

the grasp of the finite and the conditioned"—is it not far more honest to confess that we know absolutely nothing of that God, and even less blasphemous—in the very improbable case that such a God should exist and yet remain unknown to all and absolutely beyond any possible human proof—than to go on investing it or him with imaginary attributes (*finite* attributes in something *infinite*!) and then imposing that being, created by human fancy, on the millions of the *oi polloi* and threaten them with hell and damnation unless they *do* believe in that something of which no one can know absolutely anything!—(EDITOR *pro tem.*)

"M. A. (OXON)" AND THE "BROTHERS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "THEOSOPHIST."

DEAR MADAME AND SISTER,

We, some of the Hindu Fellows of the Theosophical Society and *Chelas* who read "Light," have remarked, with feelings of deep regret and surprise, the hostile attitude that one of its best contributors, and, as we had reasons to believe, one of our Christian brothers—"M. A. (Oxon)"\*—has, for some time past, taken up against our MASTERS, "THE ADEPT-BROTHERS" as he chooses to call them, in his "NOTES BY THE WAY," which have won our greatest esteem and sympathy by their able advocacy of things spiritual in these hard materialistic days. We Hindus are taught in our *Shastras* that even tolerably advanced students of Occult Philosophy are liable to be deceived by *deras* or *devatas* (elemental spirits), and this affords the only explanation of the great inconsistency in the visions of different mediums and seers. TRUTH can be but one, and these apparent divergences are but disturbing effects produced by these elementals; and one of the principal objects of all Occultists is to train the WILL in such a manner as to be able to withstand the disturbing influence of these weird visitors, and to come face to face with living truth. As for our brother "M. A. (Oxon)," since he is known as a great medium, as such his WILL-POWER must be perfectly passive, and so we can easily understand how much more, than any other Spiritualist, is he subject to all sorts of disturbing influences. This is the reason why only repeated acts of gross injustice to our MASTERS (the Himalayan BROTHERS) on the part of "M. A. (Oxon)"—has induced us to put in this word of Protest.

In "Light" of September 23, "M. A. (Oxon)" quotes with approbation, from the review of Mr. Sinnett's *The Occult World* in the *Journal of Science*, the following words:—

"Till some foot-hold of this kind is given us, it is useless to bid us join the Theosophical Society or change our 'mode of life.' Teachings, so indefinite, we are compelled to reject, not indeed 'superciliously' but sadly."

And, a few lines before, he says *in personâ propriâ*:—

"But, after all, it is the creation of crockery and the displacement of furniture that make most impression on the average Philistine."

Here we must confess, to no small surprise, to discover "the average Philistine" under the mask of "M. A. (Oxon)." For the value of the teaching is here made to depend on the strangeness of the phenomena and not on the peculiar character of them. But to the *really* scientific mind a straw is not merely a straw when it shows the way the wind blows. But, as for a Peter Bell, of course:—

A primrose by a river's brim

A yellow primrose is to him

And 'tis nothing more . . . .

If Benjamin Franklin waited for some such foot-hold before drawing his conclusions, the Science of Electricity would have still been in its infancy. But, as we said

before, we have nothing to complain against "M. A. (Oxon)" personally, for he is a medium and sees things but through a glass darkly.

Mohini M. Chatterji, F.T.S.

Rama Sourindro Gargya, F.T.S.

Nobin K. Banerjee, F.T.S.

S. Ramaswamiar, F.T.S.

Darbhagiri Nath, F.T.S.

CHELAS WHO  
KNOW THEIR  
MASTERS.

Darjeeling, October 17, 1882.

FRAGMENTS OF OCCULT TRUTH.

No. V.

THE EVOLUTION OF MAN—CONTINUED.

When we come to examine the evolution of man on our own planet, the explanation has to be drawn out on a larger scale than that which served for a sketch of the whole cosmogony. Our career on the preceding planets of the descending series is for the present over and done with. Few of us know enough of our lives there to be curious about details. But here, the phenomena of the world about us, and the period we are passing through, are all replete with interest. Our wish would be to get explanations of the conditions out of which these have originated, and of the results to which they are tending, that should be as enlarged and precise as our knowledge of the actual present. But in truth an explanation on that scale of the phenomena immediately preceding and immediately following our present life, would require an exhaustive knowledge of all natural laws and operations lying outside the physical group we have grown familiar with. And the exposition of this knowledge would involve the complete development of sciences the very alphabet of which is hidden from the world as yet. In short, it is no less impossible to comprehend all Nature's detail—the infinitely little—completely, as it is to fathom the infinitely great. But just as the principles of evolution carried on through the series of worlds, of which our planet is one, have been found susceptible of an explanation which, if not minute, is sufficiently definite to be intelligible, so it is possible now to sketch the process of evolution carried on in the case of this single planet. The area of nature to be dealt with is less enormous, and therefore a treatment of its phenomena, down to a corresponding level of detail, gives us a closer insight into the process under investigation.

And a striking illustration of the uniformities of Nature is brought out by the first glance at the Occult doctrine in reference to the development of Man on the Earth. The outline of the design is the same as the outline of the more comprehensive design covering the whole chain of worlds. The inner details of this world, as regards its units of construction, are the same as the inner details of the larger organism of which this world itself is a unit. That is to say, the development of humanity on this earth is accomplished by means of successive waves of development, which correspond to the successive worlds in the great planetary chain. The great tide of human life, be it remembered,—for that has been already set forth—sweeps round the whole circle of worlds in successive waves. These primary growths of humanity may be conveniently spoken of as Rounds. We must not forget that the individual units, constituting each round in turn, are identically the same as regards their higher principles, that is, that the individualities on the earth during Round 1, come back again after completing their travels round the whole series of worlds and constitute round 2, and so on. But the point to which special attention should be drawn here is that the individual unit having arrived at any given planet of the series, in the course of any given Round, does not merely touch that planet and pass on to the next. Before passing on, he has to live through a series of races on that planet. And this fact suggests the outline of the fabric which will presently

\* "M. A. (Oxon)" was a Theosophist since the very formation of the Society; and he has never resigned. Nevertheless, we have reasons to doubt, to our great regret, whether he could or even would consent to being regarded as a Theosophist at present.—ED.

develop itself in the reader's mind and exhibit that similarity of design on the part of the one world as compared with the whole series to which attention has already been drawn. As the complete scheme of Nature that we belong to, is worked out by means of a series of Rounds sweeping through all the worlds, so the development of humanity on each world is worked out by a series of races developed within the limits of each world in turn.

It is time now to make the working of this law clearer by coming to the actual figures which have to do with the evolution of our doctrine. It would have been premature to begin with them, but as soon as the idea of a system of worlds in a chain, and of life evolution on each through a series of re-births, is satisfactorily grasped, the further examination of the laws at work will be greatly facilitated by precise reference to the actual number of worlds and the actual number of rounds and races, required to accomplish the whole purpose of the system. For the whole duration of the system is as certainly limited in time, be it remembered, as the life of a single man. Probably *not* limited to any definite number of years set irrevocably from the commencement, but that which has a beginning, progresses onward towards an end. The life of a man, leaving accidents quite out of the account, is a terminable period, and the life of a world system leads up to a final consummation. The vast-periods of time, concerned in the life of a world system, dazzle the imagination as a rule but still they are measurable: they are divisible into sub-periods of various kinds, and these have a definite number.

By what prophetic instinct Shakespear pitched upon seven as the number which suited his fantastic classification of the ages of man is a question with which we need not be much concerned, but certain it is that he could not have made a more felicitous choice. In periods of sevens the evolution of the races of man may be traced and the actual number of the objective worlds, which constitute our system and of which the earth is one, is seven also. Remember the Occult Scientists know this as a fact, just as the Physical Scientists know for a fact that the spectrum consists of seven colours, and the musical scale of seven tones. There are seven kingdoms of nature, not three as modern science has imperfectly classified them. Man belongs to a kingdom distinctly separate from that of the animals, including beings in a higher state of organization than that which manhood has familiarised us with, as yet; and below the mineral kingdom there are three others which science in the West knows nothing about; but this branch of the subject may be set aside for the present. It is mentioned merely to show the regular descent of the division, in Nature.

Man—returning to the kingdom we are most interested in—is evolved in a series of Rounds (progressions round the series of worlds) and seven of these rounds have to be accomplished before the destinies of our system are worked out. The round which is at present going on is the fourth. There are considerations of the utmost possible interest connected with precise knowledge on these points, because each Round is as it were specially allotted to the predominance of one of the seven principles in man, and in the regular order of their upward gradation. But here again is a realm of inquiry that for the present can only be glanced at.

An individual unit, arriving on a planet for the first time in the course of a round, has to work through seven races on that planet before he passes on to the next, and each of those races occupies the earth for a long time. Our old-fashioned speculations about time and eternity, suggested by the misty religious systems of the West, have brought on a curious habit of mind in connection with problems bearing on the actual duration of such periods. We can talk glibly of eternity, and going to the other end of the scale, we are not shocked by a few thousand years, but directly years are numbered with precision in groups which lie in intervening regions of

thought, illogical Western theologians are apt to regard such numbering as nonsense. Now we at present living on this earth—the great bulk of humanity that is to say, for there are exceptional cases to be considered later—are now going through the fifth race of our present fourth round. And yet the evolution of that fifth race began about a million of years ago. In a very interesting volume of Western Science, Professor James Geikie, writing of "The Great Ice Age," is good enough to push back the origin of man on earth to interglacial epochs in a way which expands the biblical five or six thousand years into something over 100,000. The book is not at hand as I write, and I forget the exact figures reached. But what is this calculation beside the facts of the case as revealed by Occult Science? Will the reader, in consideration of the fact that the present cosmogony does not profess to work with eternity, nerve himself to deal with estimates that do concern themselves with millions of years, and even count such millions by considerable numbers?

Each race of the seven which go to make up a Round, *i. e.*, which are evolved on the Earth in succession during its occupation by one of the great waves of humanity passing round the planetary chain, is itself subject to subdivision. Were this not the case, the active existences of each human unit would be indeed few and far between. Within the limits of each race there are seven subdivisional races, and again within the limits of each subdivision there are seven branch races. Through all these races each individual human unit must pass during his stay on Earth each time he arrives there on a Round of progress through the planetary system. On reflection this necessity should not appal the mind so much as a hypothesis which would provide for fewer incarnations. For, however many lives each individual unit may pass through while on Earth during a Round, be their numbers few or many, he cannot pass on—except in rare cases to be noticed hereafter—until the time comes for the Round-wave to sweep forward, and as the interval of time occupied by the stay of a Round-wave on Earth may be roughly conjectured from the fact that our present fifth race, by no means worked through yet, began a million of years ago, it is highly desirable that Nature should find for each of us some occupation where-with to pass the time. Even by the calculation already foreshadowed it will be seen that the time spent by each individual unit in physical life, can only be a small fraction of the whole time he has to get through between his arrival on Earth and his departure for the next planet. The larger part of the time—as we reckon duration of time—is obviously therefore spent in those subjective conditions of existence which belong to the "World of effects" or spiritual Earth attached to the physical Earth on which our objective existence is passed.

The nature of existence on the spiritual Earth must be considered *pari-passu* with the nature of that passed on the physical Earth alone dealt with in the above enumeration of race incarnations. We must never forget that between each physical existence the individual unit passes through a period of existence in the corresponding spiritual world. And it is because the conditions of that existence are defined by the use that has been made of the opportunities in the next preceding physical existence that the spiritual Earth is often spoken of in Occult writing as the World of Effects. The earth itself is its corresponding World of Causes.

That which passes into the World of Effects after an incarnation in the World of Causes, has been described in the "Fragments of Occult Truth" relating to the seven principles of Man. The individual unit or spiritual monad cannot but pass into the spiritual condition, but, as already explained, the extent—to which the personality, just dissolved, passes there with it,—is dependant on the qualifications of such personality,—on the use, that is to say, which the person in question has made of his opportunities in life. Thus the period to be spent in the World of Effects,—enormously

longer in each case than the life which has paved the way for existence there,—corresponds to the “Hereafter” or Heaven of vulgar Theology. And here it is interesting to digress for a moment to take note of the relative scope of Vulgar Theology and of Occult Science. The narrow purview of the former deals merely with our physical life and its consequences in the life to come. For want of knowing better, theology conceives that the entity concerned had its beginning in this physical life, and, from the same disabilities in the other direction, it conceives that the ensuing spiritual life will never stop. And this pair of existences which is shown by the mere elements of Occult Science that we are now unfolding, to constitute a part only of the entity's experience during its connection with a branch race, which is one of seven belonging to a subdivisive race, itself one of seven belonging to a main race, itself one of seven belonging to the occupation of Earth by one of the seven Round-waves of humanity which have each to occupy it in turn before its functions in nature are concluded—this microscopic molecule of the whole structure is what common theology treats as *more* than the whole for it is supposed to cover eternity.

The reader must here be warned against one conclusion to which the above explanations—perfectly accurate as far as they go, but not yet covering the whole ground—might lead him. He will *not* get at the exact number of lives an individual entity has to lead on the Earth in the course of its occupation by one Round, if he merely raises seven to its third power. There is a mystery here which the great teachers of Occult Science have not yet thought fit to disclose to the laity. If one existence only were passed in each branch race the total number would obviously be 343. But the actual number is more than that, though nothing approaching the number that would be got at if we supposed seven separate incarnations to take place in each branch race. The explanation hinges on to some mysteries of detail in reference to which it is thought premature to convey information at present.

The methodical law which carries each and every individual human entity through the vast evolutionary process thus sketched out—is in no way incompatible with that liability to fall away into abnormal destinies or ultimate annihilation which menaces the *personal* entities of people who cultivate very ignoble affinities. The distribution of the seven principles at death shows that clearly enough, but, viewed in the light of these further explanations about evolution, the situation may be better realised. The permanent entity is that which lives through the whole series of lives, not only through the races belonging to the present Round-wave on Earth, but also through those of other Round-waves and other worlds. Broadly speaking, it will in due time,—though at some inconceivably distant future as measured in years,—recover a recollection of all those lives, which will seem as day in the past to us. But the astral dross, cast off at each passage into the World of Effects, has a more or less conscious existence of its own, which is quite separate from that of the spiritual entity from which it has just been disunited. The intensity of this consciousness varies very greatly: from absolute zero in the case of a person whose life has been so supremely good and spiritual that he has engendered no low affinities, to full consciousness in the case of entire absorption by the astral principles of all the expiring life's recollections and affinities. The destiny of the astral reliquæ in either case has been the subject of abundant discussion of late, but the point to which attention may be specially called now is the mystery of dual consciousness on the comprehension of which the comprehension of the actual course of events must depend. Occult pupils are taught to realise the possibility of dual consciousness by practically developing it during life, exercising the inner clairvoyant faculties on one set of observations or ideas and the physical senses with their appropriate intellectual faculties on another set of observations or ideas at the same time, but to ordinary people the double perceptions rarely come by Nature, not,

at all events, with any such intensity as to render their character apparent. On the other hand, the possibility of dual consciousness in life for one person is not beyond the range of ordinary imagination; and by dwelling on the notion it is not difficult to realise the way in which one human individual, as we know him in life, may divide up into two conscious individuals at death, neither of which is in any way a new invention, while each is distinctly conscious (so far as its consciousness is distinct at all) of identity with the late physically living entity.

A correct appreciation of all this serves a double purpose; it solves once for all those apparently conflicting passages in occult writing which seem at different times to attribute such different destinies to the human entity and enables one to comprehend the general scheme of human evolution and the whole vast phantasmagoria of existence through which the enduring principles which constitute our higher individuality are passing, while remaining equally prepared to investigate the side paths of super-material development along which the intermediate principles of our nature may travel, after quitting the most transitory principles that are built up to serve their brief purpose from the physical elements of the earth. And in the phenomena of dual consciousness lies the clue to that mystery on which the continuity of our higher existence depends. For many people it must remain irrational to say that any person now living, with his recollections bounded by the years of his childhood, is the same person as some one of quite a novel nationality and epoch who lived thousands of years ago, or the same that will reappear after a similar lapse of time under some entirely new conditions in the future. But one of his elements of dual consciousness is the same, and the other element is only a temporary efflorescence of the first. The feeling “I am I” is the same through the three lives and through all the hundreds; for that feeling is more deeply seated than the feeling “I am John Smith, so high, so heavy, with such and such property and relations.” Is it inconceivable,—as a notion in the mind,—that John Smith, inheriting the gift of Tithonus, changing his name from time to time, marrying afresh every other generation or so, losing property here, coming into possession of property there, and getting interested as time goes on in very various pursuits, might utterly forget in a few thousand years all circumstances connected with the present life of John Smith, just as if the incidents of that life for him had never taken place? And yet the Ego would be the same. If this is conceivable in the imagination, what can be inconceivable in the individual continuity of an *intermittent* life interrupted and renewed at regular intervals, and varied with passages through a purer condition of existence.

M. LE BON has been making a series of very important experiments on putrefaction, with regard to its effect on living animals in general, and on mankind in particular. Among other results, he has proved that the very small quantity of products of advanced putrefaction, necessary to kill an animal by simple mixture with air, proves these volatile alkaloids to be extremely poisonous. M. le Bon has ascertained that these are so to man. The experiments explain the evils arising from bodies long buried, and prove that the atmosphere of cemeteries (contrary to what has been affirmed on the score of there being few microbes present) may be very dangerous. This is, indeed, alarming, and should be a strong argument in favour of the compulsory introduction of cremation, or some other sanitary method of disposing of the dead, rather than by burying them and causing positive danger to the living. According to M. le Bon's theory the common practice of visiting cemeteries and grave-yards ought to be discouraged as much as possible.—*The Pioneer*, September 23, 1882.