of separateness and the consciousness of the Unity and Oneness of all things. Therefore the kingdom of heaven, which is within, is theirs.

*“Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.”*

The immediate effect of detachment, when we acquire the sense of the vanity and intrinsic worthlessness of temporal things, is a certain unfocussed sadness. The things of the world do not satisfy, yet we have not quite anchored to the spirit; but such as mourn in this manner shall be comforted by being shown the way of blessedness. (Compare with Matt. XI 28-30) <sup>22</sup>

*“Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.”*

This word has been badly translated as “meek,” with which we associate a certain servile, or even hypocritical connotation, which is very far from the true meaning. It would be better rendered as “calm,” or calm in a steadfast faith in the ruling of the All-power, and submission to the same. Those who have become detached from the world

will naturally be humble; for what to most of us is the personal, self-seeking self no longer exists for them. Because they desire nothing, all things shall be theirs.

*“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”*

*“Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.”*

In such, God will develop compassion into infinite love, which is the portal of the kingdom.

*“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”*

For “see” substitute “know;” for those high perceptions by which spirit cognises Spirit are far beyond the concepts of any sense. To know God one must be God-like—purified, detached, uplifted.

*“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.”*

Harmony is the seal of the Law of love; discord, inharmony, the hall-mark of the passions—envy, hatred, greed, strife—self-seeking in all its forms. He who promotes

peace upon the earth- or sense-plane is thereby inaugurating social harmony, and therefore opening the gates of righteousness; but the verse carries a more esoteric meaning. Those who subdue the discords within their own bosoms and there establish spiritual harmony are flinging wide the gates to the kingdom, and shall enter into the "peace of (or in) God which passeth understanding;" therefore shall they be called the children, or Sons of God.

*"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

He who attempts to follow out the path of unworldliness will find himself very likely in opposition to many things; convention, family, neighbours, society at large, who will not spare the lash of criticism; but no man who has steadfastly fixed his mind upon the higher life will be deterred by these stings. Although the carnal man be wounded, rather will he "rejoice and be exceeding glad," for he will know that he is following the path which leads into the kingdom.



*“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, . . . for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”* (Matt. V 2-12)

The kingdom of heaven is within us; for, as many have already discovered, heaven is not a place, but a state of consciousness; and this kingdom of beatitude is ours—*now*. This god-consciousness is our portion, our heritage; but to enter into it we shall have to come “clothed upon” with righteousness. We must don that mystic wedding garment spoken of in the parable—that white samite of the soul—that robe of glory, which is withheld from us so long as we remain contaminate with the lures, the shows, the shams of the material world. The Ego is a mirror which we keep clouded with our petty and ignoble aims. If we would have it reflect holy things we must purge it of all ignoble images. We must cleanse and exalt it. We must make of it a burnished surface which at last, and only so, will reflect that Divinity

which, could we but realise it, always potentially *is*.

Devotion and meditation are the paths which lead us to Spiritual Union. The human lover, saturated with his love, forgets all but the beloved, and does not really live excepting in those hours which he spends in the longed-for presence. No sacrifice seems too great, no service is too exacting, to attain this joy. Self is forgotten in devotion. Exactly so it becomes with the spiritual lover. Mystical Union might be illustrated by the simile of the water spout upon the sea. The drooping cloud whirls and swirls over the static waters, creating centres of excitement which toss its surface into points of lifting waves. Drawn by its attraction up toward the point of downward-reaching cloud, they leap and surge — and then fall back. Presently comes a wave which lifts itself higher than the others; — lifts itself — lifts itself, inevitably drawn, until the point of water is caught by the point of cloud and sucked up into it; and the two, become one, sweep on in a vaprous column of dynamic power. The

Divine Cloud is always circling above our static lives, reaching down for points of contact, *which we must make*. The Divine Compulsion, though it invites and attracts, does not stoop below a certain level. We are constrained, if we would unite with it, to lift ourselves to that level; — lift ourselves, until lo! the lower touches the higher, and is caught up into it, swept into the mighty rhythm of æonic life. And the wonderful part of it all, when this happens, is that the self finds that it is still itself, that that with which it has become fused is none other than its own higher self — an integer of the ALL.



When the disciples of John came to Jesus and asked him, “Art thou he that should come or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”

(Matt. XI 3-5) He would seem to have uttered these words as a conclusive proof of his claim to Messiahship; yet these very phenomena which he adduces to convince have increasingly proved stumbling blocks in the minds of the literal and materialistic, who would bound their horizons by the very limited experience of the five senses.

It has become the habit in this so-called scientific day of ours to discredit the miracles of Jesus, to relegate them to the domain of superstition or of fable, and to cast them out of account as something historically spurious. But what *is* a miracle? The official definition of the dictionaries<sup>23</sup> declares that miracle implies the supernatural—an infringement or violation of natural law; and this is the generally accepted point of view. But the word “miracle” is merely the English rendition of the Greek word “simeion,” which means *a sign*. The great prophets gave *a sign*, that the authority of their higher powers might be recognised.

*All* basic law may be regarded as “an exertion of divine power;” but in the majority

of cases we are used to these operations, and expect them. The supernatural ceases to be supernatural and becomes the natural when we understand, or partially understand it. Any phenomenon may therefore be regarded as a miracle *before* we have discovered, or partially discovered, the laws which govern it, and a fact *after* we have done so. There are miracles unfolding themselves daily — nay, hourly — all about us, and we pass them blind. There are no greater wonders than the rising and setting of the sun, Nature's sistole and diastole of day and night, and the changes of the solar year; yet these things are no longer wonders to us because we have learned that they are contingent upon the revolution of the earth upon its axis and upon its orbit around the sun. And what of this stupendous procession of the stars, nightly unfolded before us? — these illimitable streams of incalculable suns, each the centre of a vast system of its own; moving, ever majestically moving, through ungauged spans of space? Millions upon millions of stars; universe upon universe. To the as-

tronomer and to the thinker alone these are profound wonders; to the multitude, mere pin-points of an experience too familiar and recurrent to command more than a transient attention.

It is an axiom that the enigma of yesterday becomes the commonplace of today; a fact which the retrospect of a single century suffices to attest. Consider alone the question of electricity, that superlative force the slightest unguarded contact with which will destroy the human organism, but which the genius of man — not because he knows what it *is*, but because he has discovered some of the laws which govern it — has harnessed to do his will in a variety of ways. Yet a century ago such possibilities of the power of an unknown fluid would not have been credited; and two centuries ago a man who should have undertaken to demonstrate a tithe of them would, in many lands, have run good risk of perishing at the stake. Consider further this later marvel; that a man with a bit of machinery may throw his thought into the void of space, and hundreds of miles away it will

be caught up by a similar bit of machinery and transmitted into a living message for some other man. Is not this literally a message from the unseen? But we happen to understand the mechanism.

And this commonest of all common things, this universal thing—since the Cosmos is composed of it; this thing in which the soul of man is projected, immersed, and by which the majority of men appear to be bound hand and foot—matter. Can anyone elucidate the root-nature of matter?

Sir Isaac Newton, some two hundred years ago, defined matter as composed of “solid, massy, hard, impenetrable movable particles;” and this concept of the unchangeableness of the physical atom as an ultimate particle dominated physics until quite a recent date. More metaphysical minds however—and it is not possible to exclude metaphysics from science—have entertained the idea that matter might be indefinitely divisible. In the discovery of radium this idea was conclusively proved. Science arrived “behind the atom,” and discovered that the

atom is in fact continuously and spontaneously breaking itself up and *transforming itself into something else*; in short that it is so far from being fixed that it is practically protean. The radium atom disintegrates into infinitesimal particles to which science has given the name of electrons, and, as the electron appears to be always in a high state of vibration, science conceives of it farther as not matter at all but whirls or "vortex-rings" formed within that impalpable substance to which it gives the name of ether. Ether is postulated as a fluid, filling all space, and had hitherto been considered to be a medium for the transmission of light, etc. But all this indefinable *something* which fills all space, and of the real nature of which material science offers no solution, now appears to be *alive*, to be in fact a cosmic substance of infinite tenuity, rarity, and subtlety, within which inhere and exist the vibrations of light, heat, electricity (and what more?) as forms of energy. Matter thus resolves itself into forms of motion; this is the position of modern science.



The physical atom is too infinitesimal to be cognised by any material means, and has to be postulated. Cannot science take one step farther into more arcane regions, and postulate still more sublimated laws? Will she not perhaps be compelled finally to recognise that matter is only one aspect of Spirit—the outer world being but a reflection of the inner world—and that there exists a continuous interplay and circuit of spiritual currents between the unseen and the seen, between the impalpable and the palpable, between the unsubstantial and the substantial; laws within laws, forces within forces? The esoteric scientist is already aware that these things are so, and he further knows that every lift in sublimation involves a gain in power, and that therefore the higher and finer law transcends, controls, and may be made to nullify the lower, or grosser, laws. For the greater includes the less.

We are not then to regard the miracles of Jesus as violations of natural law, but as the *over-operation* of finer natural laws than any

which science has yet cognised or formulated. The key to miracle, to the roots of phenomena, therefore lies in a *larger science*.

Wonder-working is not peculiar to the career of Jesus. It has formed a striking feature in that of every Avatar; the first means by which he may excite the awe, and command the attention and faith of the masses, thus rendering them receptive to, and preparing them to absorb, those spiritual teachings which he is about to pour into them. Nor are such phenomena confined to Avatars. All Adepts, being, by virtue of their adeptship, Masters of power, are able to exercise similar dominion over elemental forces.<sup>24</sup>

That Jesus regarded his own wonder-working as means to an end rather than an end in itself is evidenced by a passage in Matthew (IX 36) where after he had performed a prodigious miracle—the feeding of four thousand persons—“he was moved with compassion for them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.” It was to minister to

souls rather than to bodies that he sought. He exhorts men, "Believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me *for the very work's sake.*" (John XIV 11)

The first recorded miracle of Jesus seems to have been purely an exhibition of supernatural powers, calculated to excite amazement and awe. He was one of a number of guests at a wedding festival in the little village of Cana in Galilee. Not enough wine had been provided, and the supply had given out. His mother came to him and said, "They have no wine." Evidently she was aware that he possessed super-normal powers, and expected him to do something.

"And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now and bear unto the governour of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that

was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which drew the water knew), the governour of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him." (John II 6-11)

How did Jesus change the character of the water so that it became wine?

Following are some suggestions as to the principles which might have been employed in this and kindred phenomena.<sup>25</sup>

Chemistry tells us that there exists a definite number of chemical elements, of which in different combinations — from the inert mineral to the throbbing heart of man — every object of the world (shall we say the universe?) is composed; certain combinations constituting one form of substance, certain others, other forms of substance. Every form is therefore, in its physical aspect, a

congeries of chemical atoms of sorts. Furthermore special chemical processes can be made by a *re-arrangement* even of the same kind and number of atoms to produce things differing essentially in form and properties. These rearrangements are known as "isomeric compounds."<sup>26</sup> These chemical elements, of which all objects in the world are composed, separate, change, recombine into other forms, but in essence they appear to be indestructible.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore all objects or bodies are ceaselessly throwing off infinitesimal particles of those elements of which they are composed, and quite as ceaselessly taking on fresh infinitesimal particles from the atmosphere.

We have already seen that the living ether literally "ensouls matter," that it is charged with uncomputable energy, both latent and active; we now know it to be a vast reservoir of every constituent necessary to organic life in any and every form, existing exhaustlessly within it. In fact, in the modern theory of substance, the minute etheric "vortex-rings" earlier referred to are postulated as *consti-*

*tuting*, in differing combinations, the chemical elements.

The body of the wine<sup>28</sup> being already supplied by the water which was in the jars, Jesus, by a concentrated effort of will-power, a burning volition, as it were, commanded — that is, forced — from the circumambient atmosphere, which was palpitant with them, those special elements into the water which would transform its substance into that other substance called wine. This process he had the power to render instantaneous. The same process might have been employed upon those two occasions when we are told that he fed vast multitudes from the small supply of two or three loaves of bread and several small fishes. As he broke pieces from the bread and from the fish, he could cause those constituent elements of which bread and fish are respectively composed to rush in from their etheric reservoir, and fill the void; and by altering the rate of vibration of the etheric substance to that of dense substance, it would be transformed into physical (or atomic)

matter. Therefore, as fast as a loaf or a fish was broken it would become instantaneously renewed and made intact.

Upon one occasion the disciples were crossing the lake of Galilee in a small ship, and Jesus, who had not accompanied them, but had remained in retirement occupied with prayer and meditation, came walking to them across the water.

“And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his

hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matt. XIV 25-31)

There exist media in Nature not yet fathomed by science. There is a law of levitation as well as of gravitation, and the former can be made on occasion to transcend the latter. All students of psychic phenomena are familiar with the action of this law in a small way. Some day we shall better understand its magnitude. Jesus availed himself of the law of levitation, not to *walk*, but to lift, or move himself rapidly above the surface of the water. He would also thus have upheld Peter had Peter wholly trusted him. Peter did not trust, and therefore the law was not operative upon him until the Master "stretched forth his hand, and caught him."

Upon another occasion Jesus with his disciples was crossing this tempestuous inland sea in a small ship, and while he lay asleep a mighty storm arose.

"And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder



part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (Mark IV 37-41)

Storms are due to inequalities in the atmospheric pressure, causing a rapid flow of so-called high-pressure air to areas of dense, or low-pressure air. Over hill-locked lakes such sudden flows are frequent, and are more or less local. By loosening the constricted areas—perhaps by a change in the atmospheric vibration—Jesus could restore the equilibrium instantly.

But by far the greater part of the miracles related of Jesus have reference to the healing of the sick.

In these days of psycho-therapeutics and of mental healing cults of all grades and de-

grees it seems a work of supererogation to plead for the power of the spirit over the body. The difference between the not too perfect cures of today and the absolutely perfect ones of Jesus lies in this perfection, and that his power further rendered his cures absolute and instantaneous.

A very large proportion of bodily disorders are classed clinically under the head of nervous diseases. Now all nervous disturbance—and its effects organically are often very far-reaching—is caused primarily by *inharmony of rhythm* between the physical, or dense body, and the subtle, or astral body, of which mention has already been made.\* We have seen above that “matter” is a something in a high state of vibration. Astral substance is also “matter,” but in a still higher state of vibration. In robust and normal health these two envelopes or vehicles of the human body are vibrating harmoniously; not in unison, but in consonant rhythm, after the manner in which the harmonics of a note of music will be exact

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\* See note 21.

subdivisions of the fundamental note and move with it. Let some undue excitement or strain disturb the nice adjustment of the delicate inter-rhythms of these two vehicles, and the whole complex machinery of the human organism will be thrown out of gear. Functional disorders ensue, and frequently organic disease follows upon functional disorder. It would be a simple matter for the Master, with a single powerful thought, to readjust the rhythm equilibrium, and the result of such re-adjustment always means health.

Jesus doubtless used various methods of cure, for the resources of occult science are many. One method probably very generally employed would be to unloose and draw to a focus certain potential etheric currents of energy, and, turning the concentrated point upon the afflicted part, re-vitalise it. This would be likely to be the method in most cases; with all the paralytics, with the man who had the withered hand, and with the lepers. If there were any waste of tissue it could be instantaneously renewed by pro-

cesses similar to the first-named miracles. The blind men also would be likely to have been healed in this manner. This burning-point of living energy would act with dynamic power, analogous to a burning-glass, re-vitalising the inhibited nerve-centres, or, in cases of cataract, burning the opaque lens into clarity, as fire fuses silica into transparent glass.

Very many cases might have been, and probably were, healed by simply coming within the radius of the *aura* of Jesus. Something has already been said about the human aura,\* which is an emanation — one might describe it as electrons thrown off — from man's ethereal body. Each of the vehicles of man throws off a radiation, but that which is usually spoken of as the aura proceeds from the psychic or astral principle. The aura is a form of energy, and therefore the aura of *any* human being to some extent affects the physical and mental condition of another — either for good or ill — who comes within its radius. The aura of the Master,

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\* See note 5.

being of the highest purity and power, as well as of greater than ordinary extent, became practically (to use a common term) a dynamo of life for all who came within its range.

The multitudes who thronged about him "besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment, and as many as touched were made perfectly whole." (Matt. XIV 36) They thought that his garments imparted the virtue, not knowing that his whole aura enfolded them like a holy effluence.

There is a touching story of one thus healed.

"A certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse; when she had heard of Jesus came in the press behind, and touched his garment: for she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up: and she felt in her body that she was healed

of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." (Mark V 25-34)

We read of many instances where lunatics were brought to Jesus for healing. These patients are always described as being "possessed by a devil" — "unclean spirits" is another name given —; the Master casts out "the devil," and the patient then becomes whole; that is, normal.

Modern psychology is beginning to suspect what the student of esoteric science already knows as fact; viz, that a large proportion of cases of insanity are due to obsession, pure

and simple. Indeed so subtle and so widespread is interference from the psychic, or astral, plane that it would not be easy without greater knowledge to draw definite lines in the matter. Much has been written relative to the objective and subjective mind of man, and we know that the objective mind—call it reason if you will—is the master of the house, and that, if its dominion is disturbed or overset, there will be trouble; for the subjective mind seems to be quite void of will, and to be at the mercy of any occult current. It is as if the driver of a chariot had dropped the reins, and another has caught them up, and is driving willy-nilly more or less wildly.

In positive insanity the objective mind, the master of the house, has, for one cause or another, abdicated. In this case one, or perhaps more, of the myriads of irresponsible discarnate spirits always waiting and eager for a chance to function upon the objective plane will rush in and take possession—sometimes intermittent, sometimes entire. The master of the house becomes a bondsman

as it were. In human society if one party usurps the rights of another the strong arm of the law steps in and evicts the intruder. Just so did the potent command of the Master evict the spirit-intruder, and restore the rightful tenant to his own.

In reading the gospels one cannot but be struck by the interchangeable manner in which Jesus uses the terms "sickness" and "sin," as if he regarded them as one and the same thing. Again and again he dismisses the healed patient with the words, "Go and sin no more;" or "Go and sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee." Sometimes he merely says to the patient, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

"And behold they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier to say,



Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy) Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house. And he arose and departed to his house." (Matt. IX, 2-7.)

Now we know that the Law of Causation is the most absolutely fixed and fundamental law in the universe. The whole bulwark of human evolution and human destiny is built upon it. Conduct at one period of a man's development conditions his status in another. Man is made a creature of free will within the law, but the law is inviolable, and demands that every infraction—physical, moral, and spiritual—be atoned for to the full in some incarnation. All adversity then, whether bodily or other, is the effect of this cosmic debt, brought over from previous incarnations, and which the individual has at one time or another to equate. Jesus used existent laws to work his miracles, but it is presumable that not even an Avatar could—or would—cause an infraction of that great

basic principle upon which the universe is built. How then *could* Jesus forgive sins? Now it may very well happen that an afflicted soul has "suffered enough," as they say in the east; that is, the cosmic debt has been virtually equated. The Master, knowing this, may then pronounce the word of freedom, of manumission; even as the warden of a prison when a prisoner has served his sentence opens the door and bids the man go free. It may well have been that some of those whom Jesus healed had not expiated fully, and would therefore have to meet the rest of the account at some other time. This healing would then be only a partial, or temporary, remission of sentence. The student who really understands the recondite side of these things does not crave any temporary remittance, but desires only the opportunity to expiate fully, so as to be truly spiritually free. We must however not lose sight of the fact that a sudden spiritual uplift, or enlightenment—such as might have come to some of those in contact with Jesus—a real moment of illumination which could lift a

man as it were to a pinnacle of vision and reveal to him things as they are in spirit, would be like a fire — a purgative fire — and would be capable of blotting out at one sweep a large extent of that man's cosmic debt. Thus frequently the Master says to one and another, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

We come now to the most impressive of the miracles of Jesus; the restoring to life of those who were already dead. We have already seen that in sleep,<sup>29</sup> or in long-suspended animation of any kind, the soul withdraws consciousness into its more ethereal vehicles and escapes from the body; but it remains attached thereto by an impalpable astral filament, and will at an instant's notice return into its tenement, and take up the life of objective consciousness again.\* At death this filament is finally and definitely severed; but it is not severed as soon as we suppose; not at the moment of physical dissolution, but later — in some cases considerably later. In southern countries interment follows very

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\* See note 21.

close upon dissolution, and, except in one instance, those whom Jesus recalled to life had not been dead long. The filament was then not definitively severed. Calling over it as over a telephone, the command of the Master summoned the escaped spirit back into its discarded tenement, at the same time stimulating the eclipsed faculties so that normal health was spontaneously restored.

And last wonder of all, comes the solemn and thrilling story of the raising of the dead Lazarus; the consummation of phenomena, which demonstrated to all men that the Master wielded power in more worlds than one.

Lazarus dwelt in Bethany with his two sisters, Mary and Martha. All three were close and esteemed friends of the Master, who had often sojourned with them. When Lazarus fell sick Jesus was in another place, some distance away; yet, although notified of the grievous malady of his friend, "he abode two days still in the same place where he was." He appears to have done this deliberately and of intent, and he tells his companions, "This sickness is not unto

death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Later he says to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep he shall do well. . . . Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him." John XI, 4-15)

Then Jesus, accompanied by the disciples, journeyed back into Judæa. Martha, hearing of his approach, ran forth to meet him crying, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. . . . Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again." But she misunderstood him. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." To which the Master responded mystically, "*I am the resurrection and the life.*" Martha hastened to summon her sister. "The Master is come and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that she arose quickly and came unto him." Mary also, falling at his feet, uttered the implied reproach, "Lord,

if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” And Jesus, for very tenderness — for he knew well what was about to happen — mingled his tears with hers. Then he asked to be led to the sepulchre, a rough hill-cavern covered with a slab of stone, as was usual among the Jews. He desired that the stone should be removed, but Martha objected. “Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days.” But the Master rebuked her unbelief, and reminded her of his pledge that her brother should rise again. Then, as they rolled away the stone from the mouth of the cavern, Jesus delivered a sublime prayer.

“And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me: and I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by I said it that they may believe that thou hast sent me.”

Concentrating all his forces into one candent focal point, the Master commanded the life-currents to return into the flaccid limbs, the fires of the spirit to kindle anew the flowing blood in the veins and to set in motion

every stagnated function of the living organism. Then he cried with a loud voice:

“Lazarus, come forth!

And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them: Loose him, and let him go.” (John XI, 20-44) In all probability this raising from the dead was of the same character as the others; and, although a much longer interval than usual had elapsed since dissolution, the astral filament had not been definitively severed. The whole context would go to substantiate this.

It was this superlative miracle — this recalling of an Ego from the mysterious abysses beyond the delimitations of all sense-perception — which, creating, as it did, a perfect ferment of excitement among all who had witnessed it or who heard of it and flocked to behold the resurrected man, fanned the virulent hostility of the sacerdotal party to fever-pitch, and precipitated the final catastrophe of Calvary.



“The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulchre. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie; and the napkin which was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.



“But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping: and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen

the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." (John XX 1-20)

Theological Christianity has for centuries pinned itself to, and revolved around, the postulate that Jesus, after death, appeared to the disciples in his dense, or physical, body; but this was not the belief at first. The spiritual leaders and teachers of the early church — themselves, many of them, mystic Initiates — knew better. This idea grew up later, and was the outcome of crudeness and ignorance in the new races carrying forward the banners of the new faith; peoples who could not conceive of any method of appearance other than the corporeal. Jesus did not appear to Mary and to the disciples in his corporeal form, but in his subtle, or astral,

form. This is a fact of which all those who have made a study of occult matters are well aware.

Some explanation of the astral body has already been made,\* and the fact stated that it corresponds in general appearance with the dense or physical body, but that it is ethereal, intangible, and is not perceivable by the external senses. Those who are able to perceive astral presences do so with the astral, or inward senses, these reporting such facts to the brain in exactly the same manner as the material senses do; so that many natural psychics — until they have been trained to do so — are apt not to differentiate the facts received from the subjective world (or plane of consciousness) from those received from the objective world (or plane of consciousness).

Very likely it was the spiritual stress of the previous days which rendered these loved and loving disciples sensitive. For it is only when the soul has passed through some supreme crisis, some divine disrupting emo-

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\* See note 21.

tion, that the veils of flesh are torn, and the eyes of the spirit become fitted to receive the higher vision. Mary Magdalene's psychic apperceptions were not complete. She did not at first recognise Jesus, although she was able to perceive him; but when he addressed her personally as Mary, her subtle senses were quickened, and she knew him. The disciples with whom he walked at Emmaus probably went through the same subtle-quickening process beneath the power of his spiritual radiation.

The gospels report several instances in which Jesus appeared to his disciples, generally within *closed doors*; a proof, if any were needed, that it was in his astral body that he manifested himself; for walls and bolts and bars present no impediment to the passage of this ethereal vehicle. Probably also the transcendence of the personality of the Master rendered the materialisation much more vivid and like the corporeal presence than is the case with ordinary (so-called) apparitions. The episode of Thomas Didymus is often alleged as proof that Jesus

wore a solid body, but when we realise that the senses by which Thomas made his investigations were *psychic* senses, and that the whole episode took place within the astral plane of consciousness, this argument loses all cogency. If the form in which the Master manifested himself had not been an astral form, there is no reason why the whole world should not have seen him, instead of a selected few. Also note that he did not appear in his grave-clothes, which were all that he had in the sepulchre. These were left there, and were seen by Peter and John. He appeared garbed as of ordinary. This bears out the astral presentment; for all astral appearances manifest in the guise most familiar to, and therefore most cognisable by, those whom they desire to have see them.

What then became of the dense, or physical body of Jesus — the body which had been laid in the tomb?

Attention has earlier been called to the idea that the human body of Jesus was of a more purified and ethereal substance than that of the ordinary man. Probably it con-

tinued to grow ever a more refined and spiritualised vehicle as his life in it progressed, so that at the time of his death it was as tenuous a shell as it could well be and yet continue to function in the objective plane. Jesus possessed entire dominion over the laws of construction, destruction, and reconstruction forever going on in this complex world; therefore he possessed entire dominion over that shell—his body. Does he not say? “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up.” (John X 18) Therefore he had ample power to consume and to disperse the atoms of which it was composed into the universal element, or storehouse, of the ether; and so—as a form—it would cease to exist. Or—according to another esoteric explanation—he could heighten the vibration of its constituent atoms, so that they ceased entirely to be dense, and became etheric or astral; thus becoming invisible and intangible to the outward senses of men. To accept these things is of course to shatter one of the bulwarks of formal Christian Theology which claims that

the appearance of the Master (supposedly in the body) was the final and vital proof of the immortality of the soul; which is, by implication, to say that, in an infinitely old world, through countless decillions of human lives upon it, the soul of man had waited until that moment in darkness and uncertainty for this assurance!

It was not necessary that, either by his "resurrection" or his "ascension," Jesus should make conclusive the immortality of the soul. The deeper side of the world had always known it. Every gnostic (knower) from the morning of Time has known it at first hand.\* In all ages there have existed more or less extensive groups of *Illuminati*—Initiates we have elsewhere called them—who, one might say, *lived in immortality*; that is, the spiritual circuit is so powerful in their consciousness that physical death is as nothing to them;—a momentary episode in an eternal existent consciousness. From these great souls the masses have caught a kindling radiance of the truths of being.

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\* See Chapter I.

The surety of immortality is basic in every great root-religion which the world has ever known. The student has only to search and he will find it in the most ancient of human records. In many he will find it sketched with horizons infinitely vaster and more splendid than those which formal theological Christianity has succeeded in presenting to its adherents.

What then does the resurrection mean?

Like many another much-misinterpreted passage, this is a symbolic term, and refers directly, not to any material happening, but to an interior experience. Very reverently and awesomely must we tread here for we are upon holy ground. Indeed very little of the Unexpressible Mystery will it be possible to put into concrete words; only an outline, a suggestion, can be attempted in these brief pages.

The subject of the nature and mission of an Avatar has been touched upon in a previous chapter, and it need not be repeated. Suffice it to say here that an Avatar is a form of the Divine Essence, *Self-limited*, that It



may come within the range of the human comprehension. That great Entity, that "Radiant One," whom, in his earthly presentment we know as Jesus of Nazareth, incarnated in the flesh, and assumed for a season the outward limitations of the flesh in order that he might come into direct touch with that unenlightened (and therefore unredeemed) humanity which he desired to lift out of carnal darkness and bondage into a greater light and freedom.

The essential mission of this Master was to bring the Mystery of the Divine Immanence, Universality and Oneness *close to man*. He unlocked the treasury of spiritual potentialities — that treasury for ages arcanelly and hieratically guarded — and with lavish hand flung broadcast the priceless seeds of the *understanding of spiritual life*, aware that a large proportion would fall upon arid minds, or be choked by worldly weeds, or be devoured by the passions of men; but also knowing that into the heart which was ready — the "good ground" — it would fall gratefully and spring up into a glorious and

imperishable flowering. So brief was that public ministry that the work was not half accomplished — nay, perhaps *could* not have been accomplished through exoteric channels alone, or without an appeal through subtler forces; and therefore it was prolonged beyond the physical death of that sense-form which he had worn before the eyes of men.

Pristine, that is to say Ante-Nicene, Christianity concentrated itself upon, and marshalled all its forces around, the elucidation of one noumenal truth. It received, and endeavoured to understand, to assimilate and to live in, the spirit of that *Mystery* which the Master had brought so close to it; even as the first disciples received, and endeavoured to assimilate and to live in it.

We recollect that while he was still in the flesh he could not, even to his chosen companions<sup>30</sup> — those who from the first had heard and obeyed the divine call — unfold the ultimate of the truths which he had to teach. They were not ready. They were not yet sufficiently unfolded to the point where the material webs which still clouded the spiritual

consciousness could be torn away. He says to them, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." (John XVI 12) And again in the Acts of the Apostles we read, "But ye shall receive power *after* that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." (Acts 1-8) It was through the awful and desolating hours of the Master's Passion—hours surcharged with intense and rending emotion—that the final detachment and purification came to them. For the shock, the suffusion, consequent upon some profound crucial and solemnising emotion, will often superinduce radical psychological changes; and in the abysses of the soul new polarisations will take place. Old bonds are broken, old boundaries become submerged. The solid earth seems to shake and slip from beneath one's feet, and the spirit is swept by some mighty tide, it knoweth not whither, into immeasurable immensity—darkness—mystery. But this darkness lies upon the threshold of the Great Light.

Even after this manner were the souls of the disciples swept and whelmed. They were

as it were lifted out of themselves — lifted out of the environment of sense-perception in which experience had hitherto functioned, and so prepared for the awakening of new and finer faculties. And then in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, by the fire of his own spirit, the Master dissolved the last impeding veil, and flung open to them the doors to the chambers of the higher consciousness; which was in effect the consciousness to each man of his own higher Self. “And he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” (John XX 22)

Very possibly the thrilling narration in the second chapter of Acts is another version of this same happening; or it may refer to some further illumination, for such experiences would be likely to be not solitary but cumulative.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were

sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts II 1-4) Such illumination could be none other than the baptism “with the Holy Ghost and with fire,” announced by John; the coming to them of the Cosmic Consciousness; an experience the majesty and wonder of which may scarcely be conceived except by those who have in some measure approached the adumbration thereof.

The disciples were now fitting instruments to receive and to disseminate the teaching of the Eternal Wisdom.<sup>31</sup> Recorded in the gospels are a number of instances where the Master showed himself to the eleven, and Paul gives us an instance when “he was seen of above five hundred of the brethren at once.” (I Cor. XV 6) Most likely these records are merely notes, or indications, of many such events.

“And there are also many other things

which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." (John XXI 25)

According to the accepted tradition drawn from the gospels, these appearances covered a period of forty days, but there exist occult records of a much longer time. These state that for eleven years\* the Master remained in contact with his elect, directing, developing, and illuminating them. A great deal of this instruction would naturally be oral, but, for the higher knowledge, there would be trance-initiations; for it is only in the super-conscious state that may be gathered that deepest experience which makes of all spiritual knowledge a living, burning reality. This is "the Wisdom of God in a Mystery" of which Paul speaks.

There is good internal evidence — borne out by many allusions in the Patristic writings and by esoteric records — that Mystery-initiations were practised within the early church; that the so-called Christian Myste-

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\* Cf. Askew Codex; British Museum.

ries formed an organic centre for the teachings of that church; that in fact they endured as long as there remained within the pale of the orthodox, or official church any hierophants of a sufficiently exalted order to conduct them, and any catechumens of a sufficiently purified character to enter into them.<sup>32</sup>

What did the Master teach his disciples?

Mystery. Being. Cosmogogenesis.

He revealed to them the essential nature of his own being and the potential nature of theirs. He unfolded to them the supreme and glorious mystery of Sonship, and in what manner he was the Son of God; and he taught them how they might climb the spiritual heights and become also Sons of God. The mystery of Christ-hood, of Sonship, is something which none but the perfected Ego may really fully know; yet this we can know, that it is the Mystery of "becoming" — of redemption — of At-one-ment.

In the third chapter of John, verse 16, we find these words:—

“For God so loved the world that he gave his *Only-begotten Son*, that whosoever be-

lieveth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The same term, “Only-begotten,” is put into the mouth of John the Baptist (cf. John I 14-18) in speaking of Jesus. The Greek text has here been mis-translated, giving rise to a perverted connotation. *Mono genēs* does not mean “only-begotten;” it means “alone-become.” The Monogenic, or alone-become, state is the fulness and blissfulness of perfection.

We are all in process of “becoming” or evolving, but this process is a long evolutionary movement, spanning a cosmic cycle. This “Radiant One,” our Master, by virtue of being of the Ultimate Essence — that is, One made perfect in some other, anterior Cosmic cycle, and therefore now one with the Father — was outside of those laws which govern the destinies of the human family. He was beyond evolution as we understand it. Therefore he was at that time the only Alone-become, or Son existent upon the planet. The Son is always “in the bosom of



the Father:" (i.e., in God.) The interplay of spiritual currents is uninterrupted.

"No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son." (Matt. XI 27) Only Spirit may enter wholly into Spirit.

"I and the Father are one." (John X 30) In ultimate consciousness there is no separateness.

In the gospels we find the Master sometimes speaking of himself as "Son of man," and sometimes as "Son of God." In some cases he appears to have in mind the Incarnation—the man, Jesus; in others, the Divine Essence. When he says "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," (Matt. VIII 20) he is clearly speaking of the man, Jesus. When he says, "Before Abraham was *I* am" (John VIII 58); when he says, "*I* am the door of the sheep" (John X 7); when he says "*I* am the way and the truth and the life" (John XIV 6); when he says, "*I* give unto them eternal life" (John X

28) ; he is not speaking from the standpoint of any personality whatever, but is expressing the action of a divine Principle. The personal pronoun becomes the universal pronoun, and expresses abstract Being. We must never for one moment lose sight of this distinction.

Oftenest he refers to himself simply as "the Son." *The Son* is the ensample of righteousness and holiness ; i.e., wholeness ; the supreme and rounded Ideal. *The Son* bears a different name in every one of the great Scriptures of the world ; but he is always the archetype of perfection. Jesus was teaching Jews, and therefore he used the humanistic symbolism familiar to the popular mind ; but Christian theology has perverted this to connote the narrow ideal of anthropomorphic Deity — an ideal difficult to transcend or put aside. But it must be transcended and put aside if we would reach to any concept of what spiritual life really means.

The personal symbolism is not found in any of the greatest Oriental Scriptures,

where Deity is spoken of awesomely as<sup>33</sup> *That*, or *It*: as if Illimitable Being were, as it is, beyond the possibility of any concrete definition. It is difficult for the mind to correlate this abstraction until we grasp the idea that Creator and created are in essence *One*.

It has been a signal calamity for Christianity that, from the time it crystallised into a formal and official body, it should have focussed the Messianic<sup>34</sup> hope in a *Person* rather than in an imperishable *Principle*. The man Jesus, whom we are wont to consider *the* and *only* Christ, ceased to be from the moment of Calvary. This is not to say that the sublimated Individuality whom we call Jesus does not remain as a *Centre of Being*; but it is not for us to probe to the ultimate mystery of any Avatar. We cannot know how far their radiation is conterminous, or coextensive, with God. The Christ-Principle, which for a space he bodied forth concretely before the eyes of the world, endures forever; is, was, and ever shall be.

At the roots of every one of us is implanted that Principle, which one may re-

gard as an aspect of the Divine unfolding. It is the Redemptive Principle; Christos, the "anointed;" hidden until we grow large enough to recognise it; inoperative until we learn to make it a dominating power. This process of growth into recognition has sometimes been called the Christ-Mystery; and the Christ-Mystery is, in its human corollary, the mystery of the divinisation of man.

"*I am* the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John VIII 12)

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John I 4)

The demiurgic aspect of God—that is, God, the Creator—called by the Greeks, *the Logos*, (whence our, *the Word*: John I 1) has two modes of manifestation: one, the general one of the Divine reflecting through nature, inclusive of man; and the specialised manifestation of *Avatars*. All that exists is really based in Spirit, man therefore is basically Spirit; but ignorance (darkness) and the dominance of the senses keep the great

Self veiled from the little self — which latter is all that the unregenerate man is wont to regard as himself.

When Nicodemus came to Jesus secretly by night to question him concerning truth, the Master said to him, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." (John III 3) In another place we are told, "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke XVII 21) Only upon the introverted vision may fall apocalypse.

To be "born again," or "re-born," is the common mystical term for that process of thought and experience by which the purified soul passes from the plane of polarisation in the material into the more advanced one of polarisation in the unmaterial; the passage of consciousness from worldliness to Godliness; which is not in any sense a process of intellection, but a transcending spiritual experience. It is indeed the process of "becoming," referred to previously. The Greek word translated "born" is elsewhere (John I 12) translated "become." To be born again implies *only metaphorically* the death

of the body, (i.e., carnal man). As when Paul exclaims, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. VII 24) But Nicodemus, still held in the bondage of material things, could not understand. "How can a man be born when he is old?" he asks. To which the Master makes always the same cryptic answer, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (John III 5) "Water" is here used in a figurative sense, meaning the words, or ministrations of a sanctified teacher. As when the Master says, "Who-soever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John IV 14) Then, when the neophyte is ready, the Holy Spirit shall touch his soul with the chrism of a new life.

"Marvel not that I said ye must be born again," (John III 7) the Master continues. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit."

(John III 6) The Sons of God are born, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of Man, but of God.” (John I 13)

“The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.” (John III 8) The chrism must be waited for in a consecrated preparation; faith, humility, selflessness, its hallmarks; but only the Supreme Foreknowledge may know when the soul of the neophyte is ripe for it and the illumination shall come. In a flash, “as the lightning cometh out of the east, and is seen even unto the west,” the hidden doors within are flung wide, and the soul enters the sanctuary of the Christ. The well-springs of being are, as it were, new-charged. Spiritual faculties, which in the unregenerate man remain dormant and inoperative, rise into activity and transform the possessor into something quite other than he was before.

Does it not become evident that *resurrection*<sup>35</sup> means exactly the same thing — means

regeneration—being born anew, or from above? Jesus said to the caviling Sadducees, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. God is not the God of the *dead*, but of the *living*.”

*Death* is always regarded by the mystic as meaning, not the laying aside of the physical body—for this he knows to be a mere incident in an endless existence—but a spiritual (or rather unspiritual) condition, a state of unregenerateness, a dwelling of consciousness in the lower man. While we are immersed in things relative, sordid, artificial, material; while we remain hidebound by the aims, the prejudices, the conventions of the world; while we are content to function within the limited horizons of the lower self, *we are dead*;—“in our sins,” is the technical term, but “in ignorance and darkness” would connote the condition better. And when we break from these bonds, when we rise into the higher consciousness, we become *alive*—“alive in Christ.”

Paul puts this to us succinctly:—

“For to be carnally-minded is death; but



to be spiritually-minded is life and peace.”  
(Romans VIII 6)

The Epistles of Paul (the earliest and most authentic Christian documents) are full of illuminative passages.<sup>36</sup>

The Master's word is:—

“Whoso liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” (John XI 26)

“If a man keep my saying he shall never see death.” (John VIII 51)

“The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” (John V 25)

“He that heareth my word and believeth (i.e., knoweth) on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and cometh not unto condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John V 24)

“I (the Christ Principle) am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in (or through) me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” (John XI 25)

Resurrection then does not mean the rehabilitation of the soul in this, or any other, *body*; it means a shift in the polarisation of

the consciousness. It means entering into the Christ-consciousness. The regenerated man enters into joy and peace and power immeasurable; enters into knowledge ineffable; enters into *Sonship*.



We are all of us potentially Sons of God,<sup>37</sup> you and I and every man; but we have forgotten our royal lineage; we pass our existence in ignorance of our birthright. The lures of the flesh, the delimitations of the sense-perceptions, the centering in trivial and material things, the indulgence of the lower nature have built up adamantine barriers between our high prerogatives and our consciousness. It becomes our privilege to beat down those barriers — to dissolve them in the kindling flame of our own inwardness. The pentecostal fires — the fires of Illumination — are forever burning; waiting to touch each of us with that same baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire which touched the Apostles; but they are burning, and must always burn, upon the heights of spiritual ex-

perience. We must climb to them; and the climbing of "the Mount" must be a volition upon our part. We ourselves must turn our faces upward, must purify and prepare ourselves. The climbing will not always be easy. It involves at the outset a full renunciation, an exalted detachment, a strong and enduring holding fast in the faith; but he who will keep his steadfast course will anon find himself filled with a new buoyancy of spirit, with an ever-increasing sense of freedom, of joy, of strength, of peace; and will go triumphantly climbing upward — and upward — and upward!

"If the Son (the Christ-Principle) shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."  
(John VIII 36)

We are all of us potentially Sons of God — Children of the Light. To grow into the recognition and consciousness of this fact is the sole purpose of human experience; and until we recognise it we exist in vain. Every Ego is an ideation of the Infinite Majesty; it remains for each of us to make that ideation a sublime actuality.

Is it so difficult to turn from darkness to light? — from pain, disillusionment, and denial, to surety, fulness, fulfilment, and eventually an incommunicable joy? — from consuming restlessness and confusion to perfect poise, divine order, and peace — the “Peace of God which passeth understanding”? Could we know, could we even dream, the grandeur of that which awaits us, we should fling aside those husks which we now regard as life, and we should stay not a moment in our haste to achieve that estate which really *is* life! And when we have once recognised that the things of the external world cannot fill us, that they are relative, transient, illusory, they — the dominion of them, that is — will slip from us as surely as autumn leaves rustle to the ground because their holding vitality has gone out of them. Then the soul will stand, cleansed and bared before the new dawn.<sup>38</sup> And it will come. It will come as surely as the terrestrial dawn does.

Love — Love, the Revealer, Love, the Redeemer — is at the root of all spiritual unfoldment. Love, in its lower or relative as-

pect, a radiation toward one's fellow men; in its higher or cosmic aspect, a sacramental fire, in which faith, purity, and holy desire are blended into one soaring flame. If that flame be high enough and hot enough it will fuse the last fetter upon the soul — dissolve the last veil which clouds the understanding, as mists vanish before the beams of the rising sun.

Those upon whom this higher vision has broken fail adequately to describe it. The tongue stammers and halts in the effort to translate ineffable things into concrete terms, but it is given us to know that it is a transcendence not born of the senses nor to be cognised by them. The percipient undergoes a wonderful change in the personal vibration; an intensification, as it were, of life. There comes a liberation of some indefinable energy from the depths of being, a swift accession of spiritual strength and power. He becomes for the moment more than man. He feels himself swept, absorbed, lost in Omnipotence, yet keeping a consciousness apart; although how this may be is not to be ex-

plained by finite mind. And, oh! darkness becomes forever swallowed up of light!

Light indeed is the supreme impression made upon the consciousness — a boundless, overwhelming splendour in which the spirit seems to float free and triumphant. In this irradiate suffusion — which, for want of a better term, we may call an ocean of super-consciousness — all mortal delimitations are swept away, and the pulsing heart of Being is laid open.

Create and uncreate are seen to be a unit.

Life is one; indivisible, indestructible; permeating, playing through all things — worlds, systems, cycles. There is no break anywhere. There is no *here* nor *there*; no *near* nor *far*; no *mine* nor *thine*. There is only ONE. Now, always and forever, there is only the ALL. In supreme self-surrender the soul of man knows itself an indissoluble part of IT, and can cry with the Master,

“*I and the Father are one!*”

III  
NOTES





## NOTES

(1)

(See page 73)

In this book the canonical gospels are followed without question, or any special reference to the so-called higher criticism. Doubtless for all intents and purposes they are authentic enough. For the first half century after the brief ministry of Jesus the message which he had brought to men was held as so overwhelming and absorbing that the personal history of *the man* was a good deal lost sight of. Every word which he had uttered, every spiritual idea which he had promulgated, was carefully caught up and soon recorded. An immense number of these *Logia*, or *Sayings of Jesus*, existed, and not a few fragments have been recently discovered. Many of these *Sayings* which we have are identical, almost word for word, with passages in the gospels; and in every case the early record is prefaced with the words, "Jesus saith," evidencing that at that time what Jesus had said, rather than what Jesus had done, was held of first importance. There is every reason to believe that the gospels of the canon were not written from each other, but that they, as well as a great number

of others, were composed separately from cognate early materials; although the third gospel and the first chapter of the first gospel are disturbed by glosses from some later hands. The mystic side of the teachings of Jesus finds its greatest expression in the fourth gospel, because the writer was more profoundly a mystic; but, read with esoteric eyes, *all* the gospels bear the same message, and there is between them a beautiful and synthetic harmony. According to consensus of opinion among scholars, the probabilities are that they were written in, or just previous to the reign of Hadrian. Mr. Flinders Petrie places the date very much earlier (cf. *The Growth of the Gospels*). He claims a "nucleus" — uniform in the synoptic gospels — probably written by the hands of the Apostles to which they are respectively accredited, the rest of the body of these gospels being later accretions, either from Galilean documents, or possibly from oral tradition.

(2)

(See page 75)

The Essenes were a community of recluses who dwelt at Engaddi, near the Dead Sea. Their origin is attributed generally to an esoteric brotherhood established by the prophet Samuel, of which they were a surviving remnant. Other authorities give it that they were a remnant of a settlement of Buddhist monks several centuries before the Christian Era.

Very possibly they were a blend of both; for it is a well-known fact that Buddhism passed far beyond its original sources, and at one time overflowed nearly the whole of Asia. The Essenes were spiritual celibates, living a life of austerity, purity, and good works. They cultivated their monastic lands, instructed those who came to them for instruction, and spent much time in meditation and inward communion, conserving in some form, not known to us, the sacrament of the Inner Mysteries. A rigorous novitiate was required to gain admittance to the order. There appear also to have been groups of lay-Essenes, who lived in the world, married among themselves, and who were distinguished for the purity and probity of their lives. Tradition connects Mary, the mother of Jesus, with the lay-Essenes.

(3)

(See page 77)

After the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity they split up into several sects, the principal of which were the Sadducees (*Tsedukim* — the righteous) and the Pharisees (*Perishim* — separatists). The Sadducees, drawn from the opulent classes, adhered to the strict code of the Pentateuch, and were rigid in their observance of the written law of Moses. The Pharisees, who seem to have been the prevailing body, were tinctured with the Hellenic culture and mysticism, which, after the conquests of Alexander,

pervaded Syria, but they seem to have drawn little enlightenment therefrom. They regulated their lives with complicated conventions, and became noted as types of pride and hypocrisy.

(4)

(See page 78)

We have no record of the personal appearance of Jesus, but we know that perfect bodily conditions must attend the absolutely purified soul. We have traditional accounts of the distinguished and lofty beauty of some other Avatars, and it is not believable that our own Lord of Light was any otherwise.

(5)

(See page 78)

John, being a psychic — as are all highly trained mystics — probably recognised Jesus by his *aura*, which would be of a dazzling light. Every man has his aura, which is a projection or emanation from the astral, or subtle body, and extends in an oval form a couple of feet or so outside of the dense, or physical body. The aura is of varying colours; dark, heated, or muddy in subjects of a material order, or those dominated by passions; passing, in the case of more spiritualised subjects, into pale blues, translucent violets, pale, luminous yellows. The aura of a great spiritual personality is dazzling. Many ordinary clairvoyants

are able to perceive the aura as a more or less transparent mist, and some are also aware of the colour.

(6)

(See page 79)

Elementary, or primordial substance, otherwise *virgin matter*, appears to be as permanent and imperishable as Spirit itself — is indeed an aspect, or expression, of Spirit. Natively it is inchoate, inert, quiescent, but, when stirred or impregnated with an effluence from Absolute Spirit, it is quickened into activity, and becomes concrete and manifest as atoms, as molecules, as plasm, as worlds, as solar systems, as universes. The manifest Solar System is the *Son*, born of the *Spirit* and *Virgin matter*. This is the meaning of the *Virgin Birth*. It is the cardinal error of those who formulated the official Christian creed, that, through ignorance of the deeper occult meaning of these things, they confused the man, Jesus, not only with the Christ (which is an indwelling Principle inherent to a special degree of spiritual development, and therefore not individual,) but also with the Second Person of the Logos. Furthermore the word “person,” as we now use it, has a very different connotation from that which it originally bore. *Persona* is compounded of two Latin words, *per* and *sona*, and means “that through which sound comes.” It was the term used to designate the mask which the Latin

actors wore upon the stage, which mask indicated the character that the actor intended to represent; and therefore it means *aspect* rather than *person*. It is well to keep this distinction in mind.

(7)

(See page 79)

St. Paul states it clearly: "Jesus Christ, our Lord, which was made of the seed of David *according to the flesh.*" (Romans I, 3) "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His son, made of a woman, *made under the law.*" (Galatians IV, 4) "That of the fruit of his (David's) loins, *according to the flesh,* he would raise up Christ—" (Acts II, 30) "*Of this man's (David's) seed,* hath God, accordingly to his promise, raised unto Israel, a Saviour, Jesus." (Acts XIII, 23)

(8)

(See page 83)

It behooves us moderns not to be contemptuous of the ancient science of astrology, for, although in our day degenerate and meretricious, it is the parent of modern astronomy, and was in ancient days a very great and comprehensive mystic science. The conjunction here referred to was the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the constellation of Pisces, the two planets being later joined by Mars, all three being close together in this same part of the heavens. The calculations of modern astronomy show that in the

Roman year of 747 (or seven years prior to the Christian Era) the planets Saturn and Jupiter were in a conjunction in the constellation of Pisces, and that, in the spring of 748, they were joined by the planet Mars. Kepler first furnished us with this calculation in the year 1604, and modern calculations have verified his work. As the exact date of the birth of Jesus is not known, and is given by different authorities as varying by four to two hundred years before the accepted date, the above apparent discrepancy need not disturb us.

(9)

(See page 98)

No personality must be associated with ethereal beings of any sort. Again we must not forget that these are not *persons* but *aspects of spirit*.

(10)

(See page 109)

Mt. Tabor is the spot to which the scene of the Transfiguration is usually ascribed. Some authorities claim for it the noble, snow-crowned Mt. Hermon, in the scarped recesses of which gush the numerous springs from which the river Jordan takes its rise. "Going up into a mountain" is the esoteric term used from very ancient times by mystics to indicate the withdrawal of the spirit into its own fastnesses; therefore some interpreters of this episode claim that the latter is the sole meaning of the passage "bringeth

them up into a high mountain." Probably however both are true, and the passage is charged, as are many others in the gospel, with both an exoteric and an esoteric significance.

(11)

(See page 109)

"The fashion of his countenance was altered" Luke (IX 29) hath it.

(12)

(See page 112)

Ultimate, or Absolute, Deity is an abstraction too stupendous to be even conceived, far less grasped, by finite intellect. The nearest that we can approach to such a concept is in the Demiurgic Aspect, when *It* emerges into manifestation as Creator; and even then any concept must of necessity be most partial and imperfect until we begin to acquire the inner vision.

(13)

(See page 116)

Or it is more than likely that Jesus never uttered exactly these words — the most Christ-like of the gospels, St. John, contains none such — but that the writer of the first gospel, being a Jew, used the terms familiar in the Jewish tradition. And it is upon the Jewish tradition that Christian theology has built itself. Jesus would have been the last to postulate eternal damnation, although of course he knew and



taught the inevitable balancing of Eternal Law. The Cosmic law of compensation — the law of the sowing and the reaping — is absolute. St. Paul puts it succinctly. “Be not deceived. God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Gal. VI 7)

(14)

(See page 120)

*How* did Jesus so easily escape from his enemies when they surrounded him, and every eye was upon him? He flung the mists of *maya*, or illusion, over their sight. To use the terms of today, he *hypnotised* them; so that the man quietly slipping through their midst appeared other than he was, and while they sought him he was away. The reason that Jesus permitted himself this protection at this juncture was because the time for his sacrifice was not quite ripe, and he had somewhat more to do before that hour arrived. This particular phenomenon is well known in the east to this day, and is sometimes practised by highly-trained thaumaturgists who have no pretensions whatever to any divinity. It merely indicates enormous psychic mastery.

This is the most simple explanation, but there is another method sometimes employed by great Adepts (an Adept is not an Avatar, although an Avatar, by virtue of the greater including the less, is of course an Adept) by which Jesus may have made his escape. As all advanced oculists are aware, there exist *media*

in Nature, not known to Material science, which can be made to encircle, or encase, an object so that rays of light impinging upon this etheric armour, or envelope, will be *deflected*. They thus will bend or curl around it, and then continue in the original direction. Such an enveloped object thus becomes invisible; but it remains tangible, and it would therefore have to be got out of the way as soon as possible. This is the explanation given by occultists for the famous “disappearance” of Apollonius of Tyana when he was on trial before the Emperor Domitian. The event is narrated in Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius*, and is authenticated by passages in other writers. Apollonius concealed himself by this means, and then availed himself of the law of levitation to lift himself out above the crowd into the open, and so away.

(15)

(See page 123)

The ancients understood better than we moderns the secrets of these *Words of power*, and how to arrange them. In Sanskrit they are called *Mantras*, and the esoteric literature of India abounds with them. The Sanskrit *Mantras* are the most complete and powerful ones which have survived to this day; although doubtless plenty of the same sort — now lost to us — existed in other ancient tongues. We know that among the Essenes, the Therapeutæ, and other mystic

bodies these sacred love-feasts, with their formulæ, were in use.

In constructing the Christian liturgy the early fathers, who were many of them themselves mystic Initiates, had this aim in view; and therefore, in the earlier Greek texts, and later, the Latin, a number of phrases and groups of phrases have the character of *Mantras*. This is the real reason that today the Roman Catholic Mass is celebrated in Latin, even though the celebrant be quite ignorant of the occult nature of that sacrament. Obviously to translate a *Mantram* into another language breaks the flow of the adjusted rhythms and harmony, and robs it both of its majesty and its significance.

That Jesus sometimes sang hymns with his chosen disciples is evidenced by the one mentioned on this occasion, and that they were of the gnostic character is most probable. In one of the uncanonical books called "The Acts of John" there occurs a beautiful hymn, known as "The Hymn of Jesus," which is distinctly a Mystery ritual. "The Acts of John" are of course not authentic history, but they are suggestive of what may very well have been.

(16)

(See page 123)

The terms "higher," "lower," "up," or "down," are merely conventional, and are only used connota-

tively. There is, and can be, *no* dimensional relativity in Spirit, which, whether manifest or unmanifest, is all-pervasive. The different planes interpenetrate. Such of us as have only consciousness of the grosser will function in those alone; but let but a break come into a finer and rarer consciousness, and the soul will expand and function in that.

(17)

(See page 126)

Compare with "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, *not discerning the Lord's body*. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (I Cor. IX 29-30)

(18)

(See page 128)

The question naturally arises why should a Lord of Light agonise at the prospect of physical, even if most cruel, suffering? We observe that the fourth gospel — the one which most closely interprets the mystery of Jesus — makes no mention of the agony in the garden. The writers of the synoptic gospels wrote largely from the human standpoint; the fourth gospel treats all circumstance entirely from the spiritual standpoint. Either then this episode was not, or else this was the synoptic interpretation of some transitory flicker of the flame in its mortal socket. We are

therefore constrained to synthesise events by acceptance of the great Gnostic paradox: "He suffered, yet he did not suffer."

(19)

(See page 129)

Bear in mind that Jesus was a Master of Power, and that a single exercise of this power could have shattered the palace of the high priest and destroyed every creature within its walls.

(20)

(See page 130)

Mark and Matthew have it that Jesus cried with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

It is inconceivable that this God-man, as we know him to have been, should for one moment have felt himself "forsaken" of That of which he was an integral part. Some commentators explain this passage by saying that in uttering these words Jesus was beginning to quote the twenty-second Psalm, which opens thus, but later turns to a pæan of triumph. "All the ends of the earth shall *remember*, and turn unto the Lord," etc., and that, though he spoke only the initial passage, the *whole* Psalm, with its connotation, was in his mind; the meaning being that this sacrifice, consummated in ignominy and agony, would not be wasted, but that, through it, and because of it,

all the world (i. e. "the ends of the earth") would turn and know God, and recognise the earthly supremacy of the Master. Perhaps. This reading is ingenious but not wholly convincing. Did the Master *really* utter these words of purely human despair? If he did, it must have been only in the delirium of physical dissolution, when the consciousness and the organs of speech were no longer connected. We believe that he did *not* utter them, and that the rendering in John and Luke are nearer the facts.

(21)

(See page 131)

Most persons suppose, naturally enough, that the physical or dense body is the only envelope of the soul; but the soul possesses other, more ethereal, vehicles in which to express itself, and functions simultaneously upon several different interpenetrating planes. Perhaps this can be made clear by a figure. Suppose that we take a peck measure and fill it with common marbles; it will not hold any more marbles, yet the measure is not full. There are innumerable little interstices between the marbles. We pour into the measure a quantity of small shot, which settles itself into the interstitial spaces; but the measure is not yet full. We can pour in a quantity of fine sand, which will settle itself into the still smaller spaces; yet the measure is not full. We can pour water into it, and the water will penetrate every tiniest crevice,

settling around the solids closely. Is there room for anything more? Yes. We can charge the whole contents with that intangible thing, electricity; and, possibly, if we were in control of any finer element, we could further introduce that. Now observe: all these things are contained within the one peck measure, which has not needed to be enlarged in order to receive them. In this same way the human soul uses for its expression several different, but interpenetrating vehicles, envelopes, or bodies, of graduated density.

The dense, or physical, body we all know; the majority of persons know nothing else. Many of us have more or less spiritual consciousness, which indicates a vehicle through which to function; but this we need not touch upon here. But in the western world we know very little — except in a sporadic and empiric way — of the intermediate vehicle, the subtle, psychic, or astral, body; yet it is as fixed a fact as the dense body.

The astral body is imponderable, intangible, and, to the ordinary vision, invisible; but it is an exact counterpart of the dense body. The astral body possesses, like the dense body but of a finer quality, five senses. To the subtle vision we give the name of clairvoyance; to the subtle hearing, the name of clairaudience. The subtle sense of touch is known as psychometry. There exist also a subtle sense of smell and of taste, but these are not yet labeled in our nomenclature. The astral body is the seat of sensa-

tion, of the emotions, of desires, and of all the passions. It is a more ethereal vehicle than, but in essence quite as material as, the dense body. The dense body is only a machine — a congeries of muscles and cells, functioning in obedience to the promptings of the subtle body, unless these be superseded by a higher authority. Behind all is the Will, the driving power of the world; a supreme spiritual quality of the Ego and not separable from it. The Will appears in a sense to be impersonal, and will be coloured by the plane upon which consciousness functions. Thus in an elementary or emotional subject the directive impulse will proceed largely from the astral faculties, such a subject being more or less a creature of passion and impulse. In subjects in whom the ethical consciousness is well developed the will is likely to be directed by *reason*. In the highest development spiritual poise and wisdom will dominate reason, and Will becomes one with consciousness.

In deep sleep, in trance, or in coma of any kind, the spirit withdraws consciousness into its more ethereal vehicles and escapes from the body. Clothed in its second vehicle, the subtle or astral body — much as a man might lay aside his outer garments and walk about in his under-vesture — it leaves the dense body unconscious, and passes into the realm of the Supraliminal. It however remains attached to the dense body by a tenuous, impalpable, astral filament, or thread, by which, at an instant's notice, it may be



drawn back into the dense body and to objective consciousness. In subjects of a dull, material, or primitive order it does not go far, but remains inertly near its unconscious shell. In subjects of a high development it will roam far and wide through the unseen, accumulating inspiration and refreshment. It is by this process, this functioning for a time in the unseen, that the Ego renews and refreshes itself from the strain of daily objective life. At death the same process takes place, except that the filament is finally severed, and the spirit does not return. The astral body is retained for a brief period, and is then also in its turn discarded, to disintegrate and return to its native elements.

All apparitions or spiritistic appearances are in the astral body, and are perceivable only by astral, or psychic, senses. In India these phenomena are pretty well understood; but in the occidental world they cause us a good deal of disturbance. We have given the astral shape many names:—“the fluidic body,” “the double,” the “doppelganger,” etc.

Great Adepts — of whom even now there exist upon earth a greater number than most of us are aware — have, through highest spiritual development and a specific disciplinary training, acquired the power of leaving the body *at will*, and projecting themselves in the astral envelope to any place they please. Ordinary psychics, in whom the astral perceptions are sporadic and partial, and who have not

undergone the strenuous disciplinary training, will do best not to play in this very dangerous plane of consciousness; for so tremendous are its potencies that a man needs to be first wholly master of himself else he will be destroyed by them.

(22)

(See page 146)

“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” (Matt. XI 28-29)

Our connotation of the English word “yoke” is one of grievous burden. The ox wears the yoke and does our drudgery with it. He is dulled and heavy, and seems to droop beneath the wooden bands across his neck, but this is not the idea which this passage is intended to convey. If it were, how should we possibly find rest unto our souls? In order rightly to interpret it we must go to our sister Aryan tongue, the Sanscrit. Here the word is “yoga,” and also means generically a yoke (from the Sanscrit, “*Yug*,” meaning “to join”); but our most metaphysical of brothers, the Hindus, transliterate this into a beautiful spiritual symbol. *Yoga* therefore has come to mean a *joining* rather than a *yoking*; a union in fact; a union of the lower self with the higher (or divine) Self. St. Paul means this when he says, “He that is

joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (I Cor. VI 17) To take the Master's yoke upon us and learn of him, is to be of his spirit, to assume that impersonal attitude toward all the circumstances of life, which will then surrender itself happily and absolutely to the Divine guidance; which obeys its leadings in perfect trust and faith; and which thus becomes spiritually poised, and so finds rest unto its soul.

(23)

(See page 152)

The Century Dictionary defines a miracle (from the Latin *mirus*, wonderful, to wonder) as an effect in nature "not attributable to any of the recognised operations of nature nor to the act of man." "A wonderful work, manifesting a power superior to the ordinary forces of nature." From Funk & Wagnalls we get "an event in the natural world, but out of its established order, and possible only by the intervention and exertion of divine power."

(24)

(See page 158)

Of Apollonius of Tyana, for instance, there are recorded quite as wonderful miracles as Jesus wrought. Marvellous phenomena are also told of the philosopher, Pythagoras, but it has been the custom in modern times to put these accounts entirely aside — as discreditable to his philosophic teaching, forsooth! — by

those who cannot recognise that one would quite rationally include the other. Neither of these men were Avatars; they were simply men, highly trained and highly purified men, who by virtue of these exercises of discipline had acquired the thaumaturgic powers which gave them control over the elemental forces. In other words, they were *Adepts*.

(25)

(See page 160)

All of the laws and agencies treated of in these suggestions are every day facts to any occultist, but the attempt is here made to square them with the position of modern science, so far as modern science has discovered and accepted them. This varies with the individual scientist. The psychic phenomena are familiar to every candid experimenter. The levitation of tables, chairs and other objects as well as of the human body are facts established years ago in this line of research. See accounts of Stainton Moses, the famous Oxford psychic, who more than once when sitting in his chair was gently lifted, chair and all, up to within a short distance of the ceiling, held there a few minutes, and then just as gently set back upon the floor. For Apollonius' use of this law of levitation, see note 14.

Even today in India, the land of Wonder, not a few phenomena can be accomplished by the highly trained Hindu Yogi. Living eyes have beheld such an

one (he, sitting cross-legged upon the ground, in the attitude of meditation) levitate himself some feet into the air, and remain there suspended in the same sitting posture, legs crossed, eyes closed, for an appreciable time, then gently descend to his original position upon the earth. Also there are known *Sannyasin* capable of duplicating small objects.

Paul and the other disciples of Jesus did healing, and so did the prophets of old. Elisha raised the widow's son from the dead.

(26)

(See page 161)

Chemistry is today shaking hands with metaphysics. Some of the experiments of our modern chemists tend to prove that chemical atoms and human emotions move hand in hand. Sound can be transmuted to form, and both further to colour, showing that each is but a permutation of some deeper fundamental law not yet formulated.

(27)

(See page 161)

The tree in the forest falls and decays. As a tree it disappears, but the chemical particles of which it was composed are as alive and active as ever. Some of them have become a part of the soil, where they will enter into the life of new vegetable growths. Some of them have evaporated into the ether, whence Na-

ture, in her fine economic processes, will draw them for new combinations. The rock, dessicated by storms and frosts, disintegrates. That of which it was substantially composed becomes in like manner something else. The human corpse is buried in the ground, or is consumed in the crematory. Its volatile elements are taken up by earth and air to be used over and over again.

(28)

(See page 162)

The body of wine consists of water — of those elements which constitute water — with the addition of some sugar, of glycerin, of a small quantity of certain acids and of ethereal salts (which give the particular flavour), and of a certain per cent. (evolved from the saccharine fermentation) of alcohol; in the case of native wines, drunk by the peasantry in wine-growing countries, a very small per cent.

(29)

(See page 175)

It may well be asked: Why then do we not bring back impressions of these nightly subjective experiences? In point of fact, many persons do. Some of us retain only a vague sense of something experienced; but trained occultists are able to bring through a very clear impression of things which they have seen and done in the Beyond.

(30)

(See page 190)

The commonly accepted view is that the twelve were especially selected and privileged men, arbitrarily exalted above their fellows by the favour of their Master, as an earthly sovereign selects his favourites. Especially selected, certainly, but arbitrarily so, no. They were indeed advanced Egos — purified and probated. It was doubtless part of the Divine plan that these men should incarnate upon the earth and be functioning in the flesh at the time when the Master appeared, that they might become his instruments. In previous incarnations they had evolved a high degree of spirituality. Contact with the Master would rapidly ripen them, and make them ready for their Pentecostal illumination. It would appear further as if a large number of kindred spirits incarnated at this same period, or in the next generation or two, which would account for the mighty flux of those exalted spiritual tides which distinguished the very early church.

(31)

(See page 193)

It is probable that not all the twelve were equally illumined, and that some discrimination was made in the teaching. Clement of Alexandria states that the *Gnosis* was imparted specifically to Peter, John and James the Just; that they instructed the other nine,

and that these in turn prepared the seventy for their world-wide mission.

(32)

(See page 195)

The Christian church has lost her pristine powers. She retains in name those *sacraments* (sacramentum, the Latin rendering of *Mysteries*) through which in the early days men might become God-like; but, beside that first and real luminance, they are void and dark and meaningless. For many centuries she has been satisfied to produce merely good men of an earthly type, and points to the saint as the height of human perfecting. But originally, when a man had reached the level of saintship, he was only at the beginning of spiritual things. We are told that there were three great stages in the mystic training: Purification — Illumination — Perfection. The final stage was the goal. “Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is *perfect*” (Matt. V 48) is the Master’s command. Saintship is the first stage only, the stage of Purification. The man has broken the dominion of the senses. He has sloughed the world. Vision is turned inward. He is ready now for the apocalyptic experiences, but within the church there is no apocalypse today. In the parable of the king who gave a marriage feast for his son (Matt. XXII 1-14) the Master has set forth the very essence and core of man’s perfecting, using the mystic



phraseology, the *symbol-terms* familiar to every occultist. The marriage feast of the king's son represents the solemn final sacrament, the *Unio mystica* — sometimes called the Mystical marriage — the supreme union of the human soul with its Source; but every guest who comes to it must wear a wedding garment, i.e., “a robe of glory,” which he cannot receive until the milestone of Purification has been passed. The Robe of glory stands for Illumination.

(33)

(See page 199)

In the Jewish Kabbalah — their “Secret Doctrine,” derived from Egyptian and Magian sources — the first principle given is the name of the *Absolute*, which in translation gives us: —

“I am That I am.” Or, better: —

“I am He who is.”

This is not the Anthropomorphic *Jahweh*, fathered by ignorant churchmen upon Christianity.

(34)

(See page 199)

The Hebrew word *Masiach* (Messiah) means the Anointed, or one who has received the unction or sanctifying oil of God. (His Holy Spirit.) The Greek translation of *Masiach* is *Christos* — (Latin, Christus).

(35)

(See page 203)

From *Re* and *surgo*, to rise. The Greek word *anastasis*, rendered *resurrection*, means literally *causing to stand up*, or stand erect.

(36)

(See page 205)

A few are quoted:—

“Paul, an apostle from God, who raised him up *from the dead.*” (Gal. I 1)

“But sin that it might appear *sin working death in me.*” (Rom. VII 13)

“If by any means I might attain unto the *resurrection of the dead.*” (Phil. III 11)

“For the wages of *sin is death*: but the gift of God is *eternal life*, through Christ Jesus, our Lord.” (Rom. VI 23)

“And you hath he quickened, who were *dead in trespasses and sins.*” (Ephesians II 1)

“But God, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.” (Ephesians II 5)

“For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the *law of sin and death.*” (Rom. VIII 2)

“For since by (carnal) man came death, by (spiritual, or regenerate) man came also the *resurrection of the dead.*” (1st Corinthians XV 21)

“For as in Adam (the unregenerate man) *all die*, even so in Christ (the higher or spiritual Self) shall all be made alive.” (1st Corinthians XV 22)

“The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.” (1st Corinthians XV 47)

“Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new.” (2nd Corinthians V 17)

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and *arise from the dead*, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians V 14)

“That as sin hath reigned *unto death*, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans V 21)

(37)

(See page 206)

“I have said Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High.” (Psl. LXXXII 6)

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” (Epistle of John III 1)

“But as many as received him (the Christ-spirit) to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” (John I 12)

“And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal. IV 6)

(38)

(See page 208)

“Jesus saith, Let not him who seeks cease until he finds; and when he finds he shall be astonished; astonished he shall reach the kingdom, and having reached the kingdom he shall rest.” *The Sayings of Jesus*: Oxyrhynchus Papyrus.







