

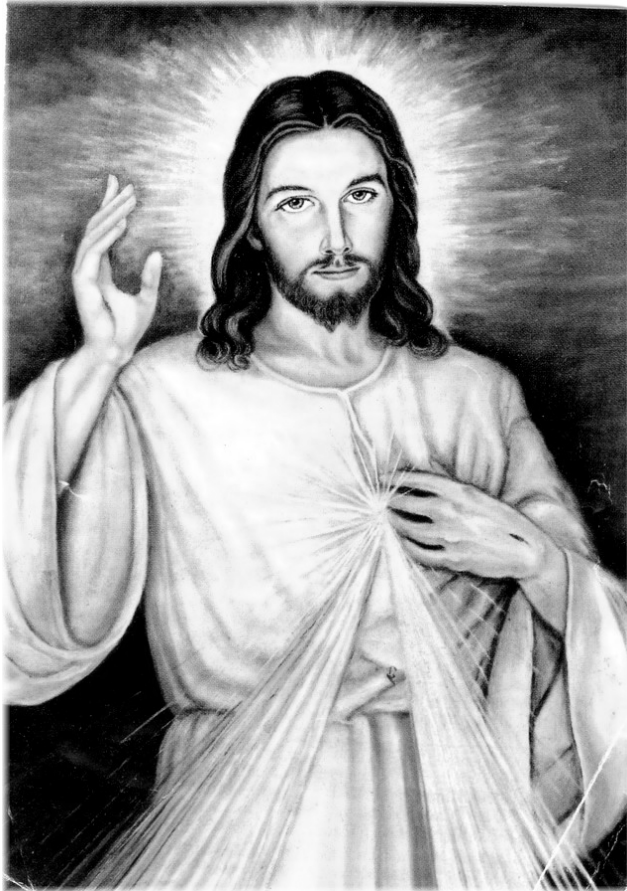
Comparative Religious Mystical Theology

Out-of-Body Travel in World Religion

Compiled By Marilyn Hughes

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!

<http://outofbodytravel.org>



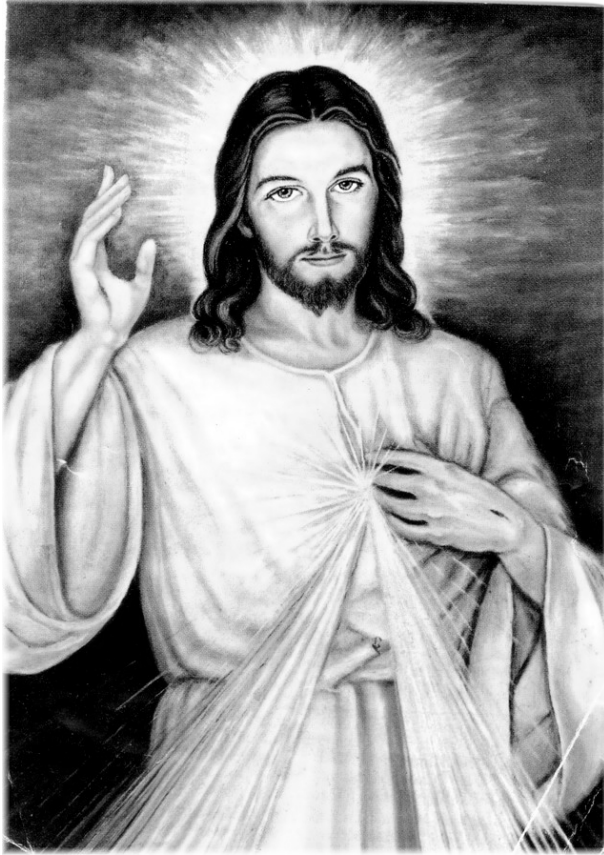
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Having worked primarily in radio broadcasting, Marilynn Hughes spent several years as a news reporter, producer and anchor before deciding to stay at home with her three children. She's experienced, researched, written, and taught about out-of-body travel since 1987.

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Comparative Religious Mystical Theology ventures to take on the issues of Mystical Theology in Different Faiths and World Religions in a new and unique way. It is the purpose of each section of the book to embrace the personal dialogue and teachings of a great Master of the Mystical Path within that religion and allow them to speak of their personal experience and conclusions based on their years of inquiry into the supersensual world.

We've utilized many texts which involve actual dialogue between the Great Mystics and others wherein they explain important aspects and understanding of the mystical theology (and sometimes moral theology) of their own unique religious path.

The Author does not necessarily agree with all views presented, but wishes to present the similarities and differences between some of the Great Mystics the world over. In doing so, we can see better where we agree and where we disagree. We can also pick up points from other paths that may enhance our own.

Look upon this journey into Comparative Religious Mystical Theology as an opportunity to discern for yourself as to how these things may be able to help you in your own spiritual journey.

Hindu Mystical Theology

In Conversation with Sri Ramakrishna



Krishna

The Gospel of Ramakrishna

Edited by Swami Abhedananda, 1907

CHAPTER II

SRÎ RÂMAKRISHNA WITH HIS DISCIPLES AT THE TEMPLE

THE Bhagavân was in His room seated in His usual place on the small platform beside His bed. It was Sunday and the room was filled with a large number of devotees. Among them was a young college student only nineteen years of age named Narendra, who afterwards became the world-renowned Swâmi Vivekânanda. Everyone noticed even at that time that he was a sincere and earnest seeker after Truth and that his mind was above all worldly concerns. His eyes were shining with spiritual light, his face was aglow with innocence and simplicity, and his words were full of spiritual power. The Bhagavân was discoursing on worldly people who ridicule the worshippers of God. Especially addressing Narendra, He asked: What do you say, Narendra? Worldly men will speak all manner of things against godly people, but they should act like the elephant. When an elephant passes through a public road, dogs run after him and bark at him; but the elephant turns a deaf ear to their barking and goes on his own way. Suppose,

my boy, people should speak ill of you behind your back, what would you think of them?

Narendra: I would look upon them as a lot of barking dogs.

God dwells in us all. The Bhagavân laughed and said: No, my friend, do not go so far as that. You should love everyone; no one is a stranger; God dwells in all beings; without Him nothing can exist. When Prahlâda realized Him, the Lord asked him to crave a boon. Prahlâda replied: "When I have seen Thee, what other boon do I need?" The Lord asked him again. He then prayed: "If Thou wishest to grant me a boon, do Thou forgive those who have persecuted me." Prahlâda meant that by persecuting him they had persecuted the Lord dwelling within him. Know that God resides in all things animate and inanimate. Hence everything is an object of worship, be it men, beasts or birds, plants or minerals. In our relation with men all that we can do is to take heed to ourselves that we mix with good people and avoid bad company. It is true, however, that God resides in bad people also, yes, even in a tiger; but surely it does not follow that we should embrace a tiger. It may be asked: Why should we run away from a tiger when God is dwelling in that form? To this the answer is that God abiding in our hearts directs us to run away from the tiger. Why should we not obey His will?

Parable of the disciple and the mad elephant. In a certain forest there lived a sage who had a number of disciples. He taught his disciples the truth: "God

dwells in all things. Knowing this, you should bend your knee before every object." One day a disciple went out into the forest for wood. On his way he saw a man riding a mad elephant and shouting: "Get out of the way, get out of the way! This is a mad elephant." The disciple, instead of running away, remembered his master's teaching and began to reason: "God is in the elephant as well as in me. God cannot be hurt by God, so why should I run away?" Thus thinking, he stood where he was and saluted the elephant as he came nearer. The driver (Mâhoot) kept on shouting: "Get out of the way!" but the disciple would not move, until he was snatched up by the mad elephant and dashed to one side. The poor boy, bruised and bleeding, lay on the ground unconscious. The sage, hearing of the accident, came with his other disciples to carry him home. When after some time the unfortunate pupil recovered consciousness, he described what had happened. The sage replied: My boy, it is true that God is manifest in everything. But if He is in the elephant, is He not equally manifest in the driver (Mâhoot)? Tell me why you did not pay heed to the warning of the driver?

God in everything. The Bhagavân continued: In the sacred Scriptures it is written, "God dwells in water"; but some water can be used for divine service, or for drinking purposes, some for bathing or washing, while dirty water cannot be touched even. In the same manner, although God resides in all human beings, still there are good men and bad men, there are lovers of God and those who do not love God. We should

recognize Divinity in all, but we should not mix with bad people or with those who do not love God. Our relation with them must not be very close. It is wise to avoid the company of such people.

Narendra: What attitude should we hold when wicked people come to disturb our peace or do actually offend us?

Bhagavân: A person living in society should have a little Tamas (the spirit of resisting evil) Resistance of for purposes of self-protection. But evil this is necessary only for outward show, its object being to prevent the wicked from doing harm to you. At the same time you should not do actual injury to another on the ground that he has done injury to you.

Parable of the snake and the holy man. There was a large venomous snake in a field. No one dared to go that way. One day a holy man (Mahâtmâ) passed by that road and the serpent ran after the sage to bite him. But when the snake approached the holy man, he lost all his ferocity and was overpowered by the gentleness of the Yogi. Seeing him, the sage said: "Well, my friend, think you to bite me?" The snake was abashed and made no reply. At this the sage continued: "Hearken, friend; do not injure anyone in future." The snake bowed and nodded assent. The sage went his way, and the snake entered his hole and thenceforward began to live a life of innocence, without attempting to harm anyone. In a few days all the neighborhood concluded that the snake had lost his venom and was no longer dangerous; so everyone

began to tease him. They pelted him with stones or dragged him mercilessly by the tail, and there was no end to his troubles. Fortunately the sage again passed that way, and seeing the bruised and battered condition of the snake, was very much moved and inquired the cause. "Holy Sir," the snake replied, "this is because I do not injure anyone after your advice. But alas! they are so merciless!" The sage smilingly said: "My friend, I simply advised you not to bite anyone; but I did not tell you not to frighten others. Although you should not bite any living creature, still you should keep people at a distance by hissing at them." And Srî Râmakrishna added: There is no harm in "hissing" at wicked men and at your enemies, showing that you can protect yourself and know how to resist evil. Only you must be careful not to pour your venom into the blood of your enemy. Resist not evil by causing evil in return.

Love for all. One of the devotees present said: But when a person is annoyed with me, Bhagavan, I feel unhappy. I feel that I have not been able to love everyone equally.

Râmakrishna: When you feel that way, you should have a talk with that person and try to make peace with him. If you fail after such attempts, then you need not give it further thought. Take refuge with the Lord. Think upon Him. Do not let your mind be disturbed by any other thing.

Devotee: Christ and Chaitanya have both taught us to love all mankind.

A true devotee always calm. Râmakrishna: You should love everyone because God dwells in all beings. But to wicked people you should bow down at a distance. (To Bijoy, smiling) Is it true that people blame you because you mix with those who believe in a Personal God with form? A true devotee of God should possess absolute calmness and never be disturbed by the opinions of others. Like a blacksmith's anvil, he will endure all blows and persecutions. and yet remain firm in his faith and always the same. Company of the wicked. Wicked people may say many things about you and blame you; but if you long for God, you should endure with patience.

One can think on God even dwelling in the midst of wicked people. The sages of ancient times, who lived in forests, could meditate on God although surrounded by tigers, bears, and other wild beasts. The nature of the wicked is like that of a tiger or bear. They attack the innocent and injure them. You should be especially cautious in coming in contact with the following: First, the wealthy. A person who possesses wealth and many attendants can easily do harm to another if he so desires. You should be very guarded in speaking with him; sometimes it may even be necessary to agree with him in his opinion. Second, a dog. When a dog barks at you, you must not run, but talk to him and quiet him. Third a bull. When a bull chases you, you should always pacify him by talking to him. Fourth a drunkard. If you make him angry, he will call you names and swear at you. You should

address him as a dear relative, then he will be happy and obliging.

When wicked people come to see me, I am very careful. The character of some of them is like that of a snake. They may bite you unawares. It may take a long time and much discrimination to recover from the effects of that bite. Or you may get so angry at them that you will wish to take revenge. It is necessary, however, to keep occasionally the company of holy men. Through such association right discrimination will come.

Four classes of individual souls. There are four classes of *Jivas*, or individual souls: First, *Baddha*, the bound; second, *Mumukshu*, the seeker after freedom; third, *Mukta*, the emancipated; and fourth, *Nitya-mukta*, the eternally free. This world is like a net, the soul is the fish, and the Lord of the phenomenal world is the fisherman. When a fisherman draws in his net, some of the fish try to escape by rending the net, that is, they struggle for freedom. So are the souls of the second class, the *Mumukshus*, the seekers after freedom. But among the fish that struggle, only a few escape. Similarly, a few souls only attain to freedom and they belong to the third class, the *Muktas*. There are some fish, however, that are naturally cautious and never fall into the net. Such are the souls of the fourth class, the *Nitya-muktas*, who are never caught in the net of the phenomenal world, but who remain eternally free, like Nârada and others like him. Most of the fish, however, fall into the net and have not the

sense to know that they are going to die there. When caught, they try to run away and hide in the mud at the bottom by swimming with the net. They make no effort to get out of the net, but go deeper and deeper into the mud. These may be compared to the souls who are bound fast in the world. They are caught in the net, but they delude themselves by thinking that they are happy. They remain attached to worldliness. They plunge into the mire of worldly evils and are content, while those who are seeking after freedom or who are emancipated do not like worldliness and do not care for sense-pleasures.

Bound souls. Those who are thus caught in the net of the world are the *Baddha*, or bound souls. No one can awaken them. They do not come to their senses even after receiving blow upon blow of misery, sorrow and indescribable suffering. The camel loves thorny bushes, and although his mouth bleeds when he eats them, still he does not cease to love them dearly and no one can keep him away from them. The bound souls may meet with great grief and misfortune, but after a few days they are just as they were before. The wife may die or become unchaste, the man will marry again; his son may die, he will be extremely sorrowful, but he will soon forget him. The mother of the boy may be overwhelmed with grief for a short time, but in a few days she will once more be concerned for her personal appearance and will deck herself with jewels and finery. Such worldly people may be left paupers after marrying their sons and daughters, yet they will still beget children every

year. They may lose their fortune by a lawsuit, but they will again go to the courts. They may not be able to support their children, to educate, feed, clothe, or house them properly, still they will continue to have more. They are like the snake with a musk-rat in its mouth. As the snake cannot swallow the rat because of its strong odor, neither can it throw it out because of its own bent teeth, so these bound souls, *Baddhas*, although they may occasionally feel that the world is unreal, can neither give it up nor can they fix their minds on the Reality of the universe. I once saw a relative of Keshab Chunder Sen, who was quite old, still playing cards as if the time for meditating on God had not come for him.

There is another sign of a *Baddha*, or worldly soul. If you remove him from the world and put him in a better place, he will pine away and die. He will work like a slave to support his family, and he will not hesitate to tell lies, to deceive or to flatter in order to earn his livelihood. He looks upon those who worship God or who meditate on the Lord of the universe as insane. He never finds time or opportunity to think of spiritual subjects. Even at the hour of death he will think and talk of worldly things. Whatever thought is strongest in the minds of worldly people comes out at the time of death. If they become delirious, they rave of nothing but material objects. They may go to places of worship, but so long as their minds are attached to the world, worldly thoughts will rise at the last moment. As a parrot may be taught to utter the Lord's Holy Name, but when attacked by a cat, screams and

gives its natural cry; so they may repeat the Holy Name of the Lord, but when attacked by death, the natural tendency of their minds will predominate. What thou thinkest thou shalt become. It is said in the Bhagavad Gitâ that the future is determined by the thought that is uppermost at the moment of death, and in the Purâna there is a story that King Bharata was born as a deer because when he died, his mind was fixed on the thought of a deer. He who passes away thinking of God and meditating on Him, does not come back to this world.

A devotee: Bhagavan, will a man who thinks of God, but who does not meditate on Him at the time of death, be born again?

Concentration and meditation

Srî Râmakrishna: An ordinary soul who has no faith in God may think of Him for a time, but easily forgets Him again and becomes attached to the world. If, however, he concentrates his mind upon God at the last moment of his life, his heart and soul become purified and remain so even after death. People suffer on so much because they have no faith and in God. In order to be able to think meditation. of God at the time of death we must prepare our mind by constant practice. The practice of meditation on God will create a tendency of mind to think of Him spontaneously even at the last moment.

A devotee: Bhagavan, what condition of mind is necessary for a worldly person to attain to freedom?

Râmakrishna: If by the Grace of the Lord strong dispassion for worldly things arises in his mind, then such a person becomes free from

Dispassion. All earthly attachment. What is this *strong* dispassion? Let me tell you. Ordinary dispassion makes the mind think of the Lord occasionally, but there is no longing in the heart. Strong dispassion, on the contrary, makes the mind dwell constantly on the Lord with the same intense longing as a mother feels for her only child. He who has strong dispassion does not want anything but the Lord. He looks at the world as a deep well and is always fearful lest he may fall into it. Earthly relations seem to him very distant. He does not seek their company. His whole heart and soul yearn for God. He does not think of his family, nor does he think of the morrow. He also possesses great spiritual force.

Parable of the farmer and the canal. Let me explain this to you by a parable: In a certain place there had been a long drought. The farmers were irrigating their fields by canals, bringing water from a long distance. One farmer had great determination and force of character. One morning he made up his mind that he would continue to dig his canal until he had connected it with the river and brought the water to his field. He was so busy digging that he lost account of time. The hour for luncheon came and passed. His wife called him to come home, wash and eat. "The luncheon is getting cold. Leave your work until tomorrow," she urged. At first he paid no heed to her

words, but when she repeated her request, he bade her go home and not disturb him anymore. "You have no sense," he said, "with this terrible drought we cannot grow anything. There will be no food for the children, the whole family will die of starvation. I have resolved that this very day I shall bring the water of the river to my field; then I shall think of washing and eating." Hearing this, his wife ran home, The farmer worked hard the whole day and toward evening he joined the canal to the river and sat on one side with great delight as he saw the stream of water running into his field. His mind was then peaceful and happy. He went home and called his wife, saying: "Now give me a little oil and fill my pipe," and he washed, ate a hearty dinner and enjoyed a sound sleep. This kind of determination and firmness of purpose must be at the back of strong dispassion. Another farmer who was trying to bring water to his field was likewise called by his wife at the hour of the noonday meal. "It is getting late, come home, and wash and eat," she said, and at once he dropped his spade and replied: "My dear, when you ask me to go, I must go." So his field remained dry. As a farmer cannot irrigate his field, so a devotee cannot attain to God without firm determination.

When God is attained through such strong dispassion, all worldly attachment fades away. A householder may then live with his family, but he becomes unattached and there is no more danger for him. If there be two magnets, one very large and the other very small, which do you suppose will attract a

piece of iron? The larger one of course. God is the greatest magnet. Compared to Him the attraction of the world is small and powerless.

A devotee: Bhagavan, why are we so bound to the world that we cannot see God?

Send of "I"

Râmakrishna: The sense of "I" in us is the greatest obstacle in the path of God-vision. It covers the Truth. When "I" is dead, all troubles cease. If by the mercy of the Lord one realizes "I am a non-doer," instantly that man becomes emancipated in this life. This sense of "I" is like a thick cloud. As a small cloud can hide the glorious sun, so this cloud of "I" hides the glory of the Eternal Sun. If the cloud is dispersed by the mercy of a Guru, or spiritual master, the glory of Infinite becomes visible. When Râma, the Divine Incarnation in a human form, was walking in the forest, Lakshmana (the individual soul), who was at a short distance, could not see Him because Sitâ or Mâyâ, or the sense of "I," was standing between. Look at me. I cover my face with this handkerchief and you cannot see me; still my face is there. So God is the nearest of all, but because of the sense of "I" you do not see Him. The soul in its true nature is absolute Existence, Intelligence and Bliss, but on account of Mâyâ or the sense of "I," it has forgotten its real Self and has become entangled in the meshes of the various limitations of mind and body.

Money is power. Each attribute limits the soul and modifies its nature. He who dresses smartly will naturally sing love-songs, play cards and carry a cane, and such things will appeal to him. If you have a pencil in your hand, you will unconsciously scribble on anything; such is the power of the pencil. Money has great power. When a man becomes wealthy his nature is entirely changed. He is a different being. A poor Brâhmin, for instance, used to come here. He was very humble. He lived on the other side of the Ganges. One day as I was landing from a boat, I saw him sitting at the riverside. Seeing me, he shouted in a disrespectful tone, "Hello! is it you, my good fellow?" Immediately I understood by his manner that he had got hold of some money, otherwise he would not dare to address me thus. A toad had a Rupee in its hole. An elephant was coming that way and passed over the hole. The toad was very angry; it came out and was about to kick the elephant, saying: "How darest thou pass over me?" Such is the power of wealth! It makes one so egotistic.

Seven stages of spiritual evolution. This sense of "I," however, vanishes at the approach of Divine wisdom, which leads to superconsciousness (Samâdhi) and eventually to God-consciousness. But it is very difficult to acquire this Divine wisdom. It is said in the Vedas that when the mind reaches the seventh stage of the spiritual evolution, the soul enters into Samâdhi and instantly its sense of "I" disappears. The mind naturally dwells in the first three stages, the realm of worldly tendencies and animal propensities,

and becomes attached to lust and wealth. When the mind dwells in the purified heart, spiritual light is perceived by the soul. At that time the soul exclaims: "What is this! What is this!" When it rises near the throat and remains there, the devotee loves to hear and speak of God. When the mind rises still higher, near the space between the eyebrows, it beholds the vision of the Infinite Being, whose nature is absolute Existence-Intelligence-Bliss. The soul then desires to touch and embrace that Being, but fails. As a light within a lantern can be seen but cannot be touched from outside, so the soul beholds the vision but cannot lay hold on it. cannot enter into it, cannot become one with it. In the seventh stage, however, the mind is bereft of the sense of "I," enters into God-consciousness and realizes its oneness with the Infinite.

Devotee: Bhagavan, what happens after reaching the seventh stage when Divine wisdom comes? What does the man see?

Râmakrishna: It cannot be described by words. In the seventh stage when the mind goes into its causal form, Samâdhi comes and what happens then no one can tell.

This sense of "I" which makes one worldly Difference between soul and God and attached to lust and wealth is the cause of bondage. The difference between the Supreme and the individual soul is created by this sense of "I" which stands between. If you hold a stick on the surface of a stream, the water

will appear to be divided into two parts, but in reality the water is one. It appears as two because of the stick. The sense of "I" may be compared to this stick. Remove this limiting adjunct and the current will be one and unbroken. What is this sense of "I" which clings to man? That which says: "I am this, I am that. I possess so much wealth. I am great and powerful; who is greater than I?" If a thief has stolen ten Rupees and been detected, the owner takes his money first, then beats him, then hands him over to the police and finally puts him in jail. The worldly "I." The worldly "I" says: "Doesn't he know that he stole ten Rupees which belonged to me? How dared he?"

Devotee: Bhagavan, if we cannot get rid of worldliness except by losing the sense of "I" in Samâdhi, is it not better to follow the path of wisdom which leads to Samâdhi, since in the path of devotion the sense of "I" still remains?

Difficult to be rid of "I."

Râmakrishna: Very few can get rid of the sense of "I" through Samâdhi. It generally clings to us. We may discriminate a thousand times, but the sense of "I" is bound to return again and again. You may cut the branches of a fig-tree to-day, but to-morrow you will see that new twigs are sprouting. If this sense of "I" will not leave, then let it stay as the servant of God. "O God! Thou art my Lord, I am Thy servant!" Servant "I" of a Bhakta. Think in this way: "I am His servant, I am His Bhakta, devotee." There is no harm in this kind of "I." Sweet things cause dyspepsia and

acidity, but crystallized sugar-candy is harmless. The path of wisdom is very difficult. It cannot be followed so long as the sense of "I" is connected with the body. In this age the consciousness of the body and the sense of "I" cannot be overcome easily. But in the path of devotion, through prayer and the repetition of His Holy Name with extreme longing, God can be reached without fail.

Devotee: Bhagavan, dost Thou teach us to renounce the worldly "I" and not the sense of the servant "I"?

Râmakrishna: Yes, the servant "I" or "I am the servant of God," "I am His devotee," this egoism is not bad but on the contrary it helps us to realize God.

Devotee: Bhagavan, does he who has the sense of the servant "I" possess passion and anger?

Râmakrishna: If this attitude of a servant be genuine and perfect, then passion and anger will drop off leaving only a scar in the mind. This "I" of a Bhakta or devotee does no harm to any living creature. It is like a sword which, after touching the Philosopher's Stone, is turned to gold. The sword retains the same form but it cannot cut or injure anyone. The dry leaves of the cocoanut-tree drop off in the wind, leaving a mark on the trunk; that mark proves that there was a leaf there at one time. Similarly, the scar of the sense of "I" remains in the mind of one who has realized God, but his whole nature is transformed into that of an innocent child.

A child's "I."

The child's sense of "I" is not attached to worldly objects. He may like a thing at one moment, but the next moment he may dislike it. You can take from him an object of great value by giving him a doll worth a penny. To a child everyone is equal, there is none greater or smaller. Therefore a child has no sense of caste or creed. If his mother says: "He is your brother," however low his caste may be, the child will sit with him and eat with him without feeling dislike or difference of any kind.

True devotion and love.

Some Bhaktas after attaining to Samâdhi or God-consciousness, when they return, retain the sense of "I" as "I am His servant, I am His devotee." They do not lose the sense of "I" entirely but keep a small portion of it to repeat the Holy Name of the Lord, to sing His praises, to love and serve Him. Again, those who constantly practise this sense of "servant I" eventually reach the Supreme Lord. This is the path of Bhakti or devotion. But true devotion is very rare. True devotion leads to intense love for God; and when that intense love comes, the Divine Being is not very far. In that intense love the sense of worldliness is wiped out entirely and the whole heart and soul rest upon nothing but the Lord of the universe. Some are born with this intense love for God; it is natural with them. Its expression is to be found even in their childhood. At that tender age even, they cry for God. There are many examples of such born Bhaktas like

Prahlâda and others. Ordinary devotion which is confined by scriptural laws of sacrifice and worship is preparatory. As in hot weather one fans oneself for a breath of air so long as the breeze is not blowing, but when the breeze springs up, the fan is no longer needed; so when the breeze of intense love begins to blow in the soul, all devotional exercises like repetition of the Name of the Lord, sacrifice, prayers and asceticism become unnecessary. Devotion without intense love is the sign of unripe Bhakti. When it ripens, it leads into Divine Love, which is perfect and which brings the highest realization.

A disciple: Bhagavan, how can God be realized?

Pure heart. Râmakrishna: God can be realized by the purified heart alone. Ordinarily the mind is stained with worldliness. God is like a magnet. The mind may be compared to a needle. If a needle be covered with thick mud, it is not attracted by the magnet; but when the mud is washed off, the magnet attracts it. Power of repentance. Similarly, when the mind is covered with the mud of worldliness, it does not feel the attraction of the Lord; but whosoever repents, saying: "O Lord, I shall never again commit such an act," and sheds tears of true repentance, washes off all impurities and the magnet of the Lord then attracts the needle of the mind. Instantly superconsciousness comes and is followed by God-vision.

The mercy of the Lord. A man may make thousands of attempts, but nothing can be accomplished without the mercy of the Lord. Without His mercy no one can

see Him. Nor is it an easy thing to obtain His mercy. The egotistic sense of "I" which says: "I am the doer," must be abandoned entirely before the Divine mercy can be felt. So long as there is a steward in charge of the storehouse, if any come to the master and beg him, saying: "Master, wilt thou not come to the storehouse and give me this thing?" he will reply: "The steward is there, what need have I to go?" In like manner, so long as the ego thinks of himself as the "doer" and the master of the storehouse of the heart, the Real Master does not enter there. The mercy of the Lord is the surest way to God-vision. He is the sun of wisdom. God, the Sun of Wisdom. A single ray of this Eternal Sun illumines this world, and by that light we are conscious of ourselves and of one another and we acquire various kinds of knowledge. If He turns that light towards His Illustration of a bull's-eye lantern.own face, then He becomes visible to His Bhakta or devotee. In the night the watchman goes from place to place holding in his hand the bull's-eye lantern. By its light he sees everyone's face and people see each other, but no one can see him. If any one wishes to see the watchman, he must beg him to turn the light towards himself. Similarly, he who wishes to see the Lord must pray to Him thus: "O Lord, in Thy mercy do Thou turn the light of Thy wisdom towards Thine own face that I may behold Thee." If there be no light in a house, that is the sign of extreme poverty. Therefore one must light the lamp of wisdom within the heart. "O mind, why dost thou not see the face of the Divine Mother by lighting the lamp of wisdom in the chamber of the soul!"

CHAPTER VII

SOME INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF SRÎ RÂMAKRISHNA (AS TOLD BY HIMSELF)

i

Days of struggle. I practised austerities for a long time. I cared very little for the body. My longing for the Divine Mother was so great that I would not eat or sleep. I would lie on the bare ground, placing my head on a lump of earth, and cry out loudly: "Mother, Mother, why dost Thou not come to me?" I did not know how the days and nights passed away. I used to have ecstasy all the time. I saw my disciples as my own people, like children and relations, long before they came to me. I used to cry before my Mother, saying: "O Mother! I am dying for my beloved ones (Bhaktas); do Thou bring them to me as quickly as possible."

All desires fulfilled. At that time whatever I desired came to pass. Once I desired to build a small hut in the Panchavati for meditation and to put a fence around it. Immediately after I saw a huge bundle of bamboo sticks, rope, strings and even a knife, all brought by the tide in front of the Panchavati. A servant of the Temple, seeing these things, ran to me with great delight and told me of them. There was the exact quantity of material necessary for the hut and the fence. When they were built, nothing remained over. Everyone was amazed to see this wonderful sight.

When I reached the state of continuous ecstasy, I gave up all external forms of worship; I could no longer perform them. Then I prayed to my Divine Mother: "Mother, who will now take care of me? I have no power to take care of myself. I like to hear Thy name and feed Thy Bhaktas and help the poor. Who will make it possible for me to do these things? Send me someone who will be able to do these for me." As the answer to this prayer came Mathura Bâbu, † who served me so long and with such intense devotion and faith! Again at another time I said to the Mother: "I shall have no child of my own, but I wish to have as my child a pitre Bhakta, who will stay with me all the time. Send me such an one." Then came Râkhâl (Brahmânanda).

Those who are my own are parts of my very Self.

ii

Visit to Zoological Garden. In referring to the time of joyous illumination which immediately followed His enlightenment, He exclaimed:

What a state it was! The slightest cause aroused in me the thought of the Divine Ideal. One day I went to the Zoological Garden in Calcutta. I desired especially to see the lion, but when I beheld him, I lost all sense-consciousness and went into Samâdhi. Those who were with me wished to show me the other animals, but I replied: "I saw everything when I saw the king of beasts. Take me home." The strength of the lion had aroused in me the consciousness of the omnipotence

of God and had lifted me above the world of phenomena.

Divinity everywhere. Another day I went to the parade-ground to see the ascension of a balloon. Suddenly my eyes fell upon a young English boy leaning against a tree. The very posture of his body brought before me the vision of the form of Krishna and I went into Samâdhi.

Again I saw a woman wearing a blue garment under a tree. She was a harlot. As I looked at her, instantly the ideal of Sitâ appeared before me! I forgot the existence of the harlot, but saw before me pure and spotless Sitâ, approaching Râma, the Incarnation of Divinity, and for a long time I remained motionless. I worshipped all women as representatives of the Divine Mother. I realized the Mother of the universe in every woman's form.

Mathura Bâbu, the son-in-law of Râshmoni, invited me to stay in his house for a few days. At that time I felt so strongly that I was the maid-servant of my Divine Mother that I thought of myself as a woman. The ladies of the house had the same feeling; they did not look upon me as a man. As women are free before a young girl, so were they before me. My mind was above the consciousness of sex.

What a Divine state it was! I could not eat here in the Temple. I would walk from place to place and enter into the house of strangers after their meal hour. I would sit there quietly, without uttering a word.

When questioned, I would say, "I wish to eat here." Immediately they would feed me with the best things they had.

Visit to a poor Brahmin. Once I heard of a poor Brâhmin who was a true devotee and who lived in a small hut in Bâghbâzâr. I desired to see him, so I asked Mathura Bâbu to take me to him. He consented, immediately ordered a large carriage and drove me there. The Brâhmin's house was so small that he scarcely had room to receive us, and he was much surprised to see me coming with such a rich man in such carriage!

At another time I wished to meet Devendra Nâth Tâgore. He is a very rich man, but in visit to Devendra Nath. Tâgore said despite of his enormous wealth he is devoted to God and repeats His Holy Name. For this reason I desired to know him. I spoke about him to Mathura Bâbu. He replied: "Very well, Bâbâ, I will take Thee to him; he was my classmate." So he took me and introduced me to him, saying: "This holy man has come to see you. He is mad after God." I saw in him a little pride and egotism. It is natural for a man who has so much wealth, culture, fame and social position. I said to Mathura Bâbu: "Tell me, does pride spring from true wisdom or from ignorance? He who has attained to the highest knowledge of Brahman cannot possess pride or egotism, such as 'I am learned,' 'I am wise,' 'I am rich,' and so on." While I was speaking with Devendra Nâth Tâgore, I went into a state from where I could

see the true character of every individual. In this state the most learned pandits and scholars appear to me like blades of grass. When I see that scholars have neither true discrimination nor dispassion, then I feel that they are like straws; or they seem like vultures who soar high in the heavens, but keep their minds on the charnel-pits below on the earth. In Devendra I found both spiritual knowledge and worldly desire. He has a number of children, some of whom are quite young. A doctor was present. I said: "When you have so much spiritual knowledge, how can you live constantly in the midst of so much worldliness? You are like Râjâ Janaka; you can keep your mind on God, remaining amid worldly pleasures and luxury. Therefore I have come to see you. Tell me something of the Divine Being." Devendra then read some passages from the Vedas and said: "This world is like a chandelier, and each Jiva (individual soul) is like a light in it." Long ago, when I spent nearly all my time meditating at the Panchavati, I saw the same thing. When Devendra's words harmonized with my experience, I knew that he must have attained to some true knowledge. I asked him to explain. He said: "Who would have known this world? God has created man to manifest His glory. If there were no light in the chandelier, it would be all dark. The chandelier itself would not be visible." After a long conversation Devendra Nâth Tâgore begged me to come to the anniversary of the Brâhmo-Samâj. I answered: "If it be the will of the Lord. I go wherever He takes me."

iv

Visit to Padmalochana. Padmalochana was the most eminent scholar in the court of the Râjâ of Burdwan. He came to a garden-house near Dakshineswara, and as I had a desire to meet him, I sent Hridai to find out whether he had pride or not. I learned that he was simple and absolutely free from scholarly pride, so I went to see him. He was indeed a great scholar and a true Jnâni. He defeated all the great pandits and theologians. He said that when he was in the court of the Râjâ a theological discussion arose regarding the Hindu Trinity,—whether the first person of the Trinity, Brahmâ, was greater than the third person of the Trinity, Shiva. The pandits referred to him for the final decision and Padmalochana replied: "I have seen neither Brahmâ nor Shiva; how can I decide?" He wished to hear me sing the praises of my Divine Mother. I had a long conversation with him. He became truly devoted to me and said: "I have never found so much happiness anywhere." He revered me although I used to cry for my Divine Mother like a child.

v

Distaste for Worldly conversation. Nothing but discourses on God appealed to me at this period. If I heard worldly conversation, I would sit in a corner and weep bitterly. When I went with Mathura Bâbu to Benares, I was sitting with him in the drawing-room when some friends came in to see him and began to discuss worldly affairs. "So much we have

gained, so much we have lost." Hearing this I was in tears and cried aloud: "Mother, why hast Thou brought me here? I was much better off in the Temple. I have come to the Holy City to hear only of lust and gold; but there in the Temple I did not have to listen to such conversation."

I was at this time like a young boy and so Mathura Bâbu fulfilled all the desires that arose in my mind. My heart and soul, however, were constantly longing to hear about the Supreme Being. I searched for the places where the Holy Scriptures were expounded. There was a Brâhmin in the neighborhood who was a great pandit and who had true faith. I used to go to hear him very often. A saint lived nearby on the bank of the Ganges and I wished to go with this Brâhmin to see him; but a priest who looked upon the world as a dream discouraged me by saying: "The body of a saint is an earthly cage; what good can one obtain by visiting such a cage?" I spoke of this to the Brâhmin and he replied: "He who thinks of God, he who repeats His Holy Name and has renounced everything for the sake of the Lord, must not be regarded as an earthly cage. The priest does not know that the form of a devotee is a spiritual form full of Divine intelligence." This Brâhmin once asked me why I had thrown away my Brâhminical thread. I replied: "When the storm of Divine ecstasy overtook my heart and soul, it blew away all signs of caste and creed. If you once become mad after God, then you will understand me." But after some time this Brâhmin himself caught the madness of Divine

ecstasy. He would utter nothing but "Om, Om," and sit in silence in his own room. He would not mix with or speak to anyone. His friends and relatives called in physicians. He told one of them: "You can cure my disease, but do not take my 'Om' from me." Once I went to see him when he was in this state. I asked him what was the matter and he answered: "The tax-collectors have been here and I am wondering what I shall do. They said that they would seize my belongings." I replied: "What will you gain by thinking in this way? Let them sell your belongings. If they put you in jail, they cannot harm you, because you say that you are nothing but (Kha) infinite space." I would often repeat this, his own statement, to him and say: "As you are infinite space, no tax can be drawn out of you."

vi

Absolute frankness. During this period I was absolutely outspoken. I observed no formality or etiquette; I was fearless. Once I met a rich Zemindar and asked him: "What is our highest duty? Is not the attainment of God our highest duty?" He replied: "We are men of the world; salvation is not for us. When even Yudhisthira, the purest and most perfect of mortals, had to see purgatory in a vision because he had once wavered for half a second from absolute Truth, what can we expect for ourselves?" I could not bear his words and rebuked him sharply, saying: "What kind of man are you, that you think of the momentary vision of purgatory? You must not think

of that, but of Yudhishthira's truthfulness, forgiveness, patience, right discrimination, renunciation, devotion and love for God."

At another time I went to see a Zemindar who had the title of Râjâ, and I told him plainly that I could not call him Râjâ because he was not really one.

One day I saw a pious Brâhmin who was counting his beads on the bank of the Ganges. I stood near him and knew that his mind was not fixed on God but on earthly things. Immediately I roused him by striking him on the shoulder. At another time Râshmoni, the founder of the Temple, was praying in the Temple while I was singing the holy song of the Divine Mother. I perceived that her mind was on worldly objects and instantly I roused her in the same manner. In amazement she folded her hands and remained motionless before me.

vii

Visit to Keshab Sen. Keshab Chunder Sen was suffering from a serious illness. Bhagavân Srî Râmakrishna was very anxious to see him, so He came one day with a few of His disciples to Keshab's home, where He was received by some of Keshab's disciples. They led Him to the drawing-room and seated Him on a couch. The room was fitted up with modern furniture. The Bhagavân looked at it for a moment; then His mind turned within and He went into Samâdhi. After recovering sense-consciousness, He spoke thus:

Body and Âtman. There are two, the physical body and the Âtman; the body is born, so it must die, but Âtman is deathless. It is separate from the body, like a nut in the shell; but when the nut is unripe, it is difficult to separate the kernel from the shell; so it is with worldly people who have not realized God. Their Âtman remains attached to the body; but in true knowledge the Âtman appears as separate from the body.

At this moment Keshab entered the room. He was extremely thin and looked almost like a skeleton. He could hardly stand on his feet. With great difficulty he walked to the couch and sat at the feet of Bhagavân Srî Râmakrishna. The Bhagavân came down from the couch and sat on the floor. Keshab touched his forehead to the floor and remained prostrate before Him for some time. Râmakrishna held Keshab's hand and said:

Perfect knowledge brings realization of oneness. So long as there is knowledge of variety, so long there is bondage. When perfect knowledge comes, man realizes one Spirit in all. In that state he also sees that the same One has become the individual soul, and the phenomenal world with its various states and elements. It is true that the Universal Spirit dwells everywhere, but His manifestation varies. In some places there is greater manifestation and in others less. Wherever there is greater manifestation of the Spirit, there is also greater manifestation of Divine Powers.

First you will have to realize unity by discrimination: "Not this, not this." Then after reaching this state of realization, when you come down to phenomena, you will discover that Unity and variety. Variety has come from unity and the same unity is the goal of variety. The difference in the manifestation of Sakti or power makes the variety. When the flood of spiritual realization comes in the soul, like a sheet of water the Universal Spirit covers everything. All distinctions vanish. Then a boat can pass over a field and the way from one place to another becomes straight across the water.

Keshab was listening with rapt attention. Although the room was crowded, absolute silence prevailed. The Bhagavân, looking at Keshab, then asked:

Meaning of Keshab's illness. How are you? How do you feel? You are suffering; but your illness has a deep meaning. In this body you have gone through various stages of spiritual development; the body is now suffering from the reaction. When the spiritual waves arise, the consciousness of the body vanishes; but it tells upon the body in the end. When a big steamer plies in the waters of the Ganges, I have seen the waves dash against the shore for some time after; the larger the boat, the stronger the waves; sometimes they break down the banks. If an elephant enters a small hut, it shakes it and breaks it to pieces; so when the elephant of the spiritual Ideal enters into the body, it shakes and sometimes shatters it. What happens; do you know? If there be a fire in the house,

it burns up many things. Similarly, the fire of Divine Wisdom burns all passion, anger and other enemies, and in the end destroys the sense of "I, me and mine." The body is then wrenched and shattered. You may think that everything is finished, but so long as there is the least sign of illness, so long Re will not make you free. If you enroll yourself as a patient in a hospital, you cannot come out before you are absolutely cured.

Keshab began to smile. The Bhagavân continued: Hridai used to say, after seeing the condition of my body: "I have never seen so much spirituality with such a state of body!" But although my body was weak, still I never stopped talking of God with others. At one time, I remember, I was thin like a skeleton, yet I would continue discussions on spiritual subjects for hours.

Then shedding tears of sympathy for Keshab, the Bhagavân said: It is His will. Everything happens by Thy will O Lord! Thou doest Thy Everything the will of God works; by mistake people say, "I do." The gardener sometimes uncovers the of roots rose-bushes that the dew may fall upon them. Sometimes he trims off some of the roots so that the flowers will become larger. Perhaps the Lord is preparing you to do greater work. But I feel very unhappy when you are ill. Last time when you were ill, I was so anxious about you that I would cry at night and pray to my Divine Mother for your recovery. Sometimes I said to my Mother: "If Keshab passes away, with whom shall

I talk about God?" But this time I do not feel the same way.

At this moment Keshab's aged mother came near the door and addressed the Bhagavân, saying: "May Keshab be cured of his illness?"

The Bhagavân replied: Pray to my blissful Divine Mother. She will remove all pain and trouble. (To Keshab) Do not spend so much time with your family and children. Their company will drag you to worldliness. You will feel better if you think of God and talk about Him.

Keshab's mother said: Do Thou bless my Keshab.

Râmakrishna: What power have I? God will bless him. Thou doest Thy work, O Divine Mother! People say by mistake, "I do it." Two are the occasions when the Lord smiles. First, when brothers remove the chains which partition off the family property, saying: "This is mine and that is thine"; and secondly, when the physician of a dying patient declares: "I shall make him live."

Keshab then began to cough and could not remain longer, so he bowed down before the Bhagavân, saluted Him, and with great difficulty walked out of the room. Keshab's eldest son was there. A Brâhmo devotee said: Bhagavan, lay Thy hand on his head and bless him.

Râmakrishna replied: It is not for me to bless anyone.

He then gently touched him on his arm and said to the Brâhmo devotee: I cannot say to anyone, "Be thou cured." I never asked my Divine Mother for that power. I simply ask for pure love and nothing else.

Srî Râmakrishna then rose to leave. Keshab's disciples accompanied Him to the door with great reverence, and He passed from the house with His disciples.

Sikh Mystical Theology

In Conversation with Guru Nanak



Guru Nanak

The Sikh Religion

By Max Arthur MacAuliffe 1909

DIVINE SERVICES BY GURU NANAK AND OTHER GURUS

THE JAPJI

THERE is but one God whose name is true, the
Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn,
self-existent by the favour of the Guru.

REPEAT HIS NAME

The True One was in the beginning; the True One was
in the primal age.

The True One is now also, O Nanak; the True One
also shall be.

God was true in the beginning, he was
true in the primal age
He is true now also, Nânak, and He also
will be true.

I

By thinking I cannot obtain a conception
of *Him*, even though I think hundreds of
thousands of times.
Even though I be silent and keep my

attention firmly fixed on Him, I cannot preserve silence.

The hunger of the hungry *for God* subsideth not though they obtain the load of the worlds.

If man should have thousands and hundreds of thousands of devices, even one would not assist him in obtaining God.

How shall *man* become true before God?

How shall the veil of falsehood be rent?

By walking, O Nanak, according to the will of the Commander as preordained.

II

By His order bodies are produced; His order cannot be described.

By His order Souls are infused into them; by His order greatness is obtained.

By His order men are high or low; by His order they obtain preordained pain or pleasure.

By His order some obtain their reward; by His order others must ever wander in transmigration.

All are subject to His order; none is exempt from it.

He who understandeth God's order, O Nanak, is never guilty of egoism.

III

Who can sing His power? Who hath
power to *sing it*?
Who can sing His gifts or know His
signs?

Who can sing His attributes, His
greatness, and His deeds?
Who can sing is knowledge whose
study is arduous?
Who can sing Him, who fashioneth the
body and *again* destroyeth it?
Who can sing Him, who taketh away
life and again restoreth it?
Who can sing Him, who appeareth to be
far, *but* is known *to be near*.
Who can sing Him, who is all-seeing
and omnipresent?
In describing Him there would never be
an end.
Millions of men give millions upon
millions of descriptions of Him, *but they*
fail to describe Him.
The Giver giveth; the receiver groweth
weary of receiving.
In every age man subsisteth by *His*
bounty.
The Commander by His order hath laid
out the way *of the world*.
Nanak, God the unconcerned is happy.

IV

True is the Lord, true is His name; it is
uttered with endless love.

People pray and beg, 'Give us, give us
the Giver giveth His gifts;
Then what can we offer Him whereby
His court may be seen?
What words shall we utter with our lips,
on hearing which He may love us?
At the ambrosial hour of *morning*
meditate on the true Name and *God's*
greatness.

Some sing His power according to their
abilities;
Some sing, His gifts according to their
knowledge of His signs;
Some sing His attributes, His greatness,
and His deeds;
Some sin His knowledge whose study is
arduous;
Some sing that He fashioneth tire body
and again destroyeth it;
Sonic that He taketh away the soul and
again restoreth it;
Sonic that He appeareth far from mortal
gaze;
Some that He is all-seeing and
omnipresent.

The Kind One will give us a robe of
honour, and by His favour we shall

reach the gate of salvation.
 Nanak, we shall thus know that God is
 altogether true.

V

He is not established, nor is He created.
 The pure one existeth by Himself.
 They who worshipped Him have
 obtained honour.

Nanak, sing His *praises* who is the
 Treasury of excellences.

Sing and hear and put His love into
 your hearts.

Thus shall your sorrows be removed,
 and you shall be absorbed in Him who
 is the abode of happiness.

Under the Guru's instruction God's
 word is heard; under the Guru's
 instruction its knowledge is acquired;
 under the Guru's instruction man learns
 that God is everywhere contained.

The Guru is Shiv; the Guru is Vishnu
 and Brahma; the Guru is Parbati,
 Lakhshmi, and Saraswati.

Under the Guru's instruction God's
 word *is heard*; under the Guru's
 instruction the knowledge of it *is*
acquired; it is contained in the Guru's
 instruction.

The voice of God is found as well in
other compositions as in the Veds; the
voice of God is all-pervading.

The pious; know the Gum's instruction,
that God is everywhere contained.

The voice of the Guru is as the Veds for
the holy; they are absorbed in it.

If I knew Him, should I not describe
Him? He cannot be described by words.
My Guru hath explained one thing to
me--

That there is *but* one Bestower on all
living beings; may I not forget Him!

VI

If I please Him, that is my place of
pilgrimage to bathe in; If I please Him
not, what ablutions shall I make?
What can all the created beings I behold
obtain without *previous* good acts?
Precious stones, jewels, and gems *shall*
be treasured up in thy heart if thou
hearken to even one word of the Guru.
The Guru hath explained one thing to
me--

That there is but one Bestower on all
living beings; may I not forget Him!

VII

Were man to live through the four ages,
yea ten times longer;
 Were he to be known on the nine
 continents, and were everybody to
 follow in his train;
 Were he to obtain a great name and
 praise and renown in the world;
 If God's look of favour fell not on him,
 no one would notice him.
 He would be accounted a worm among
 worms, and even sinners would impute
 sin to him.

Nanak, God may bestow virtue on those
 who are devoid
 of it, as well as on those who *already*
 possess it;
 But no such person is seen as can
 bestow virtue upon Him.

VIII

By hearing *the name of* God men become
 Sidhs, Pirs, Surs, and Naths;
 By hearing *the Name* man understandeth
the real nature of the earth, its supporting
 bull, and Heaven;
 By hearing *the Name* man obtaineth a
knowledge of the Continents, the worlds,
 and the nether regions.
 By hearing *the Name* death doth not

affect one.

Nanak, the saints are ever happy.

By hearing *the Name* sorrow and sin are
no more.

IX

By hearing *the Name* man become *as*
Shiv, Brahma, and Indar.

By hearing the Name *even* the low
become highly lauded.

By hearing the Name the way of Jog and
the secrets of the body *are obtained*.

By hearing the Name man *understandeth*
the real nature of the Shastars, the
Simtritis, and the Veds.

Nanak, the saints, are ever happy.

By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are
no more.

X

By hearing the Name truth,
contentment, and divine knowledge *are*
obtained.

Hearing the. Name. is equal to bathing
at the sixty-eight *places of pilgrimage*.

By hearing the Name and reading it
man obtaineth honour.

By hearing the Name the mind is
composed and fixed on God.

Nanak, the saints are ever happy.

By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are
no more.

XI

By hearing the Name, the depth of the
sea of virtue is sounded.

By hearing the Name *men become*
Shaikhs, Pirs, and Emperors.

By hearing the Name a blind man
findeth his way.

By hearing the Name the unfathomable
becometh fathomable.

Nanak, the saints are ever happy.

By hearing the Name sorrow and sin are
no more.

XII

The condition of him who obeyeth God
cannot be described.

Whoever trieth to describe it, shall
afterward repent.

There is no paper, or pen, or writer
To describe *the condition* of him who
obeyeth God.

So pure is His Name--

Whoever obeyeth God knoweth *the*
pleasure of it in his own heart.

XIII

By obeying Him wisdom and
 understanding *enter* the mind;
 By obeying Him man knoweth all
 worlds
 By obeying Him man suffereth not
 punishment;
 By obeying Him man shall not depart
 with Jam
 So pure is God's name--
 Whoever obeyeth God knoweth the
 pleasure of it in his own heart.

XIV

By obeying Him man's path is not
 obstructed;
 By obeying Him man departeth with
 honour and distinction;
 By obeying Him man proceedeth in
 ecstasy on his way;
 By obeying Him man formeth an
 alliance with virtue--
 So pure is God's name--
 Whoever obeyeth God knoweth the
 pleasure of it in his own heart.

XV

By obeying Him man attaineth the gate
 of salvation
 By obeying Him man is saved with his

family;
 By obeying Him the Guru is saved, and
 saveth his disciples;
 By obeying Him, O Nanak, man
 wandereth not *in quest* of alms--
 So pure is God's name--
 Whoever obeyeth God knoweth the
 pleasure of it in his own heart.

XVI

The elect are acceptable, the elect are
 distinguished
 The elect obtain honour in God's court;
 The elect shed lustre on the courts of
 kings.
 The attention of the elect is bestowed on
 the one Guru.
 If any one say he can form an idea of
 God, *he way say so,*

By obeying Him man proceedeth not by
 the path of destruction.

Man proceedeth by the broad, not the
 narrow way.

But the Creator's works cannot be
 numbered.
 The bull *that is spoken of* is righteousness,
 the offspring of mercy,
 Which supported by patience
 maintaineth the order of nature.

Whoever understandeth this is a true
 man.
 What a load there is upon the bull!
 Beyond this earth there are more
 worlds, more and more.
 What power can support their weight?
 The names of living things, their species,
 and colours
 Have all been written with a flowing
 pen.
 Doth any one know how to write an
 account of them?
 If the account were written, how great it
 would be
 What power and beautiful form are
 Thine, O God!
 Who hath power to know how great
 Thy gifts are?
 By one word Thou didst effect the
 expansion *of the world*,
 Whereby hundreds of thousands of
 rivers were produced.
 What power have I to describe Thee?
So powerless am I, that I cannot even once
 be a sacrifice unto Thee.
 Whatever pleaseth Thee is good.
 Thou, O Formless One, art ever secure.

XVII

Numberless thy worshippers, and
 numberless Thy lovers
 Numberless Thine adorers, and

numberless they who perform
 austerities for Thee
 Numberless the reciters of *sacred* books
 and Veds

Numberless Thy Jogis whose hearts are
 indifferent *to the world*;
 Numberless the saints who ponder on
 Thine attributes and divine knowledge;
 Numberless Thy true men; numberless
 Thine almsgivers
 Numberless Thy heroes who face the
 steel of their enemies;
 Numberless Thy silent *worshippers* who
 lovingly fix their thoughts upon Thee.
 What power have I to describe Thee?
So lowly am I, that I cannot even once be
 a sacrifice unto Thee.
 Whatever pleaseth Thee is good.
 O Formless One, Thou art ever secure.

XVIII

Numberless are the fools appallingly
 blind
 Numberless are the thieves and
 devourers of others' property;
 Numberless those who establish their
 sovereignty by force;
 Numberless the cut-throats and
 murderers
 Numberless the sinners *who pride*
themselves on committing sin;

Numberless the liars who roam about
 lying;
 Numberless the filthy who enjoy filthy
 gain
 Numberless the slanderers who carry
 loads of *calumny*, on their heads
 Nanak thus describeth the degraded.
So lowly am I, I cannot even once be a
 sacrifice unto Thee.
 Whatever pleaseth Thee is good.
 O Formless One, Thou art ever Secure.

XIX

Numberless *Thy* names, and numberless
Thy places.
 Completely beyond reach are Thy
 numberless worlds.
 Numberless they who repeat *Thy name*
 with *all* the strength of their intellects.
 By letters *we repeat* Thy name, by letters
 we praise Thee
 By letters *we acquire* divine knowledge,
 and sing Thy praises and Thine
 attributes,
 By letters we write and utter the word of
God;
 By the letters *recorded* on man's head his
 destiny is declared.
 He who inscribeth them on others,
 beareth them not on His own head.
 As He ordaineth, so shall man obtain.
 As great Thy creation, O God, so great is

Thy fame
 There is no place without *Thy* name.
 What power have I to describe Thee
So lowly am I, that I cannot even once be
 a sacrifice unto Thee.
 Whatever pleaseth Thee is good.
 O Formless One, Thou art ever secure.

XX

When the hands, feet, and *other members*
 of the body are covered with filth,
 It is removed by washing with water.
 When thy clothes are polluted,
 Apply soap, and the impurity shall be
 washed away.
 So when the mind is defiled by sin,
 It is cleansed by the love of the Name.
 Men do not become saints or sinners by
 merely calling themselves so.

The recording angels take with them a
 record of man's acts.
 It is he himself soweth, and he himself
 eateth.
 Nanak, man suffereth transmigration by
 God's order.

XXI.

Pilgrimage, austerities, mercy, and
 almsgiving on general and special
 occasions

Whosoever performeth, *may obtain* some little honour;

But he who heareth and obeyeth and loveth *God* in his heart,

Shall wash off his *impurity* in the place of pilgrimage, within him.

All virtues are Thine, O Lord; none are mine.

There is no devotion without virtue.

From the Self-existent *proceeded* Maya (athi), whence issued a word which produced Brahma and the rest--

'Thou art true, Thou art beautiful, there is ever pleasure in Thy heart!'

What the time, what the epoch, what the lunar day, and what the week-day,

What the season, and what the month when the world was created,

The Pandits did not discover; had they done so, they would have recorded it in the Purans.

Nor did the Qazis discover it; had they done so, they would have recorded it in the Quran:

Neither the Jogi nor any other *mortal* knows the lunar day, or the week-day, or the season, or the month.

Only the Creator who fashioned the world knoweth *when He did so*.

How shall I address Thee, O God? how shall I praise Thee? how shall I describe Thee? and how shall I know Thee?

Saith Nanak, everybody speaketh of
Thee, one wiser than another.
Great is the Lord, great is His name;
what He doeth cometh to pass.
Nanak, he who is proud shall not be
honoured on his arrival in the next
world.

XXII

There are hundreds of thousands of
nether and upper regions.
Men have grown weary at last of
searching *for God's* limits; the Veds say
one thing, *that God has no limit*.
The thousands of Purans and
Muhammadan books tell that in reality
there is but one principle.
If God can be described by writing, then
describe Him; *but* such description is
impossible.
O Nanak, call Him great; only He
Himself knoweth how great He is.

XXIII

Praisers praise God, but have not
acquired a knowledge of Him,
As rivers and streams fall into the sea,
but know not *its extent*.
Kings and emperors who possess oceans
and mountains of property and wealth,

Are not equal to the worm which
forgetteth not God in its heart.

XXIV

There is no limit to God's praises; to
those who repeat *them* there is no limit.
There is no limit to His mercy, and to
His gifts there. is no limit.
There is no limit to what God seeth, no
limit to what He heareth.
The limit of the secret of His heart
cannot be known.
The limit of His creation cannot be
known; neither His near nor His far side
can be discovered.

To know His limits how many vex their
hearts.
His limits cannot be ascertained
Nobody knoweth His limits.
The more we say, the more *there remains*
to be said.
Great is the Lord, and exalted is His
seat.
His exalted name is higher than the
most exalted.
Were any one else ever so exalted,
Then he would know that exalted Being
How great He is He knoweth Himself.
Nanak, God bestoweth gifts *on whom He*
looketh with favour and mercy.

XXV

His many bounties cannot be recorded,
 He is a great giver and hath not it
 particle of covetousness.
 How many, *yea* countless heroes beg of
 Him!
 How many *others* whose number cannot
 be conceived
 How many pine away in sin!
 How many persons receive yet deny
 God's gifts
 How many fools there are who *merely*
 eat!
 How many are ever dying in distress
 and hunger
 O Giver, these are also Thy gifts.

Rebirth and deliverance depend on Thy
 will:
 Nobody can interfere with it.
 If any fool try to interfere with it
 He shall himself know the punishment
 he shall suffer.
 God himself knoweth *to whom He may*
give, and He Himself giveth:
 Very few acknowledge this.
 He to whom God hath given the *boon* of
 praising and lauding Him,
 O Nanak, is the King of kings.

XXVI

Priceless are Thine attributes, O God,
 and priceless Thy dealings;
 Priceless Thy dealers, priceless Thy
 storehouses
 Priceless what cometh from Thee, and
 priceless what is taken away;
 Priceless Thy rate and priceless the time
for dealing;
 Priceless Thy justice and priceless Thy
 court;
 Priceless Thy weights and priceless Thy
 measures;
 Priceless Thy gifts and priceless Thy
 marks;
 Priceless Thy mercy and priceless Thine
 ordinances.
 How beyond all price *Thou art* cannot be
 stated.
 Ever speaking of Thee men continue to
 fix their thoughts on Thee.

That God is ever true, He is the true
 Lord, and the true Name.
 He who made this world is and shall be;
 He shall neither depart, nor be made to
 depart.
 He who created things of different
 colours, descriptions, and species,
 Beholdeth His handiwork which
 attesteth His greatness.
 He will do what pleaseth Himself; no

order may be issued to Him.
 He is King, the King of kings, O Nanak;
all remain subject to His will.

XXVIII

Make contentment and modesty thine
 earrings, self-respect thy wallet,
 meditation the ashes to *smear on thy*
body;
 Make thy body, which is only a morsel
 for death, thy beggar's coat, and faith
 thy rule of life and thy staff.
 Make association with men thine Ai
 Panth, and the conquest of thy heart the
 conquest of the world.

To Thee sing chaste and
 patient of mankind,
 Unyielding heroes of true
 faith approved.
 To Thee sing pandits and
 the chiefs of saints
 The ages four and Veds to
 them assigned.
 To Thee sing maidens who
 delight the sense,
 This world of ours, high
 heaven, and hell below.
 To Thee sing gems from
 Vishnu's sea that rose,
 And eight and sixty spots
 of pilgrims' haunt.

To Thee sing heroes and
 the men of might;
 The sources four from
 which all life doth spring.
 To Thee sing regions, orbs,
 and universe,
 Created, cherish'd, and
 upheld by Thee!
 To Thee sing those whose
 deeds delight Thine eye,
 The hosts who wear the
 colours of Thy faith.
 All things beside which
 sing Thy glorious name,
 Could ne'er be told by
 Nanak's lowly song.

HAIL! HAIL TO HIM,

The primal, the pure, without
 beginning, the indestructible, the same
 in every age!

XXIX

Make divine knowledge thy food,
 compassion thy store
 keeper, and the voice which is in every
 heart the pipe *to call to repast*.
 Make Him who hath strung the whole
 world *on His string* thy spiritual Lord;
 let wealth and supernatural power be
 relishes for others.

Union and separation is the law which
regulateth the world. By destiny we
receive our portion.

HAIL! HAIL TO HIM,

The primal, the pure, without
beginning, the indestructible, the same
in every age!

XXX

One Maya in union *with* God gave birth
to three acceptable children.

One of them is the creator, the second
the provider, the third performeth the
function of destroyer.

As it pleaseth God, He directeth them
by His orders.

He beholdeth them, but is not seen by
them. This is very marvellous.

HAIL! HAIL TO HIM,

The primal, the pure, without
beginning, the indestructible, the same
in every age!

XXXI

His seat and His storehouses are in
every world.

What was to be put into them was put

in at one time.
 The Creator beholdeth His creation.
 Nanak, true is the work of the True One.

HAIL! HAIL TO HIM,

The primal, the pure, without
 beginning, the indestructible, the same
 in every age!

XXXII

Were one tongue to become a hundred
 thousand, and a hundred thousand to
 become twentyfold more,
 I would utter the name of the one Lord
 of the world hundreds of thousands of
 times *with all my tongues*.
 In this way I should ascend the stairs of
 the Lord, and become one with Him.
 On hearing of the exaltation of the
 religious the vile become jealous.
 Nanak, *the former* have found the Kind
 One, while false is the boasting of the
 false.

XXXIII

I have no strength to speak and no
 strength to be silent.
 I have no strength to ask and no
 strength to give
 I have no strength to live, and no

strength to die,
 I have no strength to acquire empire or
 wealth which produce a commotion in
 the heart.

I have no strength to meditate on Thee
 or ponder on divine knowledge;

I have no strength *to find* the way to
 escape from the world.

He in whose arm there is strength, may
 see what he can do.

Nanak, no one is of superior or inferior
strength before God.

XXXIV

God created nights, seasons, lunar days,
 and week days,
 Wind, water, fire, and the nether
 regions.

In the midst of these He established the
 earth as a temple.

In it *He placed* living beings of different
 habits and kinds.

Their names are various and endless,
 And they are judged according to their
 acts.

True is God, and true is His court.
 There the elect are accepted and
 honoured.

The Merciful One marketh them
 according to their acts.

The bad and the good shall there be
 distinguished.

Nanak, on arrival there, this shall be seen.

XXXV

Such is the practice in the realm of righteousness.

I now describe the condition of the realm of knowledge.

How many winds, waters, and fires!
how many Krishans and Shivs!

How many Brahmas who fashioned worlds! *how many* forms, colours, and garbs!

How many lands of grace *like this!*
now many mountains!

how many Dhurs and instructors such as his.

How many Indars, how many moons and suns, how many regions and countries!

How many Sidhs, Budhs, how many Naths! now many goddesses and representations *of them!*

How many demigods and demons! how many saints, how many jewels and seas!

How many sources of life! how many languages! and how many lines of kings!

How many possessors of divine knowledge! now many worshippers!
Nanak, there is no end of them.

XXXVI

In the realm of knowledge the light of
 divine knowledge is resplendent.
 There are heard songs from which
 millions of joys and pleasures *proceed*.
 Beauty is the attribute of the realm of
 happiness.
 There things are fashioned in an
 incomparable manner.
 What is done there cannot be described.
 Whoever endeavoureth to describe it
 shall afterwards repent.
 There are fashioned knowledge,
 wisdom, intellect, and understanding;
 And there too is fashioned the skill of
 demigods and men of supernatural
 power.

XXXVII

Force is the attribute of the realm of
 action.
 Incomparable are they who dwell
 therein.
 There are very powerful warriors and
 heroes
 They are filled with the might of Ram.-
 There are many Sitas in the midst of
 greatness,
 Their beauty cannot be described
 They die not, neither are they led astray
 In whose hearts God dwelleth.

There dwell congregations of saints
 They rejoice; the True One is in their
 hearts.

God dwelleth in the true realm.
 He looketh on its denizens with an eye
 of favour, and rendereth them happy.
 There are continents, worlds, and
 universes.
 Whoever trieth to describe them shall
 never arrive at an end.

There are worlds upon worlds and
 forms *upon forms*.
 They *fulfil* their functions according to
 God's orders:
 God beholding and contemplating them
 is pleased.
 Nanak, to describe *them* would be
 impossible.

XXXVIII

Make continence thy furnace,
 resignation thy goldsmith,
 Understanding thine anvil, divine
 knowledge thy tools,
 The fear *of God* thy bellows, austerities
 thy fire,
 Divine love thy crucible, and melt God's
 name therein.
 In such a true mint the Word shall be
 coined.
 This is the practice of those on whom

God looketh with an eye of favour.
 Nanak, the Kind One by a glance
 maketh them happy.

The air is the guru, water our father,
 and the great earth our mother;
 Day and night are our two nurses, male
 and female, who set the whole world a-
 playing.
 Merits and demerits shall be read out in
 the presence of the Judge.
 According to men's acts, some shall be
 near, and others distant *from God*.
 They who have pondered on the Name
 and departed after the completion of
 their toil,
 Shall have their countenances made
 bright, O Nanak; how many shall be
 emancipated in company with them!

Egyptian Mystical Theology

In Conversation with W. Marsham Adams



The House of the Hidden Places

By W. Marsham Adams, 1895

CHAPTER I.

THE PYRAMID OF LIGHT.

CLOSE to the verge of the immense desert which stretches its arid wastes across the whole breadth of the continent to the shore of the Western Ocean, just at the apex of the famous delta which marks the meeting point of Upper and Lower Egypt, at the very spot where the busy life of the earliest civilization on record was bordered by the vast and barren solitude, stands the most majestic and most mysterious monument ever erected by the hand of man. Of all the other structures which made the marvels of the ancient world, scarcely a vestige is left. Where are the hanging gardens, the boast of the monarch of Babylon? Where is the far-famed Pharos of Alexandria? Centuries have passed since earthquake laid low the Colossus which bestrode the harbour of Rhodes; and a madman's hand reduced to ashes the temple of Artemis, the pride of Ephesus. But the Grand Pyramid of Ghizeh still remains undestroyed and indestructible, ages after the lesser marvels have passed away, as it stood ages before ever they came into being. Certainly more than fifty, it may be more

than sixty, centuries have gone by since that building, which never since has needed the care of man, first concealed from view its hidden places, those secret chambers of which no other building on the globe contains the like. Upwards of two million times has the sun risen and set upon its mighty walls, since first the pure and unbroken surface of polished casing-stones flashed back the rays like a veil of dazzling lustre, and vindicated its ancient title of *The Light*.

What the concealed significance may be of that secret masonry; by whom, and for what purpose, the complex plan was designed; at what epoch the huge structure was erected, are questions which have perplexed many minds in many lands, and have resulted in a discord more akin to Babel, than to the grandeur of its silent majesty. It was built by the Jews in the days of their captivity, says, or rather said, one school of theorists. It was built by Chemmis, but attributed by Egyptians in hatred of him to the Shepherd Philiton, is the account given by Herodotus. It was built by Ibn Salluk, say the Arabs, just before the Flood, to preserve the royal treasures from the predicted inundation. It was built by Melchisedec—or somebody—vehemently asserts the Scottish professor of astronomy, who seems always to write in a whirlwind of miscellaneous indignation. It was indisputably intended by the founder for his tomb, one party stoutly maintains,—a tomb in which he left especial instructions that he should not be buried, and in which nobody could possibly have been buried, replies another. It was an observatory,

maintains a third,—where every place for observation was carefully closed up, retorts a fourth. It is the "prophetic floor-roll of human history," screams Professor Smyth,—with all the dates gone wrong, softly sneers Mr. Flinders Petrie.

Side by side with that masonic mystery, well nigh as impenetrable at the present moment as when the Hir Sheshta, or "Master of the Secret," was an officer of Pharaoh's household, has come down to us another enigma, the strange collections of sacred writings, or Ritual * of Ancient Egypt, which modern writers have called the "Book of the Dead," but which claims for itself the title of the "Book of the Master of the Hidden Places." Vivid as is the interest now awakened in those writings, little progress has been made in elucidating their meaning. The doctrines inculcated by their religion, the relations of the worshipper to the object or objects worshipped, the signification of the particular symbol under which those relations were at once veiled and expressed, are but little better understood at the present time, notwithstanding our greatly increased knowledge of the sacred writings, than when the hieroglyphs themselves were undeciphered. Yet, strange to say, prominently as these mysteries stand out in every matter that relates to ancient Egypt, no one has hitherto thought of collating the masonic secret of the monument with the doctrinal secret contained in the mysterious books of Thoth, to whom the origin of Egyptian wisdom is attributed. * Such an omission is the more singular, because indications are not wanting on either side to

hint at the connection. That Khufu (miscalled by the Greeks, Cheops) should have adopted the pyramidal form in the hieroglyph of his name is not surprising, as he was the monarch under whom the building was erected. But it is not perhaps unworthy of notice, that the form of the Pyramid enters into the hieroglyph of the star Sothis, or Sirius. For the Grand Orient, or position of that star when its rising forms the immediate harbinger of dawn on midsummer morning, was, as is well known, the great starting-point for the age-long cycles of the Egyptian reckoning. And whereas the figure usually employed to denote the Pyramid embraces both the edifice and

the rocky platform on which it is built , the form used in the hieroglyph of Sothis consists of the

masonic portion alone , that is to say, the structure which represented to the Egyptian mind the Eternal Light, apart from its earthly support; while a Papyrus dating from the time of Khufu, the founder of the building, speaks of Isis as the ruler of the Pyramid; and a later inscription, that of Syene, calls her also the "Mother of God," and identifies her with "The Divine Sothis, the Star, the Queen of the Heaven."

On the other hand, the sacred writings, or Ritual of ancient Egypt, are full of allusions which become vocal only when applied to the Pyramid of Light. Such are the festivals of the "Northern Passage" and of the "Southern Passage," that of the "Hidden Lintel," that of "Osiris, who dwells in the roofed house" and in

the "Pool of the Great House." So in the Kalendar of Esne, we read of the "Festival of the Sockets," and again of the "Opening of the Doors," which is closely connected in the Ritual with the "Chapter of the Orientation," and the raising of Osiris from the Open Tomb. The whole progress of the Departed seems, in fact, to take place in some kind of building. The Ritual is full of references to his "Going in" and "Coming out," to "Going in after coming out," to passing gates and gateways, and doors and staircases. Nay, the very titles employed, whether in the written or the masonic record, point directly, though secretly, to each other. Where else, if not in these chambers, so jealously concealed, the like of which not even the later pyramids contain, shall we look for the Hidden Places, the master of which is claimed for its own master by the "Book of the Dead"? Again, hundreds of years before the date of the principal papyrus containing those writings, as early as the twelfth dynasty, the inscription on the coffin of Amamu, buried in the sacred city of Abydos, makes a similar allusion, and shows that the secret places determine the order of the Ritual. "Thou hast not gone dying, thou hast gone living to Osiris. Now thou hast found the *words of order, the mystery of the secret places.*"

What a sudden significance, then, attaches to the title "Ta Khut," "The Light," whereby the Grand Pyramid, that monument of flame, was known to the Pharaohs, when, turning to the sacred papyri, we find the title of the opening chapter to be the Pir M Hru, or Entrance on Light—that is, not the light of common day, which

the deceased was quitting, but, as is shown by the image of the setting sun, wherewith the descent of the tomb was always associated, of the invisible Light of the Unseen World, renewed for ever in the splendour of Osiris. For the doctrine contained in those mystic writings was nothing else than an account of the path pursued by the just, when the bonds of the flesh being loosed, he passed through stage after stage of spiritual growth, until initiated in the new birth and illumined in the hidden life, he became indissolubly united with him whose name, says the Egyptian Ritual, "is Light, Great Creator." And that path which the Ritual gives in writing, the grand Pyramid of Light materializes in the masonry.

In the double symbolism of Pyramid and Ritual lie both the chief difficulties of decipherment and the strongest evidence of their correspondence. For as the departed in his progress was to become united in the fulness of intimacy with his Creator, so it was necessary that he should progress in the knowledge of the mysteries which envelop alike the spiritual and the material creation. To know Osiris in his forms of manifestation was the secret of power, to "understand Osiris in all his names, Osiris in all his places," conferred the crown of illumination. But in the attainment of that infinite knowledge there were many stages which must be traversed by the finite mortal, many grades which must be achieved by the holy departed, when the mouth of the tomb, the portal of Eternal Day, had been opened for him, and the Catechumen of the Divine Wisdom had been

admitted as the Postulant of Immortality. The "inner man" or "person" of the deceased, the "Ka" (or

postulant with the upraised arms, ) must be re-created in incorruption, the soul must be born anew, before that postulant could be initiated into things divine; the Initiate must pass the fiery ordeal, and become approved as Adept; the Adept must be justified in the Tribunal of Truth, before he could emerge from the shadow of the Halls of Death into the immediate presence of the Source of Light. The Justified must become the Illuminate, the Illuminate must be consummated as Master, before he could attain the innermost mansion in the divine house of Osiris. For each of such grades, according to the creed of Egypt, the Creator has assigned a distinct locality in the great exterior manifestation of Himself, the universe of space; and each of these localities is described symbolically in the books of the mystical Ritual, and inscribed masonically in the features and the dimensions of the Hidden Places of the Pyramid.

Not to every one therefore did that house lie open, nor could there be a more unpardonable offence than the profanation of its secrets. "This Book," says the final chapter of the Ritual, "is the greatest of mysteries. Do not let the eye of any one see it; that were abomination." So, too, the secrecy enjoined by the Ritual was enforced by the structure of the building; nor was it ever violated so long as Egypt remained Egyptian. And as it was the characteristic of that religion to be concealed, and as the manifestation

of the Creator is deeper and more secret yet than the knowledge of His works, so it was essential that the symbols relating to Him, and to the connection of man with Him, should not betray their deepest mysteries even to the Initiate; but should reserve their more secret meaning for the Illuminate after full probation. Here, then, was the problem which lay before the first Hir Shesta, the "Master of the Secret," the originator of the "wisdom of the Egyptians;" to express, but in expressing to conceal, to veil, but with a veil of light, the mysteries of the Deity; to choose such symbols as would without betraying their nature convey their living energy, their illuminative power, and, above all, their illimitable endurance. No ordinary image, it is clear, no mineral, no animal, no plant, no man, could suffice for an expression such as this. Only the orbs of heaven, obeying in their lustrous course the laws that know no change, could fulfil the required conditions. Alike in the pictured and the masonic record the path of the just is traced amid the shining worlds, and his progress measured in the terms of celestial motion.

A remarkable instance is that of the orbit of the earth, involving a knowledge of the rotation of the earth on its axis, and its revolution around the sun, on which rested the ancient kalendar of Egypt. The "Lord of the Orbit" (Neb Sennen) was a title of the Egyptian monarch. And in the Pyramid we find the orbit, together with many other phenomena masonically expressed on the walls of the magnificent and unique upper Chamber of Ascent. Similarly, another great

astronomical conception, viz. the horizon, runs not only through the "Book of the Dead," but through all the funereal imagery of the country, as in the "Sai-an-Sinsin," or "Book of the Migration of the Soul;" and in that of Queen Anchnes-ra-neferab and other papyri. What horizon then is the "horizon of heaven," to which such mystery attaches, and what is its apex, the Grand Zenith of the celestial dome? We have no such general conception, and consequently our ideas of the celestial mechanism lack something of simplicity. But suppose that on the day of Equinox, the equal division of light and darkness, we are standing on the Equator, the equal divider of the earth into the hemispheres of North and South, and that we take up our position, say at the point where it is cut by the meridian of Memphis, close to the lake from whence flow the waters of the life-giving river. At our feet is spread the great plane, passing through the celestial poles, and bounded by the Purple Arch which encircles the floor of the starry dome. From the midst of our Horizon on that day rises the sun right upwards, * and at the summit of his course, where day by day he equally divides the heaven East and West, on that day alone he equally divides also the Grand Arch, or Grand Meridian, which rises transverse from the same horizon, and stretches from pole to pole of the azure depths. Then we shall



The "Horizon of Heaven"

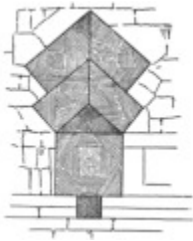
have marked out the four Cardinal Points of the universal sphere—the four points whereby the sides of the Pyramid of Light were defined; the fiery seats, according to the Egyptian theosophy, of the four "Sons of Light," whereof the most famous was Hapi, the presiding Spirit of the Nile. Into that Grand Horizon too, when the equal day is done, the sun passes beneath the Western waters. And out of it, the whole host of stars, from pole to pole, in serried array, each preserving his appointed distance from the solar path, follow him through the silent night—the "night of reckoning the spirits;" one-half springing into light as their leader disappears, the rest completing their numbers, just in time to herald his return from the Eastern point of the same Grand Horizon. "The road is of fire," says the Ritual;"they whirl in fire behind him."

Now this horizon seems strikingly indicated by the entrance passage of the Grand Pyramid, which, as is well known, may be defined by reference to the position of the pole-star. For, taking as the date of the IVth dynasty that given by Dr. Brugsch (about B.C. 3700), * we find that about two hundred and sixty years later (B.C. 3440), the pole-star of the period

(Alpha-Draconis) occupied, as Professor Smyth has pointed out, just that position; so that it would shine right down the passage. And thus the disciples of the Master of the Secret, who in successive generations must have watched for more than two centuries the approach of the star, would receive in its final co-ordination the most convincing proof of the truth of those astronomical relations, wherein their mystical religion was embodied. Hence when we read in the Ritual, of the "Good Paddle of the North the Opener of the Disc," we recall at once the narrow paddle-shaped passage widened at the entrance towards the North, which opens the sacred interior to the outer universe; the pointer of the dial which sweeps through space, indicating perennially the position occupied by each successive star, which for a brief period of centuries keeps watch before the pole.

Taking in our hands now, the sacred writings of the Pir M Hru, let us approach the masonic Light; and opening the book at the first chapter, where Thoth the Eternal Wisdom commences to instruct the catechumen freed from the corruption of the body, let us with him penetrate the interior of the building, and take such a preliminary view of its secret places and their analogues in the Ritual, as may enable us to study more deeply the twofold expression of that masonic mystery. Reciting chapter by chapter as we mount, grade by grade along with the Catechumen of Light, we approach at the fifteenth step a gateway two courses yet above us, just as the catechumen in the fifteenth chapter approaches the "double gate of

the horizon," the double-arched gate which points towards the pole-star; when he invokes "Haroeris the great guide of the world, the guide of the souls in their secret places, the light dwelling in the horizon." From this point the first veil of secrecy begins. For so effectually was the opening concealed from the uninstructed eyes by a revolving stone, that the position, once lost, was impossible to recover; and for two hundred years after passing under the barbarous Omar, the building remained impenetrable, until Caliph Al Mamoon, in the ninth century of our era, forced an opening at random through the solid masonry, and hit accidentally upon the entrance passage. Entering by the low gateway, thus built in the Northern side, at a considerable height above the ground, we have before us the passage of the horizon of the point of Equinox, which, while descending Southwards into the depths of darkness, points Northwards towards the star of the Purple Arch. As we cross the gate on the seventeenth course we



Gate of the Ascent. Northern Face: Course xvii.

course we recognize the point where, in the seventeenth chapter, the catechumen is admitted as a postulant, and exclaims, "I go from the Gate of Taser (the Ascent). What is the gate of Taser? It is the gate

where the god Shu (the Light) lifts the disc of heaven. The Gate of the North is the Gate of the Great God: "he continues, speaking evidently of the same gate; exactly as in the Pyramid the only entrance is the Gate of the Ascent in the seventeenth course of Northern face. Bidding now with him farewell to the light of earthly day, and treading the descending passage, we pass, some little way down, a very fine and beautifully ruled double line, scored perpendicularly on the slanting wall so as to point downwards to the foundation, and separating the upper section of the passage where the Departed in the Ritual is bereft of every faculty except that of motion, from the more advanced portion where his mental faculties are gradually restored to him. Continuing the long descent, we arrive at an aperture in the western wall, and passing through the opening thus disclosed mount gently into a kind of grotto at the bottom of the Well, a square perpendicular shaft, with footholds cut in the precipitous sides. Into that chamber of the Deep Waters the postulant descends on the Western side, as the sun at the close of day goes down into the Western waters, and bursts forth in splendour on the hidden world. From the top of the shaft a level passage runs to the place of the divine birth mentioned in the Ritual, the Chamber of the Moon, where, according to Egyptian teaching, Osiris each month renewed his birth. In that chamber, once rigidly blocked up, the liberated soul was born anew; and thence it came forth to descend the ladder of the shaft, as we see in the papyrus of Ani, and to become re-united with the postulant awaiting it in the Well of

Life. Then, when the soul is restored, initiation takes place and strength is given to endure the ordeal.

Returning from the bottom of the well to the Passage of the Horizon, and pursuing our course still further downwards, we come, after a short level continuation, to the subterranean chamber or the Place of the Central Fire, where the initiate undergoes his ordeal; a chamber hewn out of the solid rock, and having an inaccessible floor covered with huge blocks of varying height resembling a pool of petrified flame, or the masses of the mountain chains formed by the action of the earth's central fire; while beyond that terrible chamber a small passage leads to nothingness. Resuming our exploration of the edifice, and coming forth from the place of ordeal, as the Initiate, now become the Adept, turns back and avoids the place of annihilation; we remount the Passage of the Horizon until, at a little distance below the scored line, we come to a granite gate, or portcullis, built in the roof. This great gate, which originally was totally hidden by masonry and was only discovered by the falling of a stone when Al Mamoon was forcing his entrance into the pyramid, stands at the threshold of the Secret Places. Not only was the whole gate carefully hidden, but the lower portion of the passage within was blocked with enormous stones, still unremoved, and perhaps irremovable. So even now the Lintel is still hidden, and admission is only effected through a hole forced by violence in the wall of the passage above the blocks; while a precisely similar difficulty is experienced by the adept in passing the Lintel of

Justice before entering the Double Hall of Truth. Creeping with difficulty through the hole, we find ourselves in a small low corridor about one hundred and twenty-nine feet long, inclined upwards at an elevation slightly less than that of the depression of the Entrance Passage, and corresponding to the lower portion of the Hall of Truth where the adept justifies himself before the forty-two judges of the unseen world, "The Gods of the Horizon, and the Gods of the Orbit." Then, stooping beneath the low gateway, by which it is terminated (but not obstructed) at the top, "The Gateway of the Festival," we stand upon a kind of landing-place, from which the whole system of the interior passages opens out. On every side, is "the crossing of the pure roads of life" of which the coffin of Amamu speaks. On the Western side, is the mouth of the well, "The gate of Anruhf" leading down to the "roads of darkness." Before us lie the fields of Aahlu, the blessed country where the justified executes the works, which he is privileged to perform for Osiris. "I have digged in Anruhf," he says later on, "I have drilled the holes," the holes, that is, for the good seed, the corn which grew seven cubits high, the holes which are drilled in the ramps of the Southern Ascending Passage, but to which no signification has yet been attached.

Beyond the fields, the road leads direct to the Queen's Chamber, the Place of the New Birth, where the soul received her second life; and here on the Eastern wall, within a staircase of five ascents, is a kind of niche or image, the "type," to use the expression of the Ritual,

into which the soul is new born with the fivefold dominion of the regenerate senses. From the same point also, at the head of the well, diverge the interior ladders on the coffin already spoken of. Sheer down, "the ladder which has been made for Osiris," descends into the well. Northwards, "the ladder of Earth," slopes downward to the Hidden Lintel, the entrance of the upward path. Upwards to the South, but with a very slightly different inclination, runs the ascending passage, called by some writers "the Grand Gallery," forming the upper portion of the Hall of Truth, the Grand Lodge, or Luminous Chamber of the Orbit. This remarkable structure, consists of a corridor, about one hundred and fifty-seven feet long, and twenty feet high, built entirely on a slope, floor, walls, and roof, except a small portion at the Southern or upper end. On either side of the sloping floor, are twenty-eight ramps, each with a hole in it, a reference to which in the Ritual has been already noticed. And at the upper end the slope of the floor-line is closed abruptly, just above the Queen's Chamber by a block three feet high, forming a dais, or throne of judgment. From hence along the top of the block, or seat of the throne, the passage runs level for about sixty-one inches, the wall at the side being not quite vertical, but impending very slightly towards the slope. At the back of the throne the gallery is brought to a termination, by the Southern wall closing down in seven over-lappings within forty-two inches of the seat and leaving as an exit further South, a narrow and grave-like tunnel. In the sloping roof of the gallery, running downwards from South to North at a

somewhat greater inclination than the floor, are thirty-six overlappings, like the waves of a river of light, and corresponding to the number of decades in the orbit of the Egyptian year. And on the side wall of the dais at the upper end of the gallery are also seven overlappings, one above another, arching over to the summit; while in the position corresponding to that occupied by our own globe among the planets, runs a deep groove or orbit along its entire length. Thus we are confronted with a vivid connection between the Orbit and "the Passage of the Sun" in the Double Hall of Truth, the Lower Hall of Truth in Darkness, and the Upper Hall of Truth in Splendour, with the Throne of Radiance at the higher end. And above that throne rises the habitation of the seven great spirits in the service of their Lord, the Creator, who, the Sacred Books tell us, "protect the coffin of Osiris."

Now comes the most mysterious portion of the building. Stripped of its noble proportions, and reduced to an altitude so low, that a man must creep on hand and knee to pass, the passage pierces the southern wall of the Grand Gallery, and runs straight on, first into the Ante-chamber, or "Place of Preparation," and then into the splendid hall called the King's Chamber, in the most secluded portion of the building. In each of these halls is one and only one object. In the antechamber is a kind of masonic veil, which no one can pass without bowing the head. In the King's Chamber is a sarkophagus, not closed, but open; while the air channels wherewith this deeply buried room is amply ventilated proclaim that it is

not a chamber of the dead, but of the living, the place of "the Orient," where, in the Ritual, Osiris is awakened from his slumbers. In this portion of the building the structure changes its material for granite, forming, as it were, a house by itself within the Pyramid, an inner House yet within the House of Osiris, entered by the low and grave-like passage leading from behind the throne. This is the House of Glory described on the coffin of Amamu already quoted, the house to which the Illuminate approaches after passing the tribunal of Osiris. Here is the "Gate of the pure spirits," which they alone can enter who are washed in the waters of Life and radiant with the splendours of the Orbit. And here, too, it would seem, takes place the solemn address described in the Sai-an-Sinsin, "of the Gods in the House of Osiris," followed by the response of the "Gods in the House of Glory;" the joyous song of the holy departed who stand victorious before the judgment seat, echoed triumphantly by the inner chorus of their beloved who have gone before them into the fulness of light. Above is the "Empyrean Gate" ("the opening of Athor," as the Ritual calls it), which leads to the "Secret Places of Heaven;" the ascending spaces above the King's chamber, once completely closed, and constituting the innermost, the loftiest, and the most secret of the Hidden Places. And the whole is dominated and crowned by a gigantic triangle of granite, masonically expressing the divine Trinity of Egypt.

Such is the complex and hitherto unexplained system of gateways and passages, shafts, channels, and chambers; some leading upwards, some downwards, some level; some rough in the last degree, others exquisitely polished; some magnificent in their proportions, some so low that a man must creep, so narrow that he can with difficulty pass, to be found within the Pyramid of Light. It is absolutely unique; no other building, it may be safely averred (not even the later Pyramids), having contained any structure bearing the least resemblance to the higher chambers. Striking as it is in every feature, the most remarkable circumstance of all is the evident intention of the architect to preserve that secrecy which lends a majesty to the strange theosophy of Egypt. What then was the design, the secret and jealously guarded design, with which this wondrous edifice was constructed? That its various features are meaningless, or the mere result of caprice, is a suggestion to which the forethought and lavishness of calculation displayed in every detail unmistakably give the lie. Nor again can we maintain that they are necessary for the purposes of an ordinary tomb. For, in the first place, they are not to be found in the other Pyramids, which were used for that purpose; and, secondly, if there be any intention which the architect has openly manifested, it is to create such a series of obstructions, that no human body could be buried therein.

In truth, the Grand Pyramid is the House of a Tomb; but it is not a closed, but an open tomb. It is the tomb

not of a man, but a god; not of the dead, but of the risen. It is the tomb of the divine Osiris, whose birth on earth, descent into the under-world, victory over the serpent Apep, resurrection and judgment of the dead, were the most prominent features in the creed of Egypt, and in union with whom the holy departed achieved the path of illumination, and passed in safety the divine tribunal.

Viewed in this light, the practical value of the structure begins to become clear. On that doctrine rested the whole organization of social life amongst the ancient Egyptians. The kalendar, the festivals, the duties of the monarch, the rights of the priesthood, the relations of the provinces to their paramount temples, all were illustrated in the Path of Light. Endless confusion therefore in the State would result, no less than injury to the religion, from any misconstruction, or misrepresentation of doctrine (such as seems to have taken place under Khu en Aten); a circumstance all the more likely to occur, on account of the obscurity of the symbols employed.

Now the masonic symbolism of the Grand Pyramid affords a simple and practically indestructible means for perpetuating without betraying the doctrine of Egyptian wisdom. That expression, once formulated, was never repeated; the other tombs and Pyramids of Egypt claiming kinship only by subordinate and particular features with the work of the Grand Master. While then the written records of the Ritual, none of which now extant probably possess a higher

date than that of Khufu, were liable to change and error, no lapse of time could impair, no variation could affect in the secret places, the masonry of the Pyramid of Light. This embodiment, at once secret and unalterable, forming literally a Masonic Ritual of the whole doctrine of Light, accounts for the singularly piecemeal fashion in which the sacred words were committed to writing. During the first three dynasties one chapter alone has a dim traditional claim to have been written, while one other is said to have been revealed to Men Kau Ra, the grandson of the builder of the Grand Pyramid. And though on the later Pyramids sacred inscriptions begin to appear, it is not until the XIth dynasty that they become at all common. Of the various chapters so published (that is, used as inscriptions or written on papyri) at different times, there have been, as Mr. Budge mentions in his "Treatise on the Mummy," four principal recensions. The first is that of the Ancient Empire, written in hieroglyphics, to which the important inscription on the coffin of Amamu belongs. Then comes the Theban recension, also in hieroglyphics, of which the papyri have been with great labour collated and published by M. Naville; followed during the succeeding dynasty (XXth) by another written in the Hieratic (or priestly) characters. And last of all, we have the recension of the XXVIth or Saite dynasty, to which is due the great papyrus now preserved at Turin, of which Lepsius published a facsimile in 1846, consisting of upwards of one hundred and sixty original, with three supplementary chapters. Now it was during that recension that the

order of the chapters is said to have been fixed for the first time. What canon then, or standard of order, did the revisers employ? It certainly was not the relative antiquity of the chapters, for the only one which claims to remount to the 1st dynasty stands one hundred and thirtieth in the papyrus, while that which is attributed in it to the IVth dynasty—and which is entitled "The Entrance on Light in one Chapter," as though it had once been the single chapter in use—comes sixty-fourth. But the answer to the question appears to be contained in the last of the supplementary chapters; for the papyrus proclaims the key to be within the reach of all who understand in full the masonic secrets. "This Book," it says, "is the Book of the Master of the Hidden Places." And in those Hidden Places therefore the Secret of the Master of the Hidden Places, the "Mystery of the words of order," as the coffin of Amamu says, is to be found. This is the version, therefore, which we shall compare with the Ritual in stone, its predecessor by more than three thousand years; the very magnitude of the intervening period serving to exhibit in a more striking light the closeness of the correspondence. Nobly indeed does that stupendous monument respond to the mystic title which it bore. Surrounded by darkness as profound as that which the Almighty has made His secret place; in the midst of scenery invisible to the eye, but faithfully portraying the glories of the celestial expanse, the Grand Architect has set up the throne which the lapse of ages has had no power to impair, and has immutably inscribed in its secret places the immutable path of the just in

characters of light, embodied in the immutable motions of the heavenly orbs.

CHAPTER VI

THE INITIATION OF THE POSTULANT.

As the created light is the primary force manifested in the system of creation, so also is the Uncreate, or Self-Begotten Light (Kheper-Ra), the prime mover and creator whether of the visible or of the unseen universe. "Light Great Creator is his Name;" we read in one of the chapters added to the Egyptian Ritual at the Saite recension. And again in another ancient papyrus: "The God of the Universe is in the light above the firmament; and His symbols are upon the earth." Now it was with that divine Light, immortal, invisible, intolerable to mortal eye, the Light which none may look upon in the flesh and live, that in the ancient creed of Egypt, as in that of Christendom, the holy dead was to be at last united, person with person, and indissoluble bond. No language less universal than that of faith can enable us to express this sublime belief. For in no other creed do we find that man never loses his individuality which is yet united personally with the Deity in so intimate an unity, that in the Ritual the Osiris-soul can with difficulty be distinguished from the Osiris-Godhead. "The sun is worshipping thy face;" says Osiris in the Ritual, to the soul new born into the divine existence; that is to say, the very splendour of creation, the

source of light and life to the visible world, bows down in worship before him who has become a participator in the divinity of its creator. "He is I, I am he;" the soul responds, almost in the actual words of the Gospel.

Long and manifold was the process whereby, in the teaching of Egypt, the human nature became united with the divine—an union effected, through the God-Man Osiris, not as in the gross and distorted myths of the classic nations, by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by the interior taking of the manhood into God. Without and within, the transfiguration was complete. The soul, instantly illumined by the fulness of the Godhead, became forthwith capable of corresponding with the divine Energy. The senses, restored to incorruption, were gradually fashioned into instruments capable of expressing the soul's assimilation to that infinite power, for which the bounds of space and time exist not, but past and future alike stand open in an endless present; that transcendent freedom, wherein Act is coincident with Will, and Will commensurate with Thought. In order then that the senses may be so quickened and irradiated as to perceive the action of the Creative Mind in the exterior universe, that progress must be made by the departed in person, which, while still unreleased from subjection to the senses, the student of science makes dimly through the intellect. For whoever would understand the framework of the heavens, the structure of man's sacred dwelling place, must commence with the polestar, and tracing out the

horizon of the point of Equinox, which equally divides the light from the darkness, must apprehend how the axis of the earth is for man the prime measure of space, and the standard rule of the Depths. If he would learn the secret of living form, the ocean will be his teacher, as he passes from shore to profoundest depths and fathoms the secret places of the teeming waters. The measure of the celestial orbits will be revealed to him by the moon, as from that companion orb he watches the rotation and the revolution of our planet. To understand not merely the motion but the evolution of our globe, he must dare the place of the earth's central fire, undismayed by the cavernous glooms of the lurid abysses. And there, gazing backwards for uncounted ages, he will trace amid convulsions and cataclysms inconceivable the "Lord of Law" and the "Words of Order;" as the huge mountain chains rise higher and higher from the chaos, to prepare the surface of the globe for the dwelling-place of man. Before him next stretches the shadow of the earth, that dim and vast expanse; where the majesty of the open heaven is enshrouded in night; and he perceives how the conjunctions of eclipse are due to the same power as the orbits of illumination, and the hour of darkness is measured by the Giver of Light. That shadow traversed, a yet more awful vision, the terrible splendour of the solar fount in all its fulness, bursts upon his sight; and as he mounts the sevenfold ascent of the planetary spheres, he gazes undazzled on the stupendous jets and sprays of flame that dart on a sudden thousands and myriads of miles on high. Then far beyond in the

infinite depths of space, his eyes, now radiant "as the eyes of Athor," seek out the well-loved Sothis, the harbinger of the new dawn, the portal of the illimitable heavens, "that land of a million fortresses." And in anticipation of each successive stage of this amazing progress, this reconquest of the senses to the dominion of the reason, we may watch the course of the masonic postulant accepted by the "Master of the Secret," as he is inducted, chamber by chamber, into the Hidden Places in the Pyramid of Light.

Yet though a man understand the material forces of the universe, though he know all the phenomena of the heavens, and the composition of the most distant suns; nay, though he wield with so masterly a grasp the wand of science as to evolve at will an organic world from the atoms of the abysmal depths, all this, in the mind of Egypt, was not sufficient, even for initiation into the inner mysteries of divine realities. No mere expansion of the intellect, however pure and lofty; not even the scientific definition of absolute truth, could suffice to open the secret things of God, any more than the most exact acquaintance with the features and the proportions of the Pyramid would disclose their interior signification without the teaching of the hidden Wisdom. And hence, at the commencement of the Ritual, in the heading of the first chapter, before a word of doctrine has been revealed, we are told how it proceeds from Thoth, "The Mind and Will of God," as the inscription of Hermopolis entitles him.

Now there are three modes in which such knowledge may be communicated to those prepared to receive it; namely, by simple instruction, by distant vision, or by personal participation. Each of these modes is, it is evident, an advance upon that which precedes, a preparation for that which follows it. No man can become a participator in the Divine Nature who has never been illuminated by its contemplation. No man can contemplate the Deity who has not been instructed in Truth; nor can any receive that initiation until he be dead to the flesh. As, therefore, in the masonic induction the catechumen could ascend but a few steps in the light of common day, and passed, when the disc of the starry heaven was opened by the Master of the Secret, into the profound darkness of the Descending Passage; so too, when the great preparation of Death had been accomplished, when soul and spirit had been released from the dominion of the senses, when, by the sacred purification of embalmment, the corruptible body had put on incorruption, then "On the day of the funeral," we read, the Unseen Master commenced to instruct the catechumen in the stages which must be undergone preparatory to his initiation. And so closely does the masonic path in the Pyramid correspond with the path of the departed in the Ritual, that the traveller to-day who penetrates the recesses of the mysterious building may follow, well-nigh step by step, the mystical progress of the departed through the unseen world. For to the Egyptian of old, to have mastered the secret of the House of the Hidden Places was to have mastered the secret of the tomb. For him the

grave had no darkness, death held no terror; for he knew beforehand the starry path, wherein each step brought him nearer to the Creator-Light.

Ritual in hand, let us now take up our position once more at the foot of the exterior ascent, beneath the entrance of the star, along with the catechumen of the Secret; and with him let us forecast the time when, bereft of sense, of will, of life, he will go forth, dumb and helpless, to the mouth of the tomb, and commence "The entrance on Light" (chap. i.) while "borne to the land of the holy dead." Then, reciting chapter by chapter, as we mount step by step, we become informed, in the course of that brief but steep ascent, of the preparation which awaits him when the last glimpse of earth is hidden from his sight. Thus we learn how (ii., iii.) after death, the departed comes forth into the light of immortality, even as the sun when he sets, bursts forth in radiance on the world which is hidden from our view. Then, since the departed cannot yet bear the judgment of interior justice, he is warned beforehand (iv.) that when he has commenced the descent, he must "pass the Road above the Earth," the ascending passage concealed by the Hidden Portcullis behind the fourth exterior course. And behind that secret portal in the vignette illustrating the chapter, we descry the face of the Unseen Teacher, that countenance of which the holy dead, when initiation has begun, shall presently be strengthened to bear the distant but unveiled vision. Before that lintel can be passed, and the road above the earth be traversed, many trials, he now learns, are

waiting for him. There are tasks of justice to be fulfilled, if he omitted those good works on earth, the memorials of which may be his sponsors ("Ushabti") (v., vi.). Apep, too, the dark serpent that devours the hidden Light, as the winding darkness of the autumnal equinox devours the light of the year, lies in wait (vii.) to crush him in its multitudinous folds, while he treads the path where Light and Darkness balance. Still mounting upward, and at each step approaching nearer the grave, the catechumen is instructed how, when that serpent shall be passed, the Gate of the West (viii., ix.), the aperture of the western wall, will conduct him into the Well, or Chamber of the deep Waters, as the setting sun goes down into the deep waters of the western ocean and comes forth thence in triumph (x., xi.). Passing in silence over that which shall happen to him in the Well, since that knowledge cannot yet be imparted, the Divine Teacher directs him, when the mystery of new life is accomplished, to retrace his steps to the Passage of the Heavenly Horizon; and, after entering and coming forth from (xii., xiii.) the Chamber of Ordeal, to approach once more the Lintel of Justice. For then, and then only, can he set foot upon the threshold of justification, when "the stains have been burnt from his heart" by the raging fire (xiv.).

On the fifteenth course now high above the horizon of the earth, our eyes (two courses higher than our feet) already face the double-arched gateway defined by the pole-star, the outer entrance of the secret places revealing the path of the Horizon of Heaven. And

similarly in chapter xv. the departed comes towards the land of Eternity. "May I proceed," he continues, "as thou dost, without halt, like thy holiness, Ra, thou who hast no master, great traverser of waters, with whom millions of years are but a moment." Then, as he bends his head towards the entrance of the Pyramid and gazes on the dark passage now open within, "I proceed to heaven," he says; "I kneel among the stars." And at the conclusion of the chapter he learns the words to recite when his sun is setting, and he kneels with his hands towards the land (of the unseen), "O height of Love, thou openest the double Gate of the Horizon."

With these sublime words of thanksgiving, the instruction of the catechumen comes to a close; sufficient knowledge having been imparted to direct his course as postulant to the places of Initiation and Ordeal, until which point be passed he can look no further into the mysteries. In the following chapter (xvi.), as we ascend the last course before quitting the outer light, the divine voice is for a season hushed; and the Ritual silently offers three pictures for our contemplation. On one of these the sole object presented is the sacred Scarab, a symbol of the Eternal One, the Self-Created Being who knows no beginning and no end. On the second is the figure of the departed standing before Amen, the Hidden Deity. The third contains simply a blank stele or Egyptian form of tombstone. And that stele, as we learn from the very ancient papyrus of Unas, the "prophet of the Pyramid," was fashioned in the form of a false door

for the pyramidal entrance, the entrance, that is to say, which lies on the seventeenth course of the northward face, and which is oriented by the northern star.

In that moment of silence, the departed is alone. The friends have left him. The sun of earth, which from his earliest years has greeted him, is for ever hidden. The "Gate of the Earth" is passed (xvii.); and the Catechumen of Wisdom has been accepted as the Postulant of Immortality. Dense, utter darkness is before him; but under the direction of Anup, the guide of souls, he passes on beyond that Gate of the Ascent, where the divine Light lifts the disc of the tomb. "It is the region of his father Shu" (the Light), the Ritual continues: "he effaces his sins, he destroys his stains." Then as the departed advances through the darkness, and fearlessly commences the Descending Path, the inner Light, unseen by mortal eye, reveals itself in vision. He beholds the lower world (xvii.), the territory of Initiation, the entry of the Hidden Places, concerning which the divine Wisdom has instructed him, the place "wherein he must enter and from whence he must come forth," the transformations which he must desire to make, that he may be transformed into the likeness of God, the good works which he must do, the "throne" of the regenerate soul, and the blessed company of Osiris after the body has been laid to rest. In that same vision too he sees the whole lower world, the "Angle of Fire;" and "the Pool" or Well of Life, with its summit opening into the Double Hall of Truth (xvii.).

With the eighteenth chapter begins the "Book of Performing the Days," that is, the period of preparation for Initiation and Ordeal, the due performance of which entitles him to pass "the road above the earth" (xviii.), there to receive the Crown of Justification (xix., xx.), when his victory is assured. As he pursues the descending Passage of the Heavenly Horizon, the reconstruction of the inner man, the new creation to life immortal, slowly commences (xxi.). One by one his faculties are reawakened to spiritual life; his mouth (xxii.) is opened, that he may respond to the teaching of the divine voice; his mind and his name are restored (xxiv., xxv.); his heart (xxvi.) is given back to him, and he knows no more the icy numbness of the paralyzed affections. Gradually the new-formed body gathers force and substance; that is to say, not the natural body, which never bursts its sacred swaddling-bands till wakened in the last chapter of the Ritual and the last chamber of the building by the Grand Orient of the open tomb, but the spiritual or astral body wherewith the man, already raised in incorruption yet still awaiting the open manifestation of Osiris's resurrection, converses with the "Starry Spirits," the intelligences of the transcendent spheres. With the new life commences the attack of his spiritual enemies, now rendered palpable to his sight (xxvii.-xxxii.), the dread inhabitants of the under world, that wage in man the great battle of contending light and darkness. Sloth, the tortoise, strives to delay his steps; the asps put forth their venom; crawling reptiles infest his path. From every side the raging passions, the devouring

crocodiles which inhabit the waters of life, rush furiously to the attack; but he repels all those creatures of darkness by the astral brightness of his starry nature. "Back, Crocodile of the South," he exclaims; "I am Sothis" — the star of the Eternal Dawn. His foes, defeated by the divine protection (xxxiii.-xli.), the body raised in in-corruption (xlii.) acquires in every limb and every feature the seal of God. His hair, from which the light glows forth in streams, is as "the hair of Nu," the sacred Nile glowing with the streams of life; his countenance, shining as the sun, is radiant as the face of Ra; his eyes, glorious as are eyes of Athor, gleaming with immortal beauty; his fingers are as the Uri, the insignia of the royal power; his feet burn with the fire of the Creator-Spirit Ptah; his humanity is as the humanity of Osiris, the incarnate God. "There is not a member of him," says the Ritual, "which is not divine."

Resplendently beautiful as is the astral body assumed by the new being, he is not yet prepared for initiation; but fresh trials still await him as he approaches the granite block which obstructs the descending passage. His self-dominion, the head of his glory, may be taken from him; he may incur the second death of defilement from the creatures of darkness (xliii.-li.). But still, by the same guidance avoiding all these dangers, he comes forth as the day through the Gate of the West, to the passage which conducts him to the Well of Life; and as he passes that threshold, he is fed with the celestial food which they may not eat who are partakers of defilement (li.-lii.). "The enemies do

not eat of my body," says Osiris, in another part of the Ritual. Avoiding defilement through the strength of that food (lii., liii.) he receives the breath of Ptah (liv.-lviii.), and drawing near to the Well of Life, is granted a first draught of its refreshing streams (lix.-lxiii.). In the depths of that well, wherein, as the Sai-an-Sinsin tells us, approach is made to Osiris, shall presently take place the regeneration of the renewed man (or "Ka"), by reunion with the new-born soul amid the living waters. "I give the waters of life to every mummy," says the Goddess Nout, who presides over the waters, in the inscription on the vase of Osur-Ur (given in "Records of the Past"), "to reunite it with the soul, that it may henceforth be separated from it no more forever. The Resident of the West has established thy person amid the sages of the divine Lower Region. He giveth stability to thy body, and causeth thy soul not to distance itself from thee. He keepeth remembrance of thy person, and saveth thy body now and forever."

During this arduous preparation, while the departed passes from earth in absolute weakness to wage the prolonged conflict of light and darkness, the imperishable soul, restored to her native element, is born a second time in the Chamber of the Queen of the Pyramid, wherein was born the divine Osiris, at once her Son, her Maker, and her Spouse. "I am Yesterday," says Osiris, in the sixty-fourth chapter, said to be almost coeval with the Pyramid of Light; that is, "I am He who was before time began," since, however far back in time a day may be, yesterday was

always before it. "I am the Dawn," he continues, "the Light of the Second Birth, the Mystery of the Soul, Maker of the gods, by whom are fed the hidden ones of heaven." So in the inscription on the coffin of Anches-Ra-Neferab—that is, of her "whose life was the Sacred Heart of Ra"—we read concerning Isis, that is, she "who opens for thee the secret places by those mighty names of thine. Thy name is Infant and Old Man, Germ and Growth, Son of Heaven, who makes the road for thee according to his word. Thy name is Everlasting, Self-Begotten, the Dawn, the Day, the Evening, the Night, the Darkness. Thy name is the Moon, the Heart of Silence, the Lord of the Unseen World." And on another part of the coffin of the same holy queen, the spirits of Annu, called in the Ritual the "secret birthplace of the gods," are invoked as those "who preside over the sacred birth."

With the new birth of the soul comes also the restoration of power in its original divine image. For as in the condition which is subject to decay the corruptible senses dominate and inform the soul, so according to the theosophy of Egypt, in the condition of immortality, does the illuminate spirit inform and dominate the regenerate senses. While we are subject to the flesh, the external universe impresses itself continually upon the mind, dimming and imprisoning the original "type" or image of the Deity, which feebly struggles to express itself in the masterpieces of poet or artist. But when the soul is born into new life, it regains that Creative Image, and is endowed with the power of co-operating with the

divine Energy. For, as we learn from an exquisite chapter in the Ritual, it is the fragrance of Innocence, which perfumes the breath of the Creative Beauty. Hence, in the masonry on the eastern wall of that most secret Chamber of New Birth, we find expressed the fivefold dominion informed by the soul, new-born in the sacred type of the image of the Queen. Now thus the senses themselves become so essentially divine, that the departed pays worship to his own faculties. "I have adored Touch and Taste," he says later on; for touch and taste are the channels whereby is communicated to man the food of immortality. From that Secret Chamber, the regenerate soul comes forth glorious as the day (lxv., lxvi.), and "opening the door" (lxvii.), once so carefully concealed, comes forth in full radiance to the fields of Aahlu (lxviii.-lxxii.), the territory of illumination: to take its seat (lxxv.) upon the lower throne above the head of the Well, between the Chamber of the Orbit and the Chamber of the Shadow. "The gates of heaven open to me," he says; "the gates of earth open to me."

That solemn enthronization being witnessed by the postulant in the depths below; he remembers that the time of ordeal draws near, and after praying, as instructed beforehand, that his sin may be rubbed out, he celebrates the "festival of the soul passing to his body." But not immediately may that passage be accomplished. Raised though he be in incorruption, glowing as he is in every member with the immortal light, he cannot yet bear unveiled the overwhelming glory of the soul. Therefore, in the teaching of Egypt,

around the radiant being which in its regenerate life could assimilate itself to the glory of the Godhead, was formed the "Khaibit" or luminous atmosphere, consisting of a series of ethereal envelopes, at once shading and diffusing its flaming lustre, as the earth's atmosphere shades and diffuses the solar rays. And at each successive transformation (lxxvii.-lxxxvii.) it descended nearer to the moral conditions of humanity. From the form of the golden hawk, the semblance of the absolute divine substance, the One Eternal, Self-Existent Being, it passes to the "Lord of Time," the image of the Creator, since with the Creation time began. Presently it assumes the form of a lily, the vignette in the Ritual representing the head of Osiris enshrined in that flower; the Godhead manifested in the flesh, coming forth from immaculate purity. "I am the pure lily," we read, "coming forth from the lily of light. I am the source of illumination (the nostril of the sun) and the channel of the breath of immortal beauty (Athor). I bring the messages (of heaven), Horus (the Eternal Son) accomplishes them." Later the soul passes into the form of the Urœus, "the soul of the earth;" the serpentine path traced upon the earth irradiated by the vertical sun, as the senses are irradiated by the supreme illumination of the soul.

And finally it assumes the semblance of a crocodile; becoming subject, that is, to the passions of humanity. For the human passions, being part of the nature wherein man was originally created, are not intrinsically evil, but only become evil when

insubordinate to the soul. And thus the crocodile, which attacked the departed before new birth, is rendered divine in the regenerate form.. Therefore it was that the crocodile was held in high reverence by the Egyptians, for it spoke to them of the time when man should regain the mastery of his passions, and when the last barrier between himself and his glorious soul should be removed for ever.

Immeasurable as is the distance which thus separates the two beings which make up the perfect manhood, there is no hesitation or delay on the part of the soul. That radiant creature in its glory has not forgotten the frail companion in union with whom it dwelt during the days of its humiliation. Restored to its native purity, welcomed by the Almighty to a participation in his own energy, throned on its seat of absolute dominion, yet such is the ardour with which that soul returns the love of man, that like the Creator Himself it cannot rest satisfied with its own inexhaustible bliss; but hastens to come down from its seat of power, that it may raise and glorify expectant humanity. And thus the vignette shows us the winged creature flying towards the postulant. Meanwhile the latter, from below watching its flight, prays in an ecstasy for the reunion. "O bringer," he cries, "O runner in his hall!" — the Hall of Truth, where the throne of the soul is erected. "Great God, let my soul go where it desires (lxxxix.). O conductors of the bark of millions of years, led through the gateway, clearing the path of heaven and earth, accompany ye the souls to the holy dead."

The prayer is granted. Leaving its throne on high, and passing through its various transformations, the soul descends the ladder of the well, as in the papyrus of Ani. Then the divine protection is obtained (xci.); and, amid the living waters in the pool of the Persea, the Tree of Immortality (as the Ritual elsewhere calls it), the earnest desire of the postulant is fulfilled, and he is re-united with his living soul (xciii.); "My soul is front the beginning," he says, "from the commencement of time (reckoning of years). The eye of Horus "(the Divine Son) made for me my soul, preparing its substance. The darkness is before them; the arms of Osiris hold them. Open the path to my soul and my shadow (Khaibit) and my spirit, to see the great God within his sepulchre the day of making up the souls." If that knowledge is possessed, the Ritual adds, he enters on Light; he is not detained in the lower world.

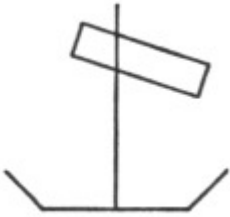
That priceless gift conceded, the postulant, though he cannot yet participate in the divine splendour until his ordeal be passed, yet can he behold it openly from afar, and enter on his initiation into the sacred mysteries. Ascending, in the strength imparted to him by his soul, the ladder of the well, he offers a prayer to the Divine Teacher (xciv.), and, "holding in his hand the Sacred Mysteries," he turns his opened eyes successively in the three directions which we saw indicated by the hieroglyph of the divine Initiator Thoth. First he gazes down "the opening where Thoth is," the Chamber of the Shadow, now no longer closed to his view, though not yet accessible to his person;

and he beholds the secret Wisdom which gives to Truth its splendour (xcv., xcvi.), the countenance of the Divine Teacher, whose voice instructed the catechumen, and whose power protected the postulant. Then, as his eyes grow clearer, he offers a prayer to Anup (xcvii.), the starry guide, who has led him thus far towards his heart's desire; and, turning towards the Chamber of the New Birth, he discerns the Bark of Ra (xcviii.-cii.), the vessel of God, foretold to him before his entry on the path by the Divine Teacher—the vessel which shall bear him safely across the Deep Waters. Even while he looks, the whole interior of the building is lit with a sudden glow; and the masonry, portraying each portion of the sacred vessel, reveals their mystical significance, which the Initiate must know before permission can be granted to embark. Within the Inner House the vast granite Triangle dominating the secret heights assumes for him the form of an "Anchor," with its central axis indicated, but not delineated, by the equality of the members: as we saw the central mystery of the Supreme Secret, the Unity of the divine Substance to be indicated but not defined by the equality of the Persons in the Egyptian Trinity. And that "anchor" firmly fixed, not in the depths below, but in the heights above the open sarkophagus, speaks to him of Osiris, "the



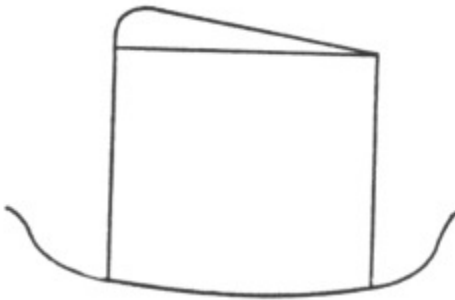
The Anchor and the Coffin of the Lord of Earth.
(Sarkophagus and highest chamber.)

Lord of the earth in his coffin;" the vision which awhile ago he prayed that he might behold on the Great Day of Reckoning. At the head of the Grand Gallery is the "seat" of the "Dweller in Space:" the radiant throne at the top of the long incline to which the Initiate now lifts his eyes. Right through the midst of the throne rises unseen the Axis of the Great House, the Central Ray of the Grand Light of Egypt, like a huge but impalpable mast towering from foundation to summit of the vessel of Light. That axis passes through the Chamber of New Birth below, and separates the Outer from the Inner House which lies beyond the throne, as the central but impalpable truth of Death separates the glory which now is from the glory which lies beyond. And in the truth of Death, to the Egyptian the "Completion-Beginning" of the New Birth, the Initiate discerns "the great bringer and taker away," as the Ritual calls the mast of the vessel of Ra. Aloft upon the same axis, above the solar throne, the roof of the lustrous chamber, with its starry rays, images to him whose eyes are opened, the "Sail of the Firmament," which, by its starry grandeur,



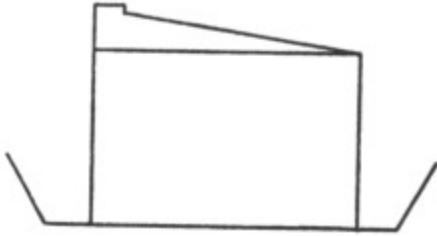
The Sail of the Firmament.

draws the soul irresistibly to God. The Well reflects to him the "Paddle" shining in the invisible waters, as the image of the Creator shines invisibly in the Waters of Life: the "Planks," the rungs of the ladder whereby the soul came down to visit him, each guarded by a spirit of celestial intelligence. In the subterranean chamber he discerns the "hold" of "darkness," and in the Chamber of New Birth the Cabin, or Secret Place of the Divine Vessel. A remarkable instance of pyramidal allusion is supplied by the form of the cabin. For the roof proper was surmounted by another roof of the singular and apparently unmeaning shape given in the text. But if above the Chamber of New Birth we indicate the throne of Ra, which immediately surmounts it, we shall have



The Cabin.

the shape in question; so that the form implies the enthronization of the Uncreated Light upon the Mystery of the Divine Mother, Isis.



Chamber of New Birth, surmounted by Throne.

Upon that bark of safety take place both his present Initiation and the Illumination which is to come; and each of these ascents finds its appropriate expression in the masonry, the one in the place of New Birth, the other in the Chamber of the Splendour. And in the vignettes of the Ritual, we see the vessel bearing upon it at one time a fivefold, at another a sevenfold staircase; the fivefold dominion of the regenerate senses, and the sevenfold elevation of the illuminate intellect.

Yet one more vision opens out to the Initiate. As he raises his eyes more upward yet to the extreme height of the Chamber of the Splendour, far removed from the head of the well, yet forming part of the same divine structure, he discerns the "opening where Athor is" (ciii.), the azure depths of ethereal loveliness leading to the secret heights above the Chamber of Grand Orient. For a moment he gazes in silent rapture on the far-off opening of the unimaginable vision, and

then calls to his aid "the Opener of the Great Sanctuary" (cv., cvi.). "Oh, assistant—oh, assistant!" he exclaims; "I am among the servants of Immortal Beauty!"

Fortified then by that enduring remembrance, he turns from the scene of future illumination, and descends towards the place of impending trial. Around him stand revealed the "Gods of the Western Gate" (cvii.), the Western opening to the Well of Life, where dwell the spirits who came unseen to his assistance at the hour when the sun of earthly life went down into the West. From the "Chamber of the Waters of Heaven" flows down the torrent of the "Celestial Nile" (cx.), and mingles at his side with the stream from the "Chamber of the Birthplace of the Gods"—that stream which waters the fields of Aahlu, the home of the regenerate. And high above, far as his quickened eyes can pierce, are assembled the bright companies of starry spirits from every quarter (cxi.–cxiv.) to assist at his victory, his judgment, and his coronation. In the memory of that unfading vision, and the strength of those protecting spirits, the Initiate enters and comes forth (cxvi.) from the subterranean Chamber of the Fiery Ordeal.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ILLUMINATION OF THE ADEPT.

INITIATION achieved, and Ordeal undergone, the character both of building and of Ritual seem to undergo a transformation. Not that the air of mystery

is in any way lessened, rather it deepens if possible, as we penetrate into the more secret parts. But the period of weakness and of expectancy once passed, a sense of power and triumph grows more and more distinctly perceptible as we enter the secret places of absolute "Truth." Turning back with the Initiate, now become the Adept from the "Meskwa" or Place of Ordeal, we retrace our steps upwards, under the direction of the celestial guide, who conducts us to the "Gate on the Hill" (cxvii.); the lintel hidden in the roof far up along the Passage of the Star. In remounting the ascent the adept once more "enters and comes forth" (cxx.) from the Gateway of the Well, that he may again receive strength for the coming judgment. And as he approaches the hidden portcullis, which now he is called upon to pass, where sits in person the Eternal Wisdom, he recites for himself (cxxi.) the unforgotten words wherein the Divine Teacher warned him of the hour now drawing near of entering into (xiii.) judgment and of issuing from thence. Arrived at the hidden portcullis (cxxii., cxxiii.), carefully concealed within the roof, that arduous "Gateway reserved for the Gods," the divine Osiris-souls, the gateway which none can enter, except "after coming out" from the place of initiation, obstruction meets him at every step. Alike in the Ritual, and in the building, each portion of that most mysterious gateway, the secret of whose masonry still remains undisclosed, refuses entrance to the upward path except to the adept. "'I will not let thee go over me,'" says the sill, "'unless you tell me my name.'" The weight in the right place is thy name," is the

profound reply of the adept. For, as the raising of the portcullis depends upon the true adjustment of the weight, so also is justice the virtue without which the path on high remains for ever closed. "I will not let thee pass me," says the Left Lintel—so continues this strange dialogue—"unless you tell me my name." 'Return of the true is thy name.' 'I will not let thee pass me,' says the Right Lintel, "unless you tell me my name." 'Return of judged hearts is thy name.'" For without truth, and without self-judgment, no step can be taken of progress in the Path of Truth (cxxv.). With that doctrine we may compare the "Golden Words" of Pythagoras, himself a pupil of the priests of Egypt—

"Do innocence; take heed before thou act;
Nor let soft sleep upon thy eyelids fall,
E'er the day's actions thou hast three times
scanned,

What have I done, where erred, what left
unwrought?

Go through the whole account, and if the sum
Be evil, chide thee; but if good, rejoice.
This do, this meditate, this ever love,
And it shall guide thee into virtue's path."

But to him who has learned of wisdom, however long, however arduous the search, the entrance into Truth cannot finally be denied. The Hidden Lintel is crossed; and the memory of that passage is forever kept sacred by the grateful departed. "I have come through the Hidden Lintel," he cries triumphantly, later on, "I have come like the sun through the gate of

the festival." The lintel crossed, the Person of the Divine Teacher is disclosed, having before him the true Balance of Light and Darkness (cxxv.). The "secret faces at the gate" unveil themselves; and the adept stands within the Double Hall of Truth—of Truth in Death and Truth in Life, of Truth in Justice and Truth in Mercy, of Truth in Darkness and Truth in Splendour. Then, as he surmounts each obstacle besetting the entrance to the path which leads on high, and achieves the triumph over Death, he beholds the long array of the Judges of the Dead, the celestial powers who take account of the moral actions of mankind, each supreme in his own province of the holy land; and to each in turn the adept, whose stains have been washed from his heart in the furnace of the ordeal, pleads his innocence of the sin of which that power is the special avenger. Very terrible are the images under which those heart-searching spirits are presented—terrible as the moral effects of our own transgression, when viewed by the inner light of Truth. "The Eyes of Fire," the passion which shrivels the intellect; the "Face of Smoke," the pride that clouds the judgment; the "Crackler of Bones," the sin which corrodes the entire manhood, these and such as these are the fearful insignia of the supernal powers. Most terrible of all is the spirit "whose mouth is twisted when he speaks, because his face is behind him," the spirit of conscience, which keeps its dread eyes inexorably on our past, and speaks to us with mouth contorted in the agony of self-condemnation—like the cry of the penitent,

which echoes as bitterly now as when uttered three thousand years ago, "My sin is ever before me."

Undeterred by that august tribunal, which as we learn at the threshold, none can endure but he who has truly judged himself, the departed, protected by the Divine Guardian, ascends the Passage of the Shadow where the light is eclipsed, and achieves through Truth his victory over Death. Gradually, as he draws near the low but unobstructed gateway, the glow of the splendour begins to appear; and he sees before him the Sacred Orbit of the circling earth defined by the four burning points of Solstice and Equinox, like a basin of fire surrounded by four jets of flame (cxxvi.). In front of each of those cardinal points of the heaven, are seated four divine spirits having the assemblance of an ape, the form nearest akin to humanity. To those four universal guardians and heralds of truth, the justified prays, that he may be purified yet further from his transgressions. "O ye," he says, "who send forth truth to the universal Lord, nurtured without fraud, who abominate wickedness, extract all the evil from me. Obliterate my faults and annihilate my sins." "Thou mayest go," is the gracious reply of the four heavenly teachers; "we obliterate all thy faults, we annihilate all thy sins." In this manner, as the Ritual declares, is separation of his sins effected "after he has seen the faces of the Gods." From henceforth death has no more power over him, and in rapture he returns thanksgiving to the supreme judges, the Gods of the Orbit, towards whom he now advances, and to Osiris on his throne (cxxvii., cxxviii.).

As he stands at the entrance of the upper chamber, where the slight projection of the lower floor bears witness to the passage from death to life, the divine voice, which has been silent till its first lesson is exhausted, recommences his illumination, and he is "instructed" (cxxix.) how "to stand at the Bark of Ra"—no longer in the lower portion of the vessel, but free of every part. Obedient to the divine command, he passes the "Gate of the Gateway" (cxxx.), and celebrates the Birthday of Osiris, the Opening of the Eternal Year. Then, as he advances a step and stands within the hall upon the slight projection, he beholds the whole building before him, the vast universe of space, in its immeasurable grandeur, now free to his immaculate spirit. And as at the Lintel of Justice all is barred, so here every part lies open. "The heaven opens," we read (cxxx.)—the Chamber of the Splendour with its seven-fold rays around the solar throne; "the earth opens," the Chamber of the Shadow; "the North opens" to the Chamber of the Pole-star; "the South opens" to the Chamber of Grand Orient; "the West opens" to the Entrance of the Well; "the East opens" to the Chamber of New Birth, with its Eastern ascent of the regenerate senses;" the Northern and Southern Chapels open," the Ante-chamber and the Place of Grand Orient, the Northern and Southern chapels of the inner house. Here, too, is the "crossing of the pure roads of life," of which the coffin of Amamu speaks. Behind are "the roads of darkness," which the departed in the Ritual once prayed so earnestly that he might pass. In front lie the fields of Aahlu, the blessed country where the

justified executes the works which he is privileged to do for Osiris.

A burst of triumph greets the justified, when having accomplished the Passage of the Sun, he enters the Chamber of the Orbit, the Hall of Illumination. "The deceased," we read, "passes through the Gate of the Gateway. Prepare ye his hall when he comes. Justify his words against the accusers. There is given to him the food of the gods of the Gate. There has been made for him the crown which belongs to him as the dweller in the Secret Place." In another place the justified himself exclaims, "I have opened the gate of heaven and earth" (at the junction of the Halls of the Orbit and of the Shadow). "The soul of Osiris rests there. I cross through the halls. No defect or evil is found in me." And once more the deceased prays that he may pass this hall. "Place me before thee, O Lord of Eternity. Hail, Dweller of the West, good Being, Lord of Abydos. Let me pass the roads of darkness; let me follow thy servants in the gate."

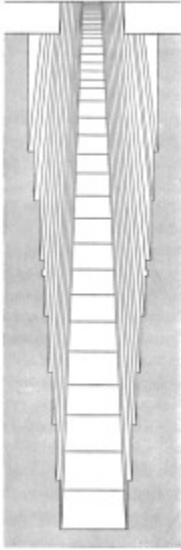
A similar note of exultation marks the passage in the Sai-an-Sinsin, where we read of the great tribunal and the House of Light. "Thou comest into the House of God with much purity," exclaim the mourners, addressing the departed. "The gods have abundantly purified thee in the great tribunal. Thou art not shut out of heaven; thy body is renewed in the presence of Osiris. Thou hast not been shut out from the House of Glory. Thou seest the Path of Beauty, completing every transformation which thou desirest." And the

ancient coffin of Amamu bore on the outside this inscription, full of desire and hope: "An act of homage to Anup, who passes the deceased over the distant paths, the fairest of the Karneter"—that is, the land of the holy dead. "Thine eyes," say our own sacred writings, "shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off."

The gateway passed (cxxx.), the divine voice resumes its instruction; and teaches him of "going to the heaven where Osiris is;" of being "received into the Sacred Heart of Ra," the fount of life (cxxx. i.-cxxx. iii.), of "the adoration which he must render," of the vessel of eternity in which the holy souls for ever move, of the rejoicings of heaven (cxxx. iv.-cxxx. vi.) in the manifestations of the Godhead to man, and of the names and places wherein those manifestations are made (cxli.-cxlii. i.).

And now the justified stands within the full glory of the orbit, and looks forth, not with the vision of mortal seer, but as the deathless spirits who encircle the throne. While he stands gazing, splendour after splendour, revelation beyond revelation, bursts upon his sight. Down from the radiant throne, along the floor, along the walls, along the roof, streams, floods, rivers of light come sweeping on like the torrent of the summer rays, like the inundation of the overwhelming Nile. But the justified breathes freely the air of opened heaven. His senses "for ever vivified," pierce through the utmost bounds of space; his quickened intellect grasps each starry law and

harmony; his purified spirit, undazzled by the blinding radiance, discerns the Hidden Love that occupies the throne. No longer as a stranger, or at a distance, but as a prince



The Gate of the Burning Crown.

admitted to the highest honour of the court, the justified takes his place in the very line of direct approach; while around and above him, the measureless expanse is filled with rank beyond rank of spirit-ministers. "He has passed his billions," we read, "the circle of flaming ministers is around him. His blessings follow him. 'Come,' says Truth; and he approaches her Lord."

At that gracious word of Truth, the abysses of mystery reveal their most secret depths. First, the Chamber of the Shadow is lit by the irradiating

brightness; and the Illuminate discerns the nature of sin viewed in the light of truth. The Seven Halls of Death (cxliv.), each measured by its cycle of eclipse, lie open to him who has looked upon the face of God; and each name of mystery betrays the form of darkness. "Babbling" Malice, that delights in "overthrow;" "Fire-faced" Anger, "leaping on a sudden to the front;" Envy, the "Eater of Dirt;" Hatred, silent and "vigilant;" Lust, "the consumer, the overthrower in a moment," that "lives off reptiles;" Pride, with its "face of stone;" Sloth, that hardens irretrievably the heart, the "final stopper of the rejected;" all these betray their nature to him over whom death has power no longer. And he discerns (as in the vignette) the seven avenging spirits, each armed with the two swords of physical and spiritual destruction.

Mounting then the steep ascent, he beholds the mystery of judgment disclose itself in successive stages as the twenty-one Gates of Aahlu—their spaces measured by the years of Light, as it speeds from Sothis, the gates which open only to "the meek-hearted" (cxlvi.) unfold before him. At each of the first ten portals flows a celestial stream of sparkling waters, which shed their undying lustre over the person of the Illuminate. Ascending still towards the throne of Ra, at the nineteenth portal he is clothed with robes of power; and at "the Gate of the Burning Crown," he stands beneath the Royal Arch of the Planetary Spheres. Immediately beyond is the "Stone of God," where he receives from the Divine Occupant a "Crown of Illumination," the "Atf"-crown of Egypt,

fashioned after the zodiacal light of highest heaven. And behind the throne rises the final "Gate of Peace" with its seven crowns of joy.

But not as yet can the Illuminate attain the infinite serenity which lies beyond that gate. Death and judgment are not the only secrets to be disclosed when the eye of faith becomes the eye of sight. The place of the divine birth, the chamber in the "Fields of Aahlu," must be visited before the Illuminate become the Master of the secret. And as he passes portal after portal of the fields (cxlvi.), he recites the titles of her whose habitation he now approaches: the "Mistress of Holy Awe," the "Mistress of Heaven," the "Regent of the Earth," the "Help of the Meek-hearted," the "Mistress of Prayer," the "Light of the Secret River." Then, having learnt the majesty of its queen, he scans the sevenfold arch, the Mystery of the Transcendent Heaven (cxlvi.); to hold converse with the seven Supreme Intelligences who overarch the Splendour of Creation.

Yet once again must the Depths be sounded, and the Secret Places be traversed, before the Illuminate can pass as master through the Gate of Peace. One secret of death still remains, most terrible and most inscrutable of all. While we are yet imperfect, we can gain some knowledge of the effect of moral death upon ourselves, and even form a faint adumbration of its nature when viewed in the light of absolute truth. But the mystery of its divine permission who can penetrate? If the Omnipotent be all good, why did He

ever allow of evil? If He be all-merciful, why does He permit His creatures to suffer? How can our actions be justly "balanced" (cli.) when the forces which produced them were not of our own creation? Why are we to be made parties to the battle of light and darkness, when no choice was given whether we would exist or not? Why are the souls of just men secretly snared and overthrown? Whence comes the "foul flux" which is purged from man, and which causes all living creatures to shudder? Such questions as these we ask, and ask in vain. Yet if that darkest shadow, that horror which forms the depth of human agony, the enshrouding of the Eternal Justice in the blackness of utter eclipse, is still liable to arise and overpower the soul, how can man ever repose in safety; and what revelation or degree of glory will suffice to bring him peace? But that it too is destined to pass away in light, when the secrets are revealed, and illumination is transformed into union, who can doubt? So at least we read in the creed of Ancient Egypt; where, when the other mysteries of death and of judgment have been disclosed to the Illuminate; when he has entered into the secrets of the new birth, and conversed with the Supreme Intelligences who "watch before the tomb of Osiris;" when time exists for him no more, and he understands the design of the Eternal House, from foundation to consummation, he makes a final circuit of its Secret Places. Clothed in power, and crowned with light, he traverses the "Abodes" (cli.) or scenes of his former weakness; there to discern, by his own enlightened perception, how it is "Osiris who satisfies the balance

of him who rules the heavens;" to exert in its supernal freedom his creative will, now the lord, not the slave, of the senses; and to rejoice in the just suffering which wrought his illumination and emancipation.

Finally, when that grand progress through the Habitations of Humanity has been completed, the Master returns in majesty to the

celestial company assembled in the Grand Lodge of the solar throne. Mounting beneath the Royal Arch of the Burning Crown, he treads the Stone of God itself, and passes through the Gate of Peace, with its seven crowns and titles of Victory. Then, outstripping in his flight the power of mortal thought, he passes beyond the shining orbit of the earth, beyond the vast expanse of solar glory, across the awful chasms of the unfathomable depths, to far-off Sothis, the land of Eternal Dawn, the ante-chamber of the infinite morning. He "has his star established to him in Sothis," says the Ritual. And here the Illuminate, now become a Master, is instructed in the last mysteries which precede the universal glory; the mysteries of the divine sorrow, the "tears of Isis" (clii.), whence comes the source of the celestial Nile, the fount of illumination to man. Here he passes within the triple veil, and is invested with the imperishable jewels of supernal lustre (cliii.-clxi.).

One chapter and one chamber yet remain—the chapter of Orientation, and the Chamber of Grand Orient beneath the Secret Places of the Most High. "Awake, awake, Osiris?" so sing the mourners to the

beloved departed, now glorious in the House of Light, and united indissolubly with the divine Being; "awake? see what thy son Horus hath done for thee. See what thy father Seb hath done for thee. Raised is the Osiris." "I have opened the doors," replies the Osiris-soul, "I have opened the doors. . . . Well is the Great One who is in the Coffin. For all the dead shall have passages made to him through their embalming," when their body in the flesh shall be raised in incorruption. Again and again is celebrated the Mystery of the Open Tomb. As the eclipsing planet which moves nearest to the sun crawls like a tortoise across the face of that orb, defacing it for a moment by its own darkness, and then is swallowed in the radiance, so also death, that dark spot which crawls across the vision of the eternal splendour, is swallowed in the resurrection of Osiris-Ra, the Uncreated Light. Four times is that Gospel of ancient Egypt proclaimed in the chapter which bears the title of the Orient. "The tortoise dies; Ra lives!" Death is swallowed in Light; God lives for evermore. "O Amen, Amen," so continues that chapter of mystery, "Amen, who art in heaven, give thy face to the body of thy Son. Make him well in Hades. It is finished."

Thus ends the strange and solemn dirge of ancient Egypt. Once perceived, the intimate connection between the secret doctrine of Egypt's most venerated books and the secret significance of her most venerable monument seems impossible to dis sever, and each form illustrates and interpenetrates the other. As we peruse the dark utterances and

recognize the mystic allusions of the Book, we seem to stand amid the profound darkness enwrapping the whole interior of the building. All around are assembled the spirits and the powers that make the mystery of the unseen world: the "Secret Faces at the Gate," the "Gods of the Horizon and of the Orbit." And dimly before our eyes, age after age, the sacred procession of the Egyptian dead moves silently along, as they pass through the "Gate of the Hill" to the tribunal of Osiris. In vain do we attempt to trace their footsteps till we enter with them into the Hidden Places, and penetrate the secret of the House of Light. But no sooner do we approach the passage and tread the chambers of the mysterious Pyramid, than the teaching of the Sacred Books seems lit up as with a tongue of flame. The luminous veil itself melts slowly away, disclosing the Path of Illumination and the Splendours of the Orbit; the celestial Powers and Intelligences shine forth from beneath their enshrouding symbols; the spirits of the just grow lustrous with the rays that proceed from the tribunal. For though none may look upon these things unveiled till the Guardian of the Starry Gate has opened for him the Portal of the Light, yet for the adept, who has been mystically initiated in the deep waters, and illuminated by the sevenfold Beauty, the invisible things become manifest by the visible creation. And a Light which is not of earth reveals in its divine unity the full secret of the Hidden Places; the Entrance to the Path of Heaven; the Well of Life, the Place of New Birth, the Ordeal of Fire, the Lintel of Justice, the Victory over Death, the Judgment of

Truth, the Splendour of Illumination, the Throne of Radiance, the Veil of Perfection, and the Grand Orient of the Open Tomb, beneath secret chambers of the Height, crowned by the Grand Arch of the Supreme Trinity.

Thus only according to that primeval creed could man fulfil his marvellous destiny; and thus only can that destiny accomplish his heart's desire. No skill in the secrets of the material universe, no dominion over the forces of life and death, no power to pierce the veil which hangs before the unseen world and to hold communion with the spiritual intelligences, will satisfy his secret aspirations. For the soul of man—so every form of creed declares—can know no rest, nor can his spirit ever be satisfied, so long as the thinnest film remains to interrupt the unclouded vision of the Hidden Love; until he stand face to face, and eye to eye with "Him who knows the Depths."

We quit that solemn monument of primeval mystery; and as we turn a farewell glance upon the Gate of Heaven, the veil of the majestic masonry once more hides from view the interior splendour, and enwraps the Secret Places of the Hidden God.



Zoroastrian Mystical Theology

In Conversation with Charles William King



Zarathustra

The Gnostics and Their Remains

By Charles William King, 1887

II. THE MITHRAIC SACRAMENTS.

The principal rites of the worship of Mithras bore a very curious resemblance to those subsequently established in the Catholic church; they likewise furnished a model for the initiatory ceremonies observed by the secret societies of the Middle Ages, and by their professed descendants in modern times. The Neophytes were admitted by the rite of *Baptism*; the initiated at their assemblies solemnly celebrated a species of *Eucharist*: whilst the courage and endurance of the candidate for admission into the sect were tested by *twelve* consecutive trials, called "The Tortures," undergone within a cave constructed for the purpose; all which "tortures" had to be completely passed through before participation in the Mysteries was granted to the aspirant.

The two distinguishing Rites, or "Sacraments" (to use the technical term) are thus alluded to by Justin Martyr (*Apol.* II) in the earliest description which has been left us of their character. "The Apostles in the Commentaries written by themselves, which we call *Gospels*, have delivered down to us that Jesus thus

commanded them: He having taken bread, after that He had given *thanks*, said: Do this in commemoration of me; this is my body. Also having taken a cup and returned thanks, He said: This is my blood, and delivered it unto them alone. Which things indeed the evil spirits have taught to be done, out of memory, in the Mysteries and Initiations of Mithras. For in these likewise a cup of water, and bread, are set out, with the addition of certain words, in the sacrifice or act of worship of the person about to be initiated: a thing which Ye either know by personal experience or may learn by inquiry." Again, Tertullian, writing in the following century, has in the same connection: "The Devil, whose business it is to pervert the truth, *mimicks the exact circumstances* of the Divine Sacraments, in the Mysteries of idols. He himself *baptises* some that is to say, his believers and followers; he promises forgiveness of sins from the *Sacred Fount*, and thereby initiates them into the religion of Mithras: thus he *marks on the forehead* his own soldiers: there he celebrates the *oblation of bread*: he brings in the symbol of the Resurrection, and wins the crown with the sword." By the "symbol of the Resurrection" Tertullian clearly means that "simulation of death" mentioned by Lampridius (of which more hereafter), and which is typified on so many talismans by the corpse bestridden by the Solar Lion. The final ceremony he has himself explained in another passage: "Blush, my Roman fellow-soldiers, even though ye be not to be judged by Christ, but by any 'Soldier of Mithras,' who when he is undergoing initiation in the *Cave*, in the very Camp of the Powers

of Darkness, when the *crown* (garland, rather) is offered to him (a sword being placed between, as though in semblance of martyrdom), and about to be set upon his head, is instructed to put forth his hand, and push the crown away, transferring it perchance, to his shoulder, saying at the same time: My crown is Mithras. And from that time forth he never wears a crown (garland), and this he has for the badge of his initiation, for he is immediately known to be a 'soldier of Mithras,' if he rejects a garland when offered to him, saying that his crown is his god. Let us therefore acknowledge the craftiness of the Devil; who copies certain things of these that be Divine, in order that he may confound and judge us by the faithfulness of his own followers." As to the ceremony here mentioned, unimportant as it may seem to the modern reader, it may be remarked that as the wearing a garland was indispensable among the ancients on all festive occasions, the refusal of one upon such occasions would be a most conspicuous mark of singularity, and of unflinching profession of faith. But every dispassionate observer will perceive that these over-zealous Fathers proceed to beg the question when they assume that the Mithraic rites were devised as *counterfeits* of the Christian Sacraments: inasmuch as the former were in existence long before the first promulgation of Christianity; unless indeed to *imitate* by anticipation be considered as merely another proof of the mischievous sagacity of its diabolical opponent. On the other hand, there is good reason to suspect that the simple commemorative, or distinctive, ceremonies, instituted by the first founder of

Christianity, were gradually invested with those mystic and supernatural virtues which later ages insisted upon as articles of faith, by the teaching of unscrupulous missionaries, anxious to outbid the attractions of long-established rites of an apparently cognate character. By this assimilation they offered to their converts through the performance of, as it were, certain magical practices, all those spiritual blessings of which the rites themselves were, at their institution, the *symbols* only, not the instruments. A very instructive illustration of such union of Mithraicism and Christianity, in the celebration of the Eucharist, is afforded by the Pistis-Sophia's description of the great one celebrated by the Saviour himself upon the shore of the Sea of Galilee, which will be found given at length in its proper place. And lastly, it deserves to be mentioned that "eating the flesh and drinking the blood" of a human sacrifice was far from being a mere figure of speech in certain of these mystic celebrations. Pliny gives high praise to Claudius for having suppressed the worship of the Druids (whom he considers as identical in their religion with the Magi), in whose rites "it was esteemed the highest act of religion to slaughter a man, and the most salutary of proceedings to eat the flesh of the same." And in this notion, which necessarily became attached by suspicion to the proceedings of all secret societies, lay most probably the root of the belief so widely diffused amongst the Roman vulgar, that the real Eucharist of the first Christians at their nocturnal meetings was the sacrifice, and the feasting upon, a new-born child,

concealed within a vessel of flour, into which the catechumen was directed by his sponsors to plunge a knife.

In the particulars preserved to us of the Mithraic Sacrament, certain very curious analogies to those of the Christian rite cannot fail to arrest our attention. The "Bread therein used was a round cake," emblem of the solar disk, and called *Mizd*. In this name Seel discovers the origin of *Missa*, as designating the Bloodless Sacrifice of the Mass, assuming that this *Mizd* was the prototype of the Host (*hostia*), which is of precisely the same form and dimensions.

It is not out of place to notice here the various etymologies which have been proposed for the word *Missa*. The most popular one, which moreover has the sanction of Ducange, derives it from the words "Ite, missa est," with which the priest dismissed the *non-communicant* part of the congregation, before proceeding to the actual consecration of the Eucharist. The translation of the phrase by the vulgar into "Depart, it is the Missa," would certainly be obvious enough. But, according to the rule in all such cases, the *object* sacrificed gives its name to the ceremony, rather than a phrase from the ceremonial itself, and this object had from time immemorial gone by the name of *hostia*, or "victim." The early Christians were quite as partial as the Gnostics to the naturalizing of the Hebrew terms belonging to the Mosaic ordinances, and applying the same to their own

practices. Thus the old Covenant went amongst them by the name of *Phase*, for example:--

"In hoc festo novi Regis,
Novum *Pascha* novæ legis
Vetus *Phase* terminat."

The Rabbins have possibly preserved a tradition that explains the true origin of the wafer. Alphonsus de Spira, in his "*Fortalitium Fidei*" (II. 2), asserts that its circular form is a symbol of the sun, and that it is in reality offered in sacrifice, at the celebration of the Mass, to the genius of that luminary! For the Kabbalists hold that Moses and the prophets were inspired by the genius of Saturn, a good and pure spirit, whereas Jesus was by that of Mercury, a malevolent one; and the Christian religion was the work of Mercury, Jupiter and the Sun, all combining together for that purpose. There is yet another curious analogy to be noticed, when it is remembered that the Mass symbolises the *death* of its first institutor. A *round* cake (the *chupatty* of such evil notoriety at the commencement of the Sepoy Mutiny) is, amongst the Hindoos, the established offering to the Manes of their ancestors. The Christian "breaking of bread," besides symbolising the great sacrifice once offered, seems, from the account of the Manifestation at Emmaus, to have been done in some peculiar way which should serve for a *masonic* token, or means of mutual recognition amongst the brethren.

The sacramental Cup, or *chalice*, is often represented as set upon the Mithraic altar, or rather, *table*; and a

curious piece of jugglery connected with its employment (though not amongst the Mithraicists), is described by Epiphanies (Hæres. xxxiv.). The followers of Marcus, in their celebrating the Eucharist, employed *three* vases made of the clearest glass. These were filled with wine which, during the progress of the ceremony, changed into a blood-red, purple, and blue colour, respectively. "Thereupon the officiating minister, or more properly speaking, *magician*, hands one of these vessels to some lady of the congregation, and requests her to bless it. Which done, he pours this into another vase of much greater capacity, with the prayer, "May the grace of God, which is above all, inconceivable, inexplicable, fill thine inner man, and increase the knowledge of Himself within thee, sowing the grain of mustard-seed in good ground!" Whereupon the liquid in the larger vase swells and swells until it runs over the brim.

The worship of Mithras long kept its ground under the Christian emperors in the capital itself, and doubtless survived its overthrow there for many generations longer in the remote and then semi-independent provinces. At the very close of the fourth century, Jerome, writing to Læta, says, "A *few* years ago, did not your kinsman Gracchus, a name the very echo of patrician nobility, when holding the office of Prefect of the City, break down and burn the Cave of Mithras, with all the monstrous images which pervade the initiatory rites, as Corax, Niphus, the Soldier, the Lion, the Persian, Helios, and Father Bromius?"

In the imagery here alluded to, it is easy to recognise figures that perpetually occur upon the still extant representations of the Mithras worship. In *Corax*, the Raven; in *Niphus*, Cneph the serpent; the *armed man*; the *Lion* bestriding the human victim; the youth in *Persian* garb; the *Sun*, expressed either by Phoebus in his car, or by the star with eight rays; and *Bromius* "the Roarer," appropriate title of the Grecian Dionysos; who also appears as the Asiatic *Phanaces*, a youth holding a torch in each hand, one elevated and one depressed to signify his rising and setting. Chiflet's gem (Fig. 62) may on good grounds be taken for a picture of the Mithraic ritual, and upon it all the forementioned figures and symbols are easily to be discovered. Two erect serpents form a kind of frame to the whole tableau; at the top of which are seen the heads of Sol and Luna confronted; between them stands an eagle with outspread wings; at the back of each, a raven. In the field are two naked, crowned men on horseback, trampling upon as many dead bodies; between them a kneeling figure in supplicatory attitude, over whose head are two stars. Behind each horseman stand two soldiers. In the exergue is set out a table supporting a loaf, a fawn (sacred to Bacchus), a chalice, and something indistinct, but probably meant for the *crown* Tertullian speaks of. The reverse presents a more simple design: two crested serpents (*dracones*), twined about wands, and looking into a cup; two stars over a table resting upon a larger vase; and on each side a bow, the ends of which finish in serpents' heads.

In this composition we probably see portrayed certain amongst the tests of the neophyte's courage, which, according to Suidas, were termed the "Twelve Degrees" or "Tortures." These corresponded in nature, although of vastly more severe reality, with those trials of courage to which our Masonic Lodges subject the "apprentice" who seeks admission amongst them. During the Mithraic probation, which lasted *forty* days, the candidate was tested by the Four Elements, he lay naked a certain number of nights upon the snow, and afterwards was scourged for the space of two days. These Twelve Tortures are sculptured upon the border of the famous Mithraic tablets preserved in the Innsbruck Museum, and a brief account of their several stages will serve to elucidate much of what remains to be discussed. I. Man standing and about to plunge a dagger into the throat of a kneeling figure, who holds up his hands in supplication. (This scene appears analogous to the one in the modern ceremonial, when the candidate, ordered to remove the bandage from his eyes, beholds many swords pointed in the most threatening manner at his naked breast.) II. Naked man lying on the earth, his head resting on his hand, in the posture of repose. (Probably the penance of the bed of snow.) III. The same figure, standing with hands uplifted in a huge crescent (perhaps an *ark*, and representing the trial by water. To this last, Plato is reported to have been subjected during his initiation in Egypt, and to have but narrowly escaped drowning). IV. The same, but now with the *pileus*, cap of liberty, upon his head, rushing boldly into a great fire (the trial by fire). V.

He is now seen struggling through a deep stream, and endeavouring to grasp a rock. VI. Bull walking to the left.

On the other side come the remaining stages. VII. Four guests reclining at a horseshoe table (*sigma*), upon which is set a boar roasted whole. VIII. Youth guided up a flight of interminable steps by an aged man. IX. Youth kneeling before a man in a long robe, whose hand he grasps in prayer. X. The same figures, but their positions are interchanged. XI. Seated man, before whom kneels a naked, crowned, youth, escorted by one in a long robe. XII. Naked man holding up the hind legs of a cow, so as to receive in his face the stream still regarded by the Hindoos as the most efficient laver of regeneration, and consequently always administered to persons at their last gasp. The same sacred fluid (as I am informed by a Parsee) is used in the sacramental cups drunk by every male upon his first admission into that religion, which takes place on his completing his seventh year. Nay more, such is the belief in its cleansing virtue, that scrupulous Parsees always carry a bottle thereof in their pocket, wherewith to purify their hands after any unavoidable contact with unbelievers!

Very similar ceremonies to these were practised in the secret societies of the Middle Ages, if we choose to accept Von Hammer's interpretation of certain mysterious sculptures, still to be seen in the Templar-churches of Germany; and which he has copiously illustrated in his 'Mysterium Baphometis revelatum.'

In the intaglio already described, the kneeling neophyte is encompassed by all the terrific and mysterious host of Mithras, so remorselessly destroyed by the zealous Gracchus. And again, the corpses trampled on by the crowned horsemen clearly refer to that recorded test of the candidate's fortitude--the apparent approach of death--for Lampridius puts down amongst the other mad freaks of Commodus, that during the Mithraic ceremonies, "when a certain thing had to be done for the purpose of inspiring terror, he polluted the rites by a *real murder*:" an expression clearly showing that a scenic representation of such an act did really form a part of the proceedings. The Raven properly takes its place here, as being the attribute of the Solar god in the Hellenic creed, on which account it is often depicted standing upon Apollo's lyre.

Many other gems express the spiritual benefits conferred by the Mithraic initiation upon believers. A frequent device of the kind, is a man, with hands bound behind his back, seated at the foot of a pillar supporting a gryphon with paw on wheel, that special emblem of the solar god; often accompanied with the legend ΔΙΚΑΙΩΣ, "I have deserved it." Another (Blacas) displays an unusual richness of symbolism: the same gryphon's tail ends in a scorpion, whilst the wheel squeezes out of its chrysalis a tiny human soul that stretches forth its hands in jubilation; in front stands Thoth's ibis, holding in its beak the balance, perhaps the horoscope of the patient. This talisman too, unites the Egyptian

with the Magian creed, for the benefit of the carrier; for the reverse displays Isis, but in the character of Hygieia, standing upon her crocodile; the field being occupied by strangely complicated monograms, of sense intelligible to the initiated alone, and doubtless communicated to the recipient of the talisman, who found in them "a New Name written, that no man knoweth, save he that receiveth the same." But both doctrines and ceremonial of this religion are best understood through the examination of extant representations displaying them either directly or allegorically; which in their turn are illustrated by the practice of the faithful few who still keep alive the Sacred Fire, namely the Parsecs of Guzerat. The series therefore will be most fittingly opened by the following curious description of a cave of Mithras, as discovered in its original and unprofaned condition, written by that eminent antiquary, Flaminus Vacca. (No. 117.)

III. A ROMAN MITHRAS IN HIS CAVE.

"I remember there was found in the vineyard of Sig. Orazio Muti (where the treasure was discovered), opposite S. Vitale, an idol in marble about 5 palms high ($3\frac{3}{4}$ ft.), standing erect upon a pedestal in an empty chamber, which had the door walled up. This idol had the head of a lion, but the body that of a man. Under the feet was a globe, whence sprung a serpent which encompassed all the idol, and its head entered into the lion's mouth. He had his hands crossed upon the breast, with a key in each; four wings fastened upon the shoulders, two pointing

upwards, two downwards. I do not consider it a very antique work, being done in a rude manner, or else indeed it was so ancient that at the time when it was made the good style was not yet known. Sig. Orazio, however, told me that a theologian, a Jesuit Father, explained its meaning by saying it signified the Devil, who, in the times of heathenism, ruled over the world: hence the *globe* under his feet, the *serpent* which begirt his body and entered into his mouth, signified his foretelling the future with ambiguous responses; the *keys* in his hands, his sovereignty over the world; the *lion's head*, his being the ruler of all beasts; the *wings*, his presence everywhere. Such was the interpretation given by the Father aforesaid. I have done everything to see the idol, but Sig. Orazio being now dead, his heirs do not know what has become of it. It is not, however, unlikely that by the advice of the same theologian, Sig. Orazio may have sent it to some *limekiln to cure its dampness*, for it had been buried many and many a year." Thus was this most interesting monument destroyed through the conceited ignorance of a wretched ecclesiastic, himself more truly a worshipper of the Evil Principle, than was the ancient votary of the beneficent Lord of Light who carved that wondrous image. Vacca adds, "I remember, there was found in the same place, after the above-mentioned idol, another, only in bas-relief, also having a lion's head, but the rest of the body human: with the arms extended, in each hand a torch; with two wings pointing upwards, two downwards, from between which issued a serpent.

At his right stood an altar with fire; from the idol's mouth proceeded a ribbon or scroll extending over the fire."

This *lion*-headed deity can be no other than Jerome's "Pater Bromius," a Grecian title of Bacchus; and he, we are told, distinguished himself under that disguise in the famous war of the giants--

"Tu cum Parentis regna per arduum
Cohors Gigantum scanderet impia,
Rhætum retorsisti *leonis*
Unguibus horribilique mala."
(Horace, Od. II. xix. 21-24.)

And, tracing back this composite figure to the real source of such iconology, it is found to be the very one under which "Nri-singha-avatar" is depicted. It was assumed by the deity in order to destroy the tyrant Hiransyakacipu, who had obtained the gift of invulnerability against all *known* beasts, either by day or night.

A Mithraic cave, with the contiguous buildings, was discovered at Spoleto in 1878. In the end wall were the usual three niches for the god and his torch-bearers. In front of them an altar inscribed "Soli invicto Mithræ sacrum." Close to the altar, a tall phallic stone, perforated with a square hole near the top--perhaps the "stone symbolizing the Birth of Mithras" mentioned by Firmicus. The cave, with the ground plan of the whole edifice is given in the 'Archæologia,' vol. 47, p. 205.

V. GNOSTIC SACRAMENTS AND INITIATIONS AS CONNECTED WITH THE MITHRAIC.

In my account of Mithraicism notice has been taken of the very prominent part that sacraments for the remission of sin play in the ceremonial of that religion; the following extracts from the grand Gnostic text-book will serve to show how the same notions (and probably, forms) were transferred to the service of Gnosticism.

Baptism, Remitting Sins.--(Pistis-Sophia) (298). Then came forth Mary and said: Lord, under what form do *Baptisms* remit sins? I have heard thee saying that the Ministers of Contentions (ἐριδᾶῖοι) follow after the soul, bearing witness against it of all the sins that it hath committed, so that they may convict it in the judgments. Now, therefore, Lord, do the mysteries of Baptism blot out the sins that be in the hands of the Receivers of Contention, so that they shall utterly forget the same? Now, therefore, Lord, tell us in what form they remit sins; for we desire to know them thoroughly. Then the Saviour answered and said: Thou hast well spoken: of truth those Ministers are they that testify against all sins, for they abide constantly in the places of judgment, laying hold upon the souls, convicting all the souls of sinners who have not received the mystery, and they keep them fast in chaos tormenting them. But these contentious ones cannot pass over chaos so as to enter into the courses that be above chaos; in order to convict the souls therefore receiving the mysteries, it is not lawful for them to force so as to drag them down into chaos,

where the Contentious Receivers may convict them. But the souls of such as have not received the mysteries, these do they desire and hail into chaos: whereas the souls that have received the mysteries, they have no means of convicting, seeing that they cannot get out of their own place; and even if they did come forth, they could not stop those souls, neither shut them up in their chaos. Hearken, therefore, I will declare to you in truth in what form the mystery of Baptism remitteth sins. If the souls when yet living in the world have been sinful, the Contentious Receivers verily do come, that they may bear witness of all the sins they have committed, but they can by no means come forth out of the regions of chaos, so as to convict the soul in the places of judgment that be beyond chaos. But the counterfeit of the spirit testifies against all the sins of the soul, in order to convict it in the places of judgment that be beyond chaos; not only Both it testify, but also sets a *seal* upon all the sins of the soul, so as to print them firmly upon the soul, that all the Rulers of the judgment place of the sinners may know that it is the soul of a sinner, and likewise know the *number* of sins which it hath committed from the seals that the counterfeit of the spirit hath imprinted upon it, so that they may punish the soul according to the number of its sins: this is the manner in which they treat the soul of a sinner. (300). Now therefore if any one hath received the mysteries of Baptism, *those mysteries become a great fire*, exceeding strong, and wise, so as to burn up all the sins: and the Fire entereth into the soul secretly, so that it may consume within it all the sins which the counterfeit of

the spirit hath printed there. Likewise it entereth into the body secretly, that it may pursue all its pursuers, and divide them into parts--for it pursueth within the body, the counterfeit of the spirit, and Fate--so that it may divide them apart from the Power and the Soul, and place them in one part of the body--so that the fire separates the counterfeit of the spirit, Fate, and the Body into one portion, and the Soul and the Power into another portion. The mystery of Baptism remaineth in the middle of them, so that it may perpetually separate them, so that it may purge and cleanse them in order that they may not be polluted by *Matter*. Now therefore, Mary, this is the manner whereby the mystery of Baptism remitteth sins and all transgressions.

(301) And when the Saviour had thus spoken, he said to his disciples: Do ye understand in what manner I speak with you? Then came forth Mary, saying: Of a truth, Lord, I perceive in reality all the things that thou hast said. Touching this matter of the Remission of Sins, thou speaketh aforetime to us in a parable, saying: I am come to bring *fire* upon the earth; nay, more, let it burn as much as I please. And, again thou hast set it forth openly, saying: I have a baptism wherewith I will baptise and how shall I endure until it be accomplished? Ye think that I am come to bring peace upon the earth? By no means so, but dissension, which I am come to bring. For from this time forth there shall be five in one house; three shall be divided against two, and two against three. This, Lord, is the word that thou speakest openly. But concerning the

word that thou spakest: I am come to bring fire upon the earth, and let it burn so much as I please: in this thou hast spoken of the mystery of Baptism in the world, and let it burn as much as thou pleasest for to consume all the sins of the soul, that it may purge them away. And again thou hast shewn the same forth openly, saying: I have a baptism wherewith I will baptise, and how shall I endure until it be accomplished? The which is this; Thou wilt not tarry in the world until the baptisms be accomplished to purify all the perfect souls. And again what thou spakest unto us aforetime: "Do ye suppose I am come to bring peace upon earth," &c. (302). This signifieth the mystery of Baptism which thou hast brought into the world, because it hath brought about dissension in the body of the world, because it hath divided the Counterfeit of the spirit, the Body, and the Fate thereof, into one party, and the Soul and the Power into the other party. The same is, "There shall be three against two, and two against three." And when Mary had spoken these things the Saviour said: Well done, thou Spiritual One in the pure light, this is the interpretation of my saying.

Then Mary went on and said: Bear with me, Lord, whilst I yet inquire of thee. Lo! we know now fully after what form Baptism remitteth sin. Now therefore declare unto us the mystery of the Three Courts, and the mystery of the First Mystery, and likewise the mystery of the Ineffable One; in what form do these also remit sin? Do they remit sin in the *form of baptism* or not? (303) The Saviour answered again: By no

means; but all the mysteries of the Three Courts remit in the soul, and in all the regions of the Rulers, all the sins that the soul hath committed even from the beginning. They remit also the sins that the soul shall have committed afterwards up to the time that each one of the mysteries taketh unto itself, the time whereof I will declare unto you hereafter. Moreover the mystery of the First Mystery, and the mystery of the Ineffable One, remit unto the soul in all the regions of the Rulers all the sins and transgressions that it hath committed. And not only do they remit, but they do not *impute sin* to the soul, from henceforth for ever by reason of the free-grace of the mystery and the exceeding glory of the same. Then said the Saviour: Do ye understand all that I have said unto you? Then Mary answered: Lord, I have caught up all the words thou hast spoken. Now therefore as to the saying that all the mysteries of the Three Courts remit sins, and blot out iniquities. Concerning this same matter hath David the prophet spoken, saying: "Blessed are they whose sins they have remitted, and whose iniquities they have covered," and as to thy saying that the mystery of the First Mystery, and the mystery of the Ineffable One, do not only remit all sin unto the soul for ever, but also do not suffer sin to be *imputed* unto the same for ever and ever, by reason of the free-gift of the great mystery, and the exceeding glory thereof; concerning this same matter David the prophet foretold, saying: "Blessed are they unto whom the Lord will not impute sin," which signifieth they will not impute sin from henceforth unto those that receive the mystery of the First Mystery and the

mystery of the Ineffable One. Then answered the Saviour: Well done, thou Spiritual One, this is the interpretation of my word.

(305) Then Mary continued, saying: Lord, if a man shall have received the mystery in the mystery of the First Mystery, and afterwards shall turn back and sin, and again shall repent and pray in his own mystery, shall his sin be remitted to him or not? Then answered the Saviour; Whosoever after receiving the mystery shall again sin twelve times, and again repent twelve times, and then shall pray in his own mystery, his sin shall be remitted unto him. But and if, after these twelve times, he shall turn again and transgress, then of a truth his sin shall never more be remitted, so that he may turn again unto his own mystery whatsoever it be. For such an one there is no repentance, unless indeed he hath received the mystery of the Ineffable One that remitteth all sins, and shall remit them at every time.

Then said Mary: Lord, those who have received the mystery of the First Mystery, and then have turned back and sinned, if such without having repented shall depart out of the body, shall they inherit the kingdom or not, forasmuch as they have received the free gift of that mystery? (306) The Saviour answered: Of such the judgment shall be the most merciful amongst all the judgments, for their dwelling is in the Middle Gate of the Dragon of Outer Darkness, and at the end of all those that be in torment; because such an one hath received the free gift of the mystery, and

hath not remained steadfast therein. Then said Mary: Such as have received the mystery of the Ineffable One and then shall turn back and sin, but afterwards shall repent in their lifetime, how many times shall their sin be remitted unto *them*? Then answered the Saviour: To such an one, not only if he turn back and sin once, and then repent, shall his sin be remitted, but even if he doth so continually, so long as he shall repent whilst yet alive, not being in hypocrisy, and shall pray according to his own mystery, because those mysteries are merciful and remit sin at every time (307). Then asked Mary: But if such an one shall depart out of the body before he hath repented, what then shall happen unto him? (307) Then answered the Saviour: Of such an one the judgment shall be worse than of any other, and exceeding great; for even if those souls be *new ones*, they shall not return unto the changes of the earthly bodies, neither shall they do any work, but they shall be cast out into the uttermost parts of the Outer Darkness, and shall be consumed so that they shall not exist for ever and ever.

(308) To this declaration Mary refers the saying: "Salt is good, but if the salt hath lost its savour," &c.

The following extracts, from the same high authority, will much elucidate the *pass-words* communicated to the dying believer, which form so important a feature of the Gnostic system.

Benefits of Initiation.--I will declare unto you that mystery, which is this: Whosoever shall have received that *One Word*, when he shall depart out of the body

of the Matter of the Rulers, there shall come the Contentious Receivers to loosen him out of that body, which same Receivers loosen every one departing out of the body. And when they shall have loosened the soul that hath received that mystery which I have declared unto you, in that very moment wherein he is set loose, he becometh a great *flood of light* in the midst of them. And the Receivers shall fear the light of that soul, and shall tremble, and shall cease through their fear of the great light which they behold. And that soul shall fly up aloft, and the Receivers shall not lay hold upon him, neither shall they discern by what way he is gone, inasmuch as he is become a great *Ray of Light*, and flieth up aloft, neither is there any Power that can overtake him, nor ever come nigh unto him at all (228). But he passes through all the regions of the Rulers, and also the regions of the offspring of the Light, neither doth he give-in a declaration in any region, nor yet a defence of himself, nor yet the password (or symbol). Neither can any Power of them all draw near him, but all the regions of the Rulers and of the offspring of the Light shall sing hymns, each one in his own place, fearing the flood of light that clotheth that soul, until he shall come into the place of the heirs of the mystery that he hath received, and become conjoined with the members of the same. Verily, I say unto you, ye shall be in all the regions in the time that a man can shoot an arrow. Again I say unto you, whosoever shall receive that mystery and make himself perfect in all the types and figures thereof, that man is in the world, but he is more excellent than the angels, and shall be before them all;

he is a man in the world, but he is better than the archangels and shall be before them all (229); he is higher than all the tyrants, and all the lords, and all the gods, and all the luminaries, and all the pure ones, and all the triple powers, and all the Primal Fathers, and all the Unseen Ones; he is a man in the world, but he is more excellent than the great unseen Primal Father, and shall be more exalted than he, and above all those pertaining to the Middle-space, and above all the emanations of the Treasury of Light, and above all the confusion, and above every region of the Treasure of Light; he is a man in the world, but he shall reign with me (230) in my kingdom; he is a man in the world, but he shall be a king in the Light; he is a man in the world, but he is not of the world; and verily I say unto you, that man is *I*, and I am *that man*; and in the dissolution of the world, when the universe shall be raised up, and all the number of perfect souls shall be raised up, and I am made king over all the offspring of the Light, and when I am made king over the seven AMHN, and the Five Trees, and the Three AMHN, and the Nine Keepers; and when I am king over the Boy of the boy which be the Twin Saviours, and over the Twelve Saviours, and over all the number of perfect souls which have received the mystery of Light, then whosoever shall have received the mystery of the Ineffable One, they shall be joint kings with me and shall sit upon my right hand and upon my left hand in my kingdom. Verily I say unto you, those men are *I*, and I am those men. For this cause have I said to you formerly, ye shall sit upon your thrones on my right hand and on my left in my

kingdom, and ye shall reign together with me (231). Therefore I did not refrain, neither was I abashed to call you my brethren and my fellows, inasmuch as ye shall be joint kings with me in my kingdom. These things therefore I said unto you, knowing that I was about to give unto you the mystery of the Ineffable One, because that mystery is I, and I am that mystery. Now therefore not only ye shall reign with me, but also whatsoever men shall have received that mystery they shall be joint kings with me in my kingdom; and I am they, and they are I. But my throne shall be more exalted than theirs; and inasmuch as ye shall receive sorrows in this world beyond all other men whilst ye are preaching the words that I declare unto you, therefore your thrones shall be next to my throne in my kingdom. For this cause I said of old time, in the place where I shall be, my twelve ministers shall be also; but Mary Magdalene, and John the Virgin, shall be the most excellent amongst my disciples. And all men that shall have received the mystery of the Ineffable One shall be upon my right hand and upon my left, for I am they and they are I, and they shall be equal with you in every thing; but your thrones shall be more exalted than theirs, and my throne shall be more exalted than yours (232). And all men that shall find out the *Word* of the Ineffable One, verily I say unto you all the men that shall know that *Word*, the same shall understand also the knowledge of all the words that I have spoken unto you, both in their depth and in their height, in their length and in their breadth. And what things I have not told you those I will tell you in their place and in their order in the

emanation of the universe. Verily I say unto you, they shall know how the world is established, and after what form those that pertain unto the height (highest place) be made, and for what end the universe was created.

And when the Saviour had said these things, Mary Magdalene came forward and said: Lord, be not wroth with me if I seek out everything with diligence. Whether is the Word of the mystery of the Ineffable One, one thing, and the Word of the Knowledge of All, another? Then the Saviour answered, and said: The Word of the mystery of the Ineffable is one thing, and the Word of the Knowledge of All is another. Then said Mary: Suffer me, Lord, to ask thee yet again one thing. Unless when we are living we understand the knowledge of the whole Word of the Ineffable One, we shall not inherit the kingdom of Light? (233). Then the Saviour answered, and said: Of a truth, whosoever shall have received the mystery of the kingdom of Light, the same shall go to inherit it into that place the mystery whereof he hath received. But he shall not obtain the knowledge of the All, wherefore all things were made, except he shall have known that One Word of the Ineffable, the which is the knowledge of all. And again, there is no way of knowing that One Word of knowledge, except a man shall have first received the mystery of the Ineffable One; but every man shall go to inherit that place the mystery whereof he hath received. For which cause I said to you formerly: "He that believeth a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and he that believeth

a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward," which is this: of whatsoever place each hath received the mystery, into that same place shall he go. He that hath received a humble mystery, the same shall inherit a humble place. He that hath received an excellent mystery, the same shall inherit an exalted place; and every one shall abide in his own place in the light of my kingdom, and every one shall have authority over the Course that is below him, but over that which is above himself he shall not have authority, but shall abide in his inheritance of the light of my kingdom, dwelling in a great light unto which there is no measure, next to the gods and to the Unseen Ones, and he shall be in great joy and gladness (234).

Now therefore I will speak with you touching the glory of those also that shall receive the mystery of the First Mystery. He that hath received the same, at the time when he shall depart out of this body of Matter, the Contentious Receiver shall come that they may take his soul out of the body, and that soul shall become a great Pay of light and shall fly aloft through the midst of them, and shall pass through all the regions and shall not give-in any declaration, or defence, or symbol, token (password), but shall pass through all, that he may come and reign over all the places belonging to the First Saviour. In the like manner he that hath received the Second Mystery and the Third and Fourth up to the Twelfth, that soul likewise shall pass through all the regions without giving in his defence, or token, and shall come and

reign over all the places belonging to the Twelve Saviours. And in like manner those receiving the second mystery shall reign over the places of the Second Saviour amongst the heirs of light. In like manner those receiving the third and the fourth up to the twelfth, shall reign over the regions of that Saviour whose mystery each hath received. But they shall not be equal with those that have received the mystery of the Ineffable One, but shall abide in the Courses of the Twelve Saviours.

Then Mary answered, saying: Lord, suffer me yet again. How is it that the First Mystery hath twelve mysteries, whereas the Ineffable hath but one? Jesus answered: Of a truth He hath but One, but that mystery maketh *three* others; the mystery is indeed *one*, but to each of them there is a different form, and moreover it maketh *five* mysteries.

As for the First Mystery, when thou hast performed it well in all the forms thereof, when thou departest out of thy body thou shalt forthwith become a great Ray of light, and it shall traverse all the regions of the Rulers and all the regions of Light, all being afraid of that light of the soul, until it shall come into its own kingdom. As for the Second Mystery, he that shall perform the same rightly in all the forms thereof, if he speak it over the head of a man departing out of the body, and *into his two ears*, that man departing out of the body when he hath received the mystery a second time, and been made partaker of the *Word of Truth*, that man's soul shall become, when it leaveth the

body, a great flood of light, so as to traverse all the regions until it cometh into the kingdom of that mystery. But and if that man hath not received that mystery, neither hath been made partaker of the words of truth, if he that hath performed that mystery shall speak the same into the ears of him who is departing out of the body, verily I say unto you, the soul of that man, although he hath not received the mystery of Light nor partaken of the words of truth, shall not be judged in the places of the Rulers, neither shall it be punished in any place, neither shall the fire touch it, by reason of the mystery of the Ineffable which goeth along with it. And they shall hasten to deliver that soul one to the other, and shall guide it Course after Course, and place (239) after place, until they bring it before the Virgin of Light: for all the regions shall fear the mystery and the *Mark* of the kingdom of the Ineffable One that is with it.

And when they have brought the soul unto the Virgin of Light, she shall see the Mark of the mystery of the kingdom of the Ineffable One which is with it. And the Virgin of Light marvelleth thereat, and she judgeth that soul, but suffereth him not to be brought unto the light until he hath accomplished the ministry of the light of that mystery, which be these: the purification of the renouncing of the world and of all the *Matter* that therein is. And the Virgin of Light sealeth him with a special seal, which is this: in the same month in which he hath departed out of the body, she will cause him to be placed in another body that shall be righteous, and shall obtain the divinity of

truth and the high mystery, so that he may inherit the same, and also inherit the Light for ever and ever. This is the grace of the Second Mystery of the Ineffable One.

As touching the Third Mystery: the man that hath performed the same duly in all the forms thereof and shall *name* that mystery over the head of one departing out of the body whether he be living or *dead, or abiding in the midst of the torments of the Rulers,* and their different fires, they shall make haste to release that man out of them all, and shall bring him before the Virgin of Light, who shall place him in a righteous body that shall inherit the light.

(243) Moreover in the dissolution of the Universe, that is, when the number of perfect souls is made up, and the mystery is accomplished on account of which the Universe has been created, then I will spend a thousand years, according to the years of light, ruling over the offspring of the light, and over the number of the perfect souls which have received all the mysteries. Then Mary said, Lord, how many years in the years of this world is one year of light? Jesus answered, One day of light is one thousand years of this world, wherefore thirty and six myriads and a half of the years of the world make one year of light. I shall therefore reign a thousand years of light, being king in the middle of the last *Parastates*, being king over all the offspring of light, and over all the number of perfect souls that have received the mysteries of light. And ye, my disciples, and each one that hath

received the mysteries of the Ineffable One, shall be upon my right hand and upon my left, being kings together with me in my kingdom. And those likewise that receive the three mysteries of the five mysteries of the Ineffable shall be kings together with you in the kingdom of light. But they shall not be equal with you, and with those receiving the mystery of the Ineffable One, for they shall continue kings behind you. And those receiving the five mysteries of the Ineffable shall remain behind the three mysteries being kings also. Likewise those receiving the twelve mysteries of the First Mystery, they too shall abide as kings behind the five mysteries of the Ineffable One. And they also are kings each one of them according to his course, and all receiving in the mysteries in all the places of the Court of the Ineffable One, so that they shall be kings also but come after such as have received the mystery of the First Mystery: being sent forth according to the glory of each, so that those receiving high mysteries shall dwell in high places, but those receiving humble mysteries shall abide in humble places.

These are the *Three Lots* of the Kingdom of Light, and the mysteries of these Three Lots of Light are exceeding great. Ye will find them in the great Second Book of IEV; but I will give unto you and declare unto you the mysteries of each lot, which be more exalted than any other place (246), and are chief both as to place and as to order: the which also lead all mankind within, into lofty places; according to the, court belonging to their inheritance, so that ye have

no need of any of the *lower mysteries*, but ye will find them in the Second Book of **IEV** which Enoch wrote when I spoke with hint out of the Tree of Knowledge and out of the Tree of Life in the Paradise of Adam.

Now therefore after I shall have declared unto you all Emanation, I will give and I will tell unto you the Three Lots of my Kingdom which be the chief of all.

Inasmuch as *Ordeals* and *Meritorious Penances* held so important a place in the Mithraic ceremonial, it will not be irrelevant here to adduce for comparison a series of the kind as excogitated by the extravagant imagination of the Brahmins. The penances of the *demon* Taraka, the Tapa-asura, by means whereof he constrained Brahma to grant him whatever he chose to demand, are thus enumerated, each stage being of one century's duration. 1. He stood on one foot, holding up the other with both hands towards heaven, his eyes fixed immovably upon the sun. 2. He stood on one great toe. 3. He took for sustenance nothing but water. 4. He lived similarly upon air. 5. He remained immersed in the water. 6. He was buried in the earth, continuing, as during the last penance, in continued adoration. 7. He performed the same act in the fire. 8. He stood on his head with his feet upwards. 9. He stood resting on one hand. 10. He hung by his hands from a tree. 11. He hung on a tree by his feet, with his head downwards. (The twelfth degree Moor (Edward Moor, *The Hindu Pantheon*--JBH.) has, for some reason, omitted.)

By means like these, termed the *Yog*, the ascetic *Yogī* is enabled to obtain nine several gifts, that set him above all the laws of Nature. For example, he may expand or contract his body to any size he pleases; he may float in the air upon a sunbeam; he may exert all his sense at an infinite distance from the objects of them; with other capabilities of like kind. And with respect to the sixth penance of Taraka, this, incredible as it appears, is still performed. To be buried alive in a small vault covered deep with earth until a crop of grain, sown over him at the time of inhumation, shall be ripe for cutting, is yet esteemed the most efficacious of good works for extorting from heaven the blessing most desired by the patient or his employer (the doctrine of *vicarious* atonement being most thoroughly Hindoo). The English Resident at Runjeet Singh's court has minutely described all the preparation made by the royal proxy, (whose regular trade it was thus to die for others), and the successful completion of his penance, which occupied the space of six weeks. The Resident assisted at the closing and the opening of the vault, and was certain that no deception could possibly have been practised by the *Yogi*. The blessing aimed at was the gift of fecundity for a favourite queen of Runjeet's.

The "Taurobolia," or *Baptism of Blood*, during the later ages of the Western Empire, held the foremost place, as the means of purification from sin, however atrocious. Prudentius has left a minute description of this horrid rite, in which the person to be regenerated, being stripped of his clothing, descended into a pit,

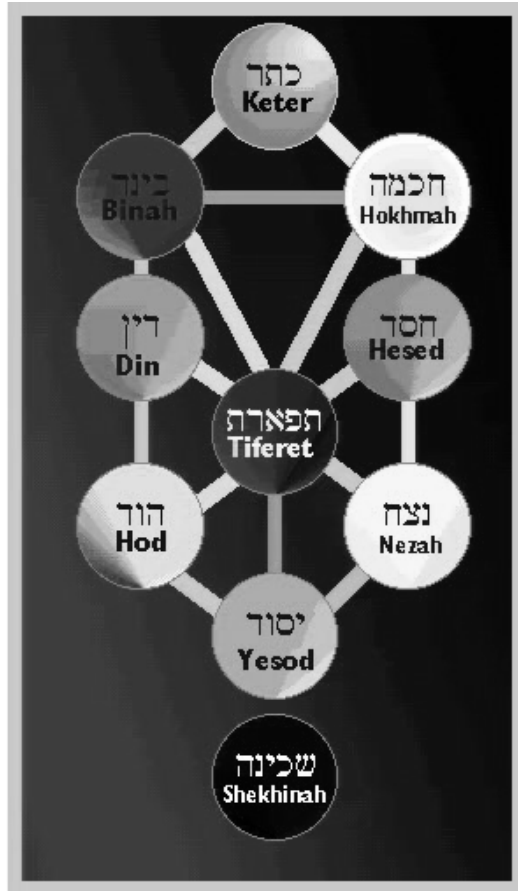
which was covered with planks pierced full of holes; a bull was slaughtered upon them, whose hot blood, streaming down through these apertures (after the fashion of a shower-bath), thoroughly drenched the recipient below. The selection of the particular victim proves this ceremony in connection with the Mithraica, which latter, as Justin says, had a "Baptism for the remission of Sins"; and the Bull being in that religion the recognised emblem of *life*, his blood necessarily constituted the most effectual laver of regeneration. No more conclusive evidence of the value then attached to the Taurobolia can be adduced, than the fact mentioned by Lampridius that the priest-emperor Heliogabalus thought it necessary to submit to its performance; and a pit, constructed for the purpose as late as the fourth century, has lately been discovered within the sacred precincts of the Temple at Eleusis, the most holy spot in all Greece.

The subject will find its most appropriate conclusion in the list of "Degrees" to be taken in the Mysteries, as laid down by M. Lajard, in his elaborate treatise, '*Le Culte de Mithra*,' These degrees were divided into four stages, Terrestrial, Aerial, Igneous, and Divine, each consisting of three. The Terrestrial comprised the Soldier, the Lion, the Bull. The Aerial, the Vulture, the Ostrich, the Raven. The Igneous, the Gryphon, the Horse, the Sun. The Divine, the Eagle, the Sparrow-Hawk, the Father of fathers. Lajard's theory is best elucidated by quoting his way of expounding a very frequent cylinder-subject. He finds the admission to the degree of "The Soldier," in the group where a man

is seen standing before a "hierophant," or priest, who stands on the back of a bull *couchant* on a platform. The hierophant, wearing a cap tipped by a crescent, holds out to the neophyte a curved sword, symbol of admission into the Order. A priestess stands apart, separated from him by the horn, or Tree of Life, over which soars the emblem of the Assyrian Triad. Her cap is tipped by the Sun-star, but she also wears the crescent, to show the hermaphrodite nature of Mylitta!

Jewish Mystical Theology

In Conversation with Rabbi Simeon



Zohar: Bereshith to Lekh Lekha

By Nurho de Manhar, 1900-1914

INTRODUCTION.

THE LILY.

THE students of Rabbi Simeon were assembled together and sitting in silence, waiting for the master to begin his discourse. At length Rabbi Simeon spake, and said: "As a lily amongst the thorns." Cant. 2:2 This word lily, what doth it mean and symbolize? It symbolizes the congregation of Israel; and as lilies are either red or white in color, so the members of this congregation are divided into two classes, distinguished by their rigorous justice and uprightness, or by their gentleness, kindness and compassion. These are environed about with thirteen ways or degrees of mercy, as the lily has thirteen leaves surrounding it on all sides. Furthermore, intervening between the first and second Elohim or Alhim, mentioned in Genesis, are thirteen words corresponding to these thirteen leaves of the lily and the degrees of mercy surrounding the congregation of Israel. The divine name Alhim is mentioned again, and wherefore? In order to show the symbolic meaning of the five strong leaves which surround the lily, the occult meaning of which has reference to the five ways of salvation, corresponding to five gates of

mercy. Respecting this mystery of five, it is written: "I will take the cup of salvation," Ps. 116:13 which is the cup of blessing, and which must stand or repose upon five fingers only, similar to the lily supported and sustained by its five strong leaves. For this reason the lily symbolizes the cup of blessing, as there are five words between the second and the third Alhim mentioned in the Book of Genesis. One of these words is A U R, meaning light. This light was treated and became enclosed as an embryo in the *Berith*, or covenant, and, entering into the lily as a principle of life, made it fruitful, and this is what is called in Scripture "fruit tree, yielding fruit whose seed is in itself"; Gen. 1:29 and as this life principle, entering into the *Berith*, caused itself to become manifested in forty-two kinds of second matter, so has it produced the *Shemhamphorash*, the great and ineffable divine name of God, composed of forty-two letters, which operated in the creation of the world.

THE REDEMPTION OF HUMANITY.

Rabbi Simeon spake again: "The Flowers appear on the earth." Cant. 2:12 By flowers is signified the appearance of created beings on the earth. When did they appear? On the third day, when it is written: "The earth first brought forth." Then the flowers appeared on that day. "The time of singing or of commingled voices and cries and noises is come," indicates the fourth day of creation, in which took place the excision of the Aretzim (the terrible one, or demons). For this reason the word Moroth (lights) is found without V and written M A R Th, meaning

curse, or malediction. "The voice of the turtle" refers to the fifth day, when it is written: "The waters brought forth abundantly, and etc.," for the generation of created beings. On the sixth day it was said: "Let us make man," who in after-time would say: "Let us hear, before let us do or make." "In our land" is meant the Sabbath, symbol or type of the land of life, the world of spirits or souls, the world of resurrections or rising up to a higher life. "The flowers" were the fathers or pitris whose souls pre-existed in the Divine Thought, and, entering into the world to come, became concealed and hidden therein. From thence they came forth, becoming incarnated in prophets of truth. When Joseph was born they were concealed and unrecognized in him, and when he entered into the holy land he presided over them and ruled there; so then they became known. When did this occur? To this question Scripture gives answer: when the Iris, or rainbow, first appeared in the world. Then was the time of the excision or cutting of the brutal and savage and sinful from the face of the earth. Why, then, did they not perish? Why were they preserved? Because the flowers then appeared on the earth. If they had not appeared, they, the brutal and sinful ones, would have become extinct and the world would have ceased its existence. Who, then, established the world and caused the fathers to appear? It was the voice or cry of the *little ones*, or students of the law, and it was owing to them that the world now subsists.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND REMARKS.

In these two first sections of the introduction to the Zohar are abstruse intimations and references to the doctrine of Light, which enters so largely as an element in the systems of ancient Eastern philosophy, especially that of the Persians, with whom the Jews had at one time such intimate relations. Light is the primal emanation of the Divine, from which and by which all things visible and invisible have originated. From out of that Light have they all come forth, and into it will they return when the great drama of existence is completed and the tragedy of life comes to an end. Meanwhile the Light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world to play each his or her part, is accessible to all, irrespective of artificial conditions or the distinctions of human society. Upon our own measure of receptivity of it depends our inner development and evolution to higher planes of life; of loftier, clearer and more accurate views of truth that free us from the influence of external contaminations by purifying and spiritualizing the animal or lower nature within us. It is the one heritage common alike to king or peasant, noble or ignoble, learned or illiterate, rich or poor, and he who is endowed with and knows most of it ranks higher in the scale of existence and approximates nearer and closer to the Divine, in whom we all live and move and have life, whether we use it for the good and happiness of others or trifle and fritter it away as foolish spendthrifts who are ignorant of the value and worth of money. It was this Light that the great

German, Goethe, in his last words, craved and desired: "Light! More Light!" And this is the Light that Rabbi Simeon refers to all through the pages of this remarkable book, in which we shall meet with many allusions to it of great interest, both to the general and the theosophic reader. Kabbalists affirm that there were thirty-two Alhim engaged in the work of creation as executors of the divine will. They correspond to the Dhyan Chohans in Hindu philosophy. By the lily, with thirteen leaves, is occultly meant the twelve avatars, or incarnations, of divine messengers, six of whom are Cabiri, ministers of karmic justice for the chastisement of nations; and six of them are Messiahs; their emblem is a lily, whose color is white, as seen in ancient paintings of The Annunciation, in which the Angel Gabriel holds a lily in his hand. The thirteenth is their great chief and lord, by whom they have been trained and commissioned and sent forth on the great work of spiritual enlightenment of the nations. In Eastern philosophy he is known as the "Great Sacrifice," the "Silent Watcher," who will not vacate his post until the last scion of humanity, agonizing and struggling with its weakness and infirmities to overcome self and accomplish its destiny, finds its way to him at last. We have also here hints of the state of mankind in its primary stages, when the cry of the Atzerim, the terrible or terrorizing ones, resounded on the earth, and which lasted until the *fathers*, or divine teachers, came and led humanity on to the upward track of light and civilization. Then the world became steadied or established, and students of the divine

law of the universe and of the divine government of humanity became numerous, their voices and teachings going out unto the ends of the world; and then, as it is written: "Great was the company of the preachers" of truth and righteousness.

By the "little ones" are meant student initiates, of which class St. Paul was one. Before his initiation his name was called Saul, but after his initiateship he became known as Paulus--the little one. There are various other expositions of these two sections by Kabbalists, but so abstrusely worded and expressed in metaphysical terms and language that none but those who have a wide and extended knowledge of Hebrew and its cognate language would be able to understand and appreciate them.

For greater elucidation and a clearer understanding of the Briatic or creative Alhim, we give them in their order as set forth in Kabbalistic writings:

(1) In the beginning Alhim created. (2) And the spirit of Alhim hovered or brooded. (3) And Alhim said: "Let there be light." (4) And Alhim saw the light. (5) And Alhim divided between the light. (6) And Alhim called the light *Day*. (7) And Alhim said: "Let there be a firmament." (8) And Alhim made the firmament. (9) And Alhim called the firmament *Heaven*. (10) Alhim said: "Let the waters be gathered together." (11) Alhim called the dry land *Earth*. (12) And Alhim saw it was good. (13) Alhim said: "Let the earth bring forth." (14) And Alhim saw it was good. (15) And Alhim said: "Let there be lights." (16) Alhim made two lights. (17)

And Alhim placed them in the firmament of the heavens. (18) And Alhim saw it was good. (19) Alhim said: "Let the waters bring forth." (20) Alhim created the whales. (21) And Alhim saw it was good. (22) And Alhim blessed them, saying: "Be fruitful and multiply." (23) Alhim said: "Let the earth bring forth." (24) Alhim made the beasts of the earth. (25) And Alhim saw it was good. (26) Alhim said: "Let us make man." (27) And Alhim created the man. (28) In the form or image of Alhim created he him. (29) Alhim blessed them. (30) Alhim said: "Be fruitful and multiply." (31) Alhim said: "Behold! I have given to you." (32) And Alhim saw all that he had made.

The English equivalents of the thirteen words intervening between the first and second Alhim are as follows: The heavens, the earth, earth was Tohu vabohu, darkness upon face, abyss (or great deep) Spirit. The five words between the second and third Alhim are: "Hovered, upon, face, waters, said."

The expression, "Congregation of Israel," in the first instance, refers to the first born sons of Light, or, as they are termed in the Book of Job, the morning stars, who, along with the Sons of Alhim, sang their song of praise at the creation of the world. In an extended sense, it includes the true children of light who have attained unto the Divine Life.

THE INITIATION OF RABBI HIYA.

Bereshith, "In the beginning," said Rabbi Ionda, "what is the signification of this mystical word? It is

hochma--wisdom, that wisdom by which the world was formed and still subsists. Like a globe it includes the six directions of space, viz., north, south, east and west, high and low, from which emanate six streams of existence, all of which flow at last into the great ocean of primal life. Another occult signification of Bereshith is this, Bara sith (he created six) and who was he? Though not mentioned, it was the mysterious though ineffable, the great unknown."

Rabbi Hiya and Rabbi Jose were walking together in the country and when they reached their destination, said Rabbi Hiya: "This occult meaning of bereshith is undoubtedly correct, since we find in the Book of Genesis that the creation of all things occurred and took place in six days and not more. In an ancient occult work on Genesis we have found many references to this account. Thus, the holy one at first formed a point in which was included and concealed, as in a palace, the forms or prototypes of all created things. Now though the palace contains them, the key of it is the most essential thing which closes and opens it. This palace, the world, is the receptacle or casket in which are enclosed many wonderful and secret mysteries, it has fifty gateways, ten on each of its four sides, nine opening heavenward and one, of which nothing definite is known about it, and it is therefore termed '*The Mysterious Gate*.' There is also one kind of lock to all these gates and one key alone opens and closes them and gives entrance into the palace and the treasures therein. Bereshith, bara Alhim, these words are the palace, and Bereshith is

the key that conceals or opens up their mysterious meanings. It opens and shuts, it reveals or obscures. Bereshith contains an opening word, shith, and a closing word, bara."

Said Rabbi Jose: "Truly this is so, and I have myself heard the master, Rabbi Simeon, say that this occult word bara closes but does not open, and thus explained it. "Ere the world became fixed and established, it was wrapped and enshrouded in darkness and chaos reigned supreme and as long as it endured, the world was Tohu (without form and solidity). When this key opened the gates, it became adapted for the generation and production of living beings. When was this? When Abraham came, as it is written: *'These (Aleh) are the generations of the heavens and the earth, behibaram'* Gen. 2:4 (when they were created) which word is an anagram of beabraham (by Abraham). The creation was brought about by the transposing of the letters of the concealing word, bara, into Abar, the sacred principle on which the world was founded and continues to subsist. Mi was the first aspect of the mysterious unknown who, when bara was transposed into Abr, created Alh (these). To Abr he took and joined the letter H, forming Abrh, to Alh. He took and joined I, forming Alhi, then of the two component letters of Mi, he took and added M to each of them and thus were formed Alhim and Abraham. Another explanation of the forming of these names is as follows:

"The holy one took Mi and joined it to Alh and this formed Alhim. He also took Mah, and joining it to Abr, formed Abraham. Now the name Mi (50) has reference to the fifty gates of Binah, the third sephira, and in it is also I, the first letter in the Shem Hamphorah or holy name IHVH, and Mah has also reference to the divine name, for the H thereof is the second letter in it. So the two worlds were formed, by I the world to come through H the present world through Mi, the world on high, through Mah the world below. But until the name of Abraham was formed, there was no generation of living creatures and things, and this explains what is written, Aleh produced the generations of the heaven and the earth bi-Abraham; that is, when the name of Abraham was formed, as it is written *'In that day the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.'*"

Rabbi Hiya prostrated himself on the earth and kissing it, exclaimed: "Oh, earth, earth! how hard and unfeeling art thou! In thee lies buried everything delighting the eyes. All the lights of learning and wisdom thou causest to disappear and vanish from the world. How unfeeling thou art. The great master and teacher, the one shining light of the world, by which it was enlightened, has returned to the dust and now lies concealed in thee, even Rabbi Simeon thou hidest him and all things become subject to thee at last. Overwhelmed with emotion, for a moment he became speechless. Again he cried, earth! earth! Exult thou not, for now I see the great masters of light are not delivered into thy hands, for Rabbi Simeon yet

lives, and with eyes filled with tears of joy, Rabbi Hiya went on his way and Rabbi Jose was with him. For forty days he fasted that he might see Rabbi Simeon, but it was said to him: "It is not possible for thee to behold him." Then fasted he other forty days, at the end of which he saw as in a vision Rabbi Simeon, with Rabbi Eleazar his son, studying and meditating upon the words upon which Rabbi Jose had discoursed. They were surrounded by a multitude of listening and attentive students. Anon he observed mighty angelic beings, who descended from on high, taking Rabbi Simeon, and Eleazar, his son, with them, wended their way again upwards to the celestial school, where, when they arrived, they all became arrayed with garments of dazzling splendor, whiter and more glittering than the light of the sun.

Then spake Rabbi Simeon, and said: "Let Rabbi Hiya come up hither and behold how great joys the holy one hath prepared for the just and upright in the world to come. Blessed the lot of him who cometh hither with a pure heart and mind, blessed also are they who in the world abide steadfast and firm and unmoved as pillars of right and truth." Rabbi Hiya then ascended and after making obeisance to Rabbi Eleazar and the masters who were standing to receive and welcome him, went and sat down at the feet of Rabbi Simeon. A voice resounded and said: "Close thy eyes and bow thy head, so that thy mind may not be distracted or disturbed." He closed his eyes and there was, as it were, a great light shining afar off and another voice was heard saying: "Ye heavenly beings,

high and exalted ones, who unseen and invisible to mortal vision, visit the world, attend ye! Teachers of the mysteries who in your lonely hermitages are sleeping, awaken ye! attend, as also those who before coming hither, have turned darkness into light and made bitter to become sweet, waiting and longing for the dawning of the day when the king should visit his loved ones, in and by whom he shall be glorified and hailed as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Such only have the right and privilege to be present here."

Then Rabbi Hiya saw his fellow students standing around the, masters and they wended their way to the celestial school. Some were ascending and others descending thither, and at their head was the great winged angel of the presence (Metatron), who was saying he had heard in the palace on high that the king, visits everyday and does not forget his lone and loved ones who are struggling towards the higher life unnoticed and unregarded by the world. At that moment three hundred and ninety worlds trembled and shook as with an earthquake. Stars as of fire descended from on high and fell into the great sea, whose ruler then stood up and swore by him that lives forever, that he would dry up all the waters of creation if ever the world and its powers should gather themselves against the children of light to destroy them.

As he ceased speaking, Rabbi Hiya heard a voice from heaven exclaiming: "Fall back! make room for the King Messiah coming to the school of Rabbi Simeon,

whose students are all initiates and master teachers of the secret doctrine." Then came Messiah and visited all the celestial schools and confirmed the teachings and expositions of the mysteries given by their appointed instructors. As he entered the great assembly crowned with many crowns, all the great masters rose up and saluted. Turning to Rabbi Simeon, the emanation of whose light reached up to heaven, Messiah spake and said: "Blessed art thou, Rabbi Simeon, for thy mystic teachings are of the highest worth and valued and cherished by all. They only, along with those of Heseekiah, King of Judah, and Achiya, the Solonite, are marked and sealed with the approval of the holy one. I have come hither because I know that the angel of the presence visits no other school save yours."

As he ceased speaking, Rabbi Simeon raised his hand and repeated the vow of the angel of the great sea. Then spake Messiah words which made the heavens, the ocean and Great Leviathan tremble, fearing that the world was about to be destroyed and annihilated. Beholding Rabbi Hiya at the feet of Rabbi Simeon, "Who!" said he, "who has brought hither one clad in garments of the lower world?" "It is Rabbi Hiya," replied Rabbi Simeon, "a student skilled in the science of the mysteries." "Let him then, together with his son, be enrolled as members of thy school." "I pray thee," said Rabbi Simeon again, "that time may be granted for due preparation." The request was granted and Rabbi Hiya overwhelmed with feelings of joy, went forth exclaiming: "Blessed is the lot of the just in

heaven, blessed also the lot of Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, to whom the words of the scripture may be applied: *'I cause those that love me to be blest with substance, and I will fill their treasures.'*" Prov. 8:21

The following affecting and descriptive account of Rabbi Hiya's decease is not found in some of the early editions of the Zohar and is probably an interpolation from an ancient Kabbalistic work no longer extant.

Rabbi Hiya, perceiving the end of life approaching, exclaimed: "Return, my soul to thy home on high! Thou spark divine of heavenly flame, quit thou this mortal frame. Fearing, trembling, hoping the time has come for thee to mount up to the mansions of light and life. Sweet angelic voices are calling me. My strength is failing, my eyes grow dim; I cease to breathe; the earth is disappearing and heaven opens on my eyes. Me-thinks I hear the fluttering of angel wings. Ah! what do I see'? The tree of life radiating a perfume that fills the azure vault of heaven itself. I see descending the mystic heavenly dove. I recognize King Messiah, whom I saw in Rabbi Simeon's school. Oh! ye angelic beings, lend me your wings, that I may mount on high to meet him. Oh, my soul! can this be death'? How vain the fear and dread of the transports of ecstatic bliss and joys its presence brings! Oh, grave! where is thy victory? Oh, death! where is thy sting?"

A moment, and his soul had taken its flight--the life of Rabbi Hiya had ended.

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

Bereshith! Rabbi Simeon spake and said: "*I have put my words in thy month, and I have covered thee in the shadow of my hand, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundation of the earth.*" Is. 51:16 These words inculcate that man should study and acquaint himself with the mysteries of the secret doctrine by day and by night, and that the Holy One regards those whose delights are therein. Every new thought suggestive or explanatory of it is crowned by him, and by it he forms a new heaven. It is said that whenever a man gives expression to such a word it ascends at once into the divine presence, who taketh and embraceth it and adorneth it with seventy crowns, all engraveth with his holy name. This word of mystic wisdom then descends and visits the children of light, who are the life of the world. Then it flies through seventy thousand worlds and stands before the Ancient of Days, with whose words, enfolding the deepest mysteries, it then becomes united and together fly through eighteen worlds invisible to mortal eyes Is. 64:4 and known only to Alhim. Perfected and complete, it returns to the Ancient of Days and become to him a subject of delight as he takes and crowns it with three hundred and seventy thousand crowns, when at length it is transformed into and becomes a new world. So, with every such like word, it becomes a new world of hidden mysteries of heavenly wisdom, a new earth referred to in scripture. "*As the new heaven and the new earth which I make abiding before me.*" Is. 66:22 Not which I have created, as in the past, but which I create in the

present, by means of those holy words which preserve and renew the worlds, and this is the occult signification of these words. Observe, it is said, not the heavens, but new heavens."

Said Rabbi Eleazar: "What is the occult meaning of the words, 'In the shadow of mine hand have I hid thee?'" Is. 51:16

Rabbi Simeon replied: "When the secret doctrine and its hidden mysteries was delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai myriads of angels endeavored, through jealousy, to consume him with their fiery breath. Then the Holy One covered him with his hand, so that they did him no hurt. Also, with the word of which we have just described proceeding from human lips, it also is covered and protected from the wrath and envy of angels, until it becomes a new heaven or a new earth; for then only become they uncovered and their meaning revealed. This is furthermore shown by the words, '*Say unto Sion Ammi Atha*' (*thou art my people*). They should rather be rendered, '*Immi Atha*' (*thou art with me*), *with* me as an associate, just as my word was with me when I created the world, as it is written: '*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made.*' Ps. 33:6 And so it is with words containing mysteries of the secret doctrine uttered by us. We become creators, and happy- am! blessed are I hey who consecrate themselves to the study and teaching of this holy science and knowledge. If, however, you say that such a word may proceed from or be spoken by one who has no knowledge or understanding of

sacred mysteries, observe that, if this should happen, then the word spoken by one who is ignorant of the secret doctrine is seized hold of by a demon called *aishtahphucoth* (froward lips), who casts it into the great abyss when it becomes a false heaven, and know as *Tohu* (vanity). When this heaven of falsehood is formed, forthwith it becomes united with another demon named *esithzenonim* (or lady of seductions), who causeth the ruin and destruction of thousands and as long as this false heaven subsists and power and rule predominate. Therefore is it written: '*Woe unto you who draw iniquity (avon) with cords of vanity and sin (hatah), as with a cart rope.*' Isa 5:18 What is Hatah? It is this seductress who, proceeding from this world of vanity, destroyeth the children of man. The cause of all this is the student who has not attained to the wisdom and science of an initiate or master. God preserve us from becoming such! See to it, therefore, that ye let not a single word escape your lips concerning divine mysteries without understanding or before consulting with a master that ye may not be originators of *Hatah*, and thus cause the destruction and ruin of many souls."

With one accord exclaimed the students of Rabbi Simeon: "God keep and preserve us from this!"

Continuing his discourse, Rabbi Simeon said: "Mark this also. It was by means of the secret doctrine that the Holy One created the world. Holy scripture affirms that it was with him and was his delight daily. He examined it attentively and minutely, and then

uttered it, and thereby produced all his works in order to teach us to study occult science and sacred mysteries calmly and reverently, and thus avoid falling into error and causing many to stumble, to fall, to perish. It is written, "*Then did he see it and declare it. He prepared it; yea, searched it out.*" Job 28:27 in which verse are the words yaha (see), yesaphrah (declared), kenah (prepared), hakar (searched), showing what carefulness was exercised by the Holy One before creating the world. For ere doing so he formed the four words corresponding to those we have just particularized, viz.: Bereshith, bara, Alhim, ath, implying a fourfold examination of the secret doctrine ere he used it in Creation."

Rabbi Eleazar went one day to visit his uncle, Rabbi Jose, and Rabbi Abba was with him. A porter followed behind them.

Said Rabbi Abba: "As the time and opportunity are favorable, let us discourse and search a little into the secret doctrine."

Then spake Rabbi Eleazar, and said: "It is written, 'Ye shall keep my sabbaths.' Lev. 19:30 Observe that in six days the Holy One created the world that each day was distinguished by a special production. But on what day appeared the production that was fruitful? On the fourth; for those of the three first days were unmanifested and hidden, viz.: fire, water, and earth. If you say that the earth was clothed with vegetation on the third it was truly so. It was, however, really on the fourth day that the results became manifest and

distinctive in themselves, and thus it became the fourth pedestal of the heavenly throne. All the works of creation were finished certainly on the Sabbath, as it is written: '*And Alhim created on the seventh day,*' the Sabbath, which was the fourth day of the earth's fruitful production. But what meaneth 'Ye shall keep my Sabbaths,' as though there were two or more sabbaths? The scripture, by this plural word, designates the eve of the Sabbath and the day of the Sabbath, distinct yet not separate."

Then spake the porter who had followed them, and said: "But what is the signification of the following words: 'Ye shall reverence my sanctuary.'"

Rabbi Eleazar replied: "They refer to the holiness of the Sabbath."

"What do you mean by the holiness of the Sabbath?" asked the stranger.

"It is the heavenly holiness which cometh down upon the earth on that day," replied Rabbi Eleazar.

"If so, then you make not the Sabbath holy, but a something which is from above."

"That truly is so," said Rabbi Abba, "what Rabbi Eleazar has said, for it is written: '*Call the Sabbath a delight, and the Holy of the Lord honorable.*' Is. 58:13 Therefore there is a distinction between the Sabbath day and the Holy of the Lord."

"What, then, meaneth the Holy of the Lord?" asked the stranger again.

"It is," replied Rabbi Abba, "as has been just said, a heavenly holiness co coming from above on that day."

"Then," answered the stranger, "in that ease the heavenly holiness is glorious and hallowed, but not the day of the Sabbath; and yet the scripture says, 'Glorify the Sabbath day.'"

"Men," said Rabbi Eleazar to Rabbi Abba, "let this man speak on, for he seems to be endowed with a wisdom and knowledge we do not possess."

"They turned toward the stranger and said: 'Give us your opinion on the subject.'"

"It is written," he said to them, "'*Keep my Sabbaths,*' Lev. 19:30 words which show plainly that there are two sabbaths--one heavenly and one earthly--yet are they but one, both alike in their esoteric meaning. There is another Sabbath--a third one, not mentioned in scripture, and which was unhonored. This Sabbath said to the Holy One: 'Thou art my maker, and I am called Sabbath. Now, there is no day without a night. Let there a Sabbath night or eve, as well as a Sabbath day, be kept.' To which the Holy One replied: 'My child, Sabbath art thou, and Sabbath thou shalt be called. I will yet adorn thee with great honor and beauty.' Then made he proclamation, and said: 'Reverence my sanctuary.' That is to say, the Sabbath eve, which is also to be revered and kept; for the

name of the Holy One is found in the word. I will now inform you how my father explained this to me. 'Imagine,' said he, 'a square within a circle, symbolizing two divine forms, which, though distinct, are not separate; for there is not division or separation in the divine essence. An earthly resemblance to this divine union is that between Jacob and Joseph. There is also a resemblance in the repetition of the word peace, in that verse of scripture, "*Peace to those that are far off and peace to those that are near*," Is. 57:19 those that are far off referring to Jacob and those that are near to Joseph, symbolical of the Sabbath and the Sabbath eve, distinguished by 'Keep the Sabbath' Deut. 5:12 Ex. 20:8 and 'remember the Sabbath day.' But the words, 'Reverence my sanctuary,' designate a point in the middle of the square and circle which is the most sacred of all--he who violates and breaks this commandment is punishable with death, as it is written, '*Whoso violates it shall be put to death*'; Ex 31:14 that is, who enters into the circle and square to the middle point and profanes it. Therefore is it said, '*Reverence ye*,' for that middle point is called *Ani* (Me). which is but another term or name of the Great Unknown, the Divine Being."

After hearing these words from the unknown stranger, they embraced him, and said:

"Possessed of such knowledge of the secret doctrine, you must not follow behind, but go before us. What is thy name?"

"Ask me not," he replied. "But let us go forward discoursing on occult mysteries, each of us giving utterance to words of hidden wisdom which shall lighten the way."

Said they: "How came you to follow us'?"

"Yod," he replied, "made war against two other letters, Caph and Samech (ch and S), in order that they might become attached to me. Koph was unwilling to be joined to one without whose help it could not subsist a single moment, and Samech was equally unwilling to become bound to Koph, and thus he unable to help those who stumble and fall. Then Yod, coming to me, embraced me, caressed me, wept with me, and said: 'My child, what can I do for you? I aim about to ascend on high, and shall acquire amongst many good things secret letters. all capitals, and valuable. I will then come back to thee and help thee and give thee other letters, better and stronger than those who have forsaken and left thee, even Ysh (blessing), who will he to thee treasures filled with good things. Go, therefore, my child, and mount thy ass.' And this is why I am here."

Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba were greatly pleased, and said: "Go on before and we will follow after thee."

Replied the stranger: "have I not told you it was through the King's orders that I have come hither?"

They said: "But you have not told us your name. Where do you dwell?"

"My habitation is a fine and strong one, a high tower, in which the Holy One and myself only reside. Just now I am here riding on my ass."

Then Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba pondered awhile and meditated on these sayings and the meaning of them, which to them were as honey and manna. Then said they unto him: "Who is thy father? If thou wilt tell us we will make obeisance unto thee."

"Wherefore should I?" he answered. "It is not usual with me to impart occult science to anyone. However, my father lives in the great sea, and was a great fish. He was great and strong and full of years, so that he swallowed up all the other fishes of the sea and then sent them forth living and filled with all the good things of the world. His power is such he can run through the sea in a moment, and he sent me forth as an arrow from the bow of a skilled archer and concealed me in the place of which I have spoken; but he himself has returned, and remains hidden in the sea."

Rabbi Eleazar, after reflecting a moment, exclaimed: "Thou art the son of the great mystic teacher Rabbi Hammenuna, the Aged, the great initiate in the secret doctrine!"

Then they embraced him and went forward, saying: "Let it please thee, Oh, master, tell us thy name?"

"Then," said he, "it is written, '*Benaiah, Son of Jehoida.*' 2 Sam 23:20 We have already expounded the

signification of these words. It will, however, be profitable to consider the deeply occult meaning of them, which has reference to human life. To continue, 'Son of a living man'; that is, of the just one--the life of the world. 'Who wrought many great works,' meaning Lord of all workers and of the heavenly hosts, all of whom are marked and distinguished by the letters of the divine name, Yehoval Sabaoth, the greatest of all names. 'The Lord of great works'; that is, the Lord of 'Mequabsel,' a mighty and most lordly tree. Where is its locality, and in what consists its magnificence? The scripture refers to it as being on high, where '*Eye hath not seen it, save thine alone, Oh, Lord.*' Isa. 64:4 In it is contained the life and essence of all existing things and living creatures, angels, archangels, heavenly hierarchies, principalities and powers, the universe with its unnumbered systems of stars and constellations; yea! all things are contained therein as in a glorious and magnificent palace, and from it come forth all things visible and reflective of its glory and magnificence. 'He killed two lions of Moab,' referring to the first and second temple of Jerusalem, which subsisted until the heavenly light which enlightened them was withdrawn from them; then were they destroyed and the holy throne demolished. Thus it is written: '*I was in the captivity*'; Ezek. 1:1 that is to say, this divine glory or essence called Ani (I) was in captivity. Why does the scripture still proceed, saying: 'By the River Chebar?' Because Chebar is the mysterious river of the heavenly light which floweth forth, but became dried up and ceased to flow when I was in captivity, and this is the

meaning of the words, '*The river decayeth and drieth up,*' Job 14:11 referring to the two temples of Jerusalem. With respect to the words, 'He killed two lions of Moab,' this latter word should be rendered Meab--of the father in heaven, having the same occult meaning. Again it is said of Benaiah, '*He went down and slew a lion in the midst of the pit in time of snow.*' In former times, when the river of divine radiance and glory was flowing, the children of Israel flourished and lived in peace and offered up daily sacrifices for their sins, when a celestial being, with the emblematic form of a lion, was seen by them descending on the altar, consuming and devouring the offerings with the avidity of a hungry man, during which the demons of evil, like dogs, fled away and hid themselves. But, on account of the sins of the people, the Most High came down and killed the lion, if it may be so expressed. '*He killed it in a pit,*' meaning in presence of the dog-like demons, living in dark subterranean places, that they might see they could seize and devour now the sacrifices, as they were of no worth in his sight. Now, the name of the lion was *Ouriel*, because lion-like in form, and the name of the demons was *Baladan*, or not human but dog-like. 'In the time of snow'; that is, when the children of Israel sinned and were consumed by divine justice. Such also is the significance of the words, '*She feareth not for her house of snow.*' Prov. 31:21 Why? Because arrayed with purple, and thus able to resist the fiercest flame. To proceed further, 'And he killed an Egyptian, a goodly man,' teaching that whenever Israel sins it loses the blessing and light of the divine presence which it once

enjoyed. '*And he killed the Egyptian,*' referring to the light which illuminated Israel, viz.: Moses, who was called an Egyptian by the daughters of Jethro, when they said to him: '*An Egyptian hath helped us.*' Ex. 2:19 In Egypt he was born and reared, and there he became initiated in the secret doctrine. 'A goodly man,' for he saw the Lord clearly Num. 12:8 and not in dark speeches. He was a divine man, a man of God, Deut. 33:1 a recipient of divine science as no other man had ever enjoyed before. '*And in hand of the Egyptian was a spear.*' This was the sceptre or rod of God that was handed to Moses, as mentioned by scripture: '*And the rod of the Alhim was in my hand,*' Ex. 17:9 the rod which was made when the sun rose for the first time, and on it was engraved the Shem Hamphorash, or most holy divine name. By it he smote the rock, as it is written: '*And he struck the rock with his rod twice.*' Num. 20:11 Then said the Holy One: 'Moses, my rod was not given to thee to be used thus. I swear, by thy life, from this moment thou shalt not retain it.' Therefore we read: '*He descended with the rod,*' which proved a great affliction for Israel, for then the rod was taken away. '*And he wrested the spear from out of the hand of the Egyptian,*' meaning the rod, and it was never seen again. Then, furthermore, he read: 'He killed him with his spear for the sin committed by a wrong use of the rod. Moses died and was not allowed to enter into the promised land, and that light was taken from Israel. The scripture further relates that he, Benaiah, '*Was more honorable than the thirty, but he was not one of the three.*' 2 Sam. 23:23 'More honorable than the thirty, referring to the thirty years

he was separated from the heavenly powers on high, and who, at the end of life, took him to themselves again. *'But he became not one of the three, viz.: the Divine, under three hypostases or forms, and who gave him the desire of his heart. 'Nevertheless, David set him over his guard';* that is, David, being attached to him, retained his services, so that they might not be separated from one another, in the same way that the moon is attached to the sun, to which it addresses its song of praise as the center and source of its light."

Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba knelt and prostrated themselves before the stranger, and then--but where was he? He had suddenly disappeared. They looked around amazed, but he was not to be seen. They sat down and pondered, bewildered and speechless. At length Rabbi Abba spake, and said:

"True is it that whenever students of esoteric truths travel together, discoursing amongst themselves on the mysteries of the secret doctrine, then are they visited by spiritual masters and teachers from on high. This stranger was indeed none other than Rabbi Hammenuna, the Aged, who has taught us truths which have never been divulged and revealed to anyone before, and leaving us before we were able to recognize him."

Then rose they up to mount their asses, but were unable to do so. Again they tried, with no better success. Filled with a feeling of trepidation, they fled away and left their asses behind, and to this day that place is known and called *Assfield*.

EXPOSITION OF BIBLE MYSTERIES.

"In the beginning," Rabbi Hiya spake and said: "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Jehovah, a good understanding I have all they that do his commandments, his praise endureth forever" (Ps. cxi. 10). The beginning of wisdom has reference to the great object of wisdom, viz., to raise and elevate us into the higher and diviner life, as it is said: "Open to me the gates of righteousness" (Ps. cxviii. 19). This is the gate or way of the Lord through which everyone must pass in order to attain unto this life and live in the presence of the heavenly king. Ere this, however, there are several other gates on the upward course which must be passed through, each with their bolts and bars that have to be unloosed, and the last of which is that called "the fear of the Lord." It is the one only gate of access. There are in scripture two beginnings (*bereshith*) mentioned, and are united into one, viz., "the fear of the Lord" and "the beginning of Wisdom," both one and the same, and never found disjoined from each other. As it is written: "That men may know that thy name is Jehovah only." (Ps. lxxxiii. 18). Why is the first gate called the fear of the Lord? Because it is a tree of good or evil. When a man lives uprightly, it is a tree of good to him; if unjustly, a tree of evil. It is the gate or portal through which all blessing, spiritual or temporal, comes. The words: "A good understanding," refer to those gates which, as aforesaid, are one and the same.

Said Rabbi Jose: "A good understanding"; it is the tree of life without admixture or alloy of evil. "That do his

commandments" are they who are true and faithful students of esoteric science. "His praise endureth forever" signifies that the throne of God or, in other words, the action of the good law, pervades the universe and endures throughout all ages.

Rabbi Simeon was sitting engaged in meditation and study of the secret doctrine during the night when the celestial bride becomes united to her bridegroom, for then, it is enjoined upon all the members of her retinue they should especially be present to accompany her to the nuptial dais and rejoice with her. On the eve of the heavenly union they must devote themselves to the study of the Pentateuch, the prophetic books, and the other parts of scripture, to the explanation of verses, and their occult meaning in which the heavenly spouse takes great delight. These students, with their acquired knowledge resulting from their studies, are "the marriage guests." When she ascendeth and seateth herself on the nuptial dais, the Holy One salutes her and blesses her attendants and presents them with crowns and garlands. Happy and blessed is their lot! Rabbi Simeon, together with his students, spent the night in study and acquiring deeper knowledge of esoteric science. Then said Rabbi Simeon: Blessed are ye! inasmuch as having spent this eve in meditation and study, your names will be enrolled and written in the celestial book, and the Holy One will endow you with faculties and powers more enlarged and receptive for the comprehension and understanding of divine mysteries.

Rabbi Simeon again spake and said: "The heavens declare the glory of God." (Ps. xix. 2). These words have already been explained, but they possess a deeper mystical meaning. At the time that the heavenly spouse is adorned in order to ascend the nuptial dais surrounded with the masters or teachers who have rejoiced with her throughout the night, beholding her husband, then is it "the heavens declare the glory of God," the heavens meaning the bridegroom who enters the nuptial chamber. The word "declare" (*mesapherim*) signifies sending forth glittering rays from one end of the wood to the other like a brilliant sapphire. "The glory of God" is the glory of the bridegroom who is called El (God) as it is written: "El judgeth the righteous, El is angry with the wicked every day." (Ps. vii. 12). During the whole of the year up to the eve of the celestial union, He is called El, but when the marriage day is consummated, he takes the name of Kobad (glory). These two names are a source of reciprocal light, power and joy to each other.

"And the firmament showeth his handiwork." Ps. 19:1 His handiwork are the true and faithful followers of the holy law of whom it is said: "Let the beauty of the Lord, our God, lie upon us and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of [our hands establish thou it" (Ps. xc. 17), signifying or referring to the work of circumcision, which is a sign marked on the human body. Rabbi Hammenuna, the aged, has said: "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin" (Eccles. v. 5). Never allow thy lips to give

expression to evil words and thus sin against thy flesh which has been sanctified with the seal of the holy covenant, for by so doing thou incurrst the danger of being cast into the hell of evil and wrong-doing (Gehenna), the ruler of which is called *Duma* and is always attended with destroying angels, observing those who keep the covenant over whom they have then no power to injure or afflict. It is further written: "Neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error; that is, speak nothing that will cause the angel *Duma* to prevail against and overcome thee. "The firmament showeth his handiwork." These are the companions of the heavenly spouse, whose names are marked and inscribed in the firmament. What firmament? The visible heaven in which are the sun and moon, stars and constellations, and is the true Book of God. In it are found and written the names of all who have kept themselves pure and undefiled.

"Day unto day uttereth speech." Ps. 19:2 This refers to the great holy day of the King who applauds his companions and commends the words of learning and wisdom uttered by each of them. "Night unto night showeth knowledge." That is, each night communicates to the following one the mystery of the esoteric knowledge which enlightens all intelligences. "There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard," meaning they discourse not of worldly matters and vanities in presence of the King, who taketh no delight in such. "Their line is gone out through all the earth" refers to the dimensional archetypes according to which the heavens and the

earth were measured and formed. If the question be asked who resides in them? Scripture declares: "In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun," that is, the Holy One has fixed his mansion or tabernacle in the heavens wherein he is adorned and is then as a bridegroom Ps. 19:5 coming out of his chamber rejoicing to run on his course, which when finished, he mounteth on high and runneth another course elsewhere. "His going forth is from the end of the heaven and his circuit unto the ends of it." Ps. 19:6 that is, he descendeth from the higher to the lower world, which is expressed by the word *outhqonphatha* in which is included the idea of rotundity. For this reason the duration of a year is termed, *thqouphatha-shana*, for during that period the earth has travelled round the sun, and been the recipient of the whole of its rays of light and heat. "And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." Every created thing, whether visible or not, is affected by the warming rays of the sun, which occultly represents the universality of the secret doctrine operating everywhere and is described as "the law of the Lord is perfect."

From the beginning of this Psalm (19th) the tetragrammaton or holy name I. H. V. H. is found six times, showing the mystery contained in the word *Brashith* (in the beginning), which has six letters. *Bra-shith*. (He created six) and these six letters correspond to the six first words of scripture which express the work of creation. Bra, Alhim, eth, hassamayim, veath, aaretzs (Alhim created the substance of the heaven

and the earth) or thus: Alhim created the substance of fire, water and earth.

At this moment Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba entered the assembly. On beholding them, Rabin Simeon exclaimed: Truly is the presence of the Schekinah with you and therefore I have called you Peniel, for ye have seen the Schekinah face to face, and now that I have explained the esoteric meaning of Benaiah, Son of Jehoida, I will explain to you the mystical meaning of yet another biblical verse: "And he slew an Egyptian, a man of great stature five cubits high" (I. Chron. xii. 23). The word Egyptian refers to Moses, of whom we said that he was very "great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh's servants and the people of the land" (Ex. xi. 3), the mystical meaning of which is that he was distinguished more by his intellectual endowments and gifts than by his stature, similar to Adam, the first man, of whom it is metaphorically said that his stature was of the number of cubits separating the east from the west of the world. So when it is said of Moses that he was five cubits in height, it means that he was an adept practised in the five virtues leading to spiritual perfection, viz., love to God, chastity, charity, humility and perseverance in meditation and study of the secret doctrine. "And in the hand of the Egyptian was a spear like a weaver's beam," meaning the rod of God on which was engraved the holy name of forty-two letters, as was the shuttle of Bezaleel since we read: "He hath filled him with the spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge and in all

manner of workmanship, and to devise curious works, in gold, silver and brass--all manner of work of the engraver, of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer" (Ex. xxxv. 31-35). "Happy was the lot of Moses!" Come, therefore, dear friends; come and let us meditate and evolve new thoughts and ideas from out of the secret doctrine, for whoever on this night doeth thus shall be preserved from evil, and live in peace hereafter, "for the angel of the Lord campeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (Ps. xxxiv. 8-9).

Again, on another occasion, Rabbi Simeon spake and said: "Bereshith bara Alhim" (In the beginning created God). These words require great thought and consideration, for everyone that says there is another God is cut off from the world, as it is written: "Thus shall he say unto them, the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens" (Jer. x. 11), for there is other God beside the Holy One.

This verse is in the Chaldee tongue excepting the last word, Aleh (these) which is in Hebrew. Why? It might be said, in order that the holy angels should not comprehend its signification of the divine unity. The true reason is that they might not become envious of man and thus cause him to suffer, for in the words, "the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth" have reference to certain angels who fell from heaven and set themselves up as gods.

Now the word earth which in Hebrew is *arqa*, in the Chaldee is *arca*; why so? Because it is one of the seven lower worlds where reside the descendants of Cain. After his expulsion from the earth, he went thither and begat children. This *arqa* was partly lighted and partly enshrouded in darkness and governed by two chiefs who were constantly warring against each other. On the arrival of Cain, however, they entered into an alliance of friendship for they perceived that it was to him they owed their existence. They became one body with two heads, the name of the one was *Aphira*, and *Qastimon*, the name of the other; this ruled over the dark, that over the light parts of *Arqa*. Before becoming joined together, they were like angels with six wings, *Aphira* having the form of an ox, *Qastimon* that of an eagle. On their union, they took on them the human form and begat offspring like unto themselves. When they found themselves in darkness, they became changed into the form of a serpent with two heads, and crawling as a serpent they plunged into the great sea, the abode of demons, where they found the decadent angels *Azar* and *Azael* and expelled them from their lurking places. These then fled and hid themselves in dark mountains thinking that the Holy One was about to execute vengeance open them for their evil doings and conduct. After this, the two chiefs *Aphira* and *Qastimon* swam through the great sea and went to visit *Naamah*, the mother of the demons, and the first deceiver and seducer of holy angels, who after their fall took different human forms and in their turn became corruptors of mankind. After roaming through the

world they returned to Arqa, and now their great object is to corrupt the descendants of Cain and lead them into sin. Respecting this Arqa, the heaven with its various constellations and stars is altogether different from our visible heavens at night. The seasons for sowing and reaping are not the same as ours in their sequence and regularity, being separated by a considerable number of years; these two chiefs of Arqa are they to whom the Scripture refers, who posing as gods shall become exterminated from our Thebel or earth on which they shall not exercise any dominion, nor afflict the children of man during the night, but as saith the Scripture: "They shall be destroyed by Aleh, by whom the heavens and the earth have been created". This is why Aleh in this verse is written in Hebrew, designating the holy name untranslatable into the Chaldee language.

Then said Rabbi Eleazar to his father: What meaneth the words: "Who would not fear thee, Oh King of nations?" (Jer. x., 7). Who is this King of Nations or Gentiles?

Said Rabbi Simeon: "This verse, my son, has been interpreted in various ways, but all alike erroneous, as is proved by the remaining portion of this verse, "among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee," which closes the mouth of the ungodly who imagine that the Holy One knoweth not and is not acquainted with the thoughts of their hearts. We will now refute their error.

A Gentile philosopher came to me one day, saying: You say that your God rules in the heavens on high and that all the angelic hosts cannot approach him or form a conception of his being. The words of this verse add no dignity to his glory. What glory and eminence can be ascribed to a deity who cannot be found and located amongst mankind. Furthermore, you declare: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses" (Deuter. xxxiv. 10), from which it may be inferred that though no such prophet as he rose in Israel, yet it does not apply to the Gentiles, amongst whom I venture to maintain there have appeared many as great and equal to him. From these words of Jeremiah I conclude therefore that only amongst the wise men of the Gentiles there is none like unto God, but that in Israel there have been many like unto him; consequently, he could not be from this similarity their superior or master. Think well over my words and you will confess that I have reasoned logically and correctly.

My reply to him was thus: 'It is true what thou sayest, that in Israel there have been some sages like unto God. Who raiseth the dead to life again? Is it not God only? Yet both Elijah and Elisha brought the dead to life again. Who maketh the rain descend, but God only? Yet by his prayer Elijah caused it to cease and descend. Who is it but the Holy One that made the heavens and the earth? Yet Abraham came, and by him they were established. Who rules the course of the sun? Is it not the Holy One? Yet Joshua commanded it to stand still as it is written: "And the

sun stood still" (Josh. x., 13). The Holy One gave decrees, so also did Moses, and they were established and conformed. Again the Holy One decreed punishments, but the just men of Israel caused them to cease or be turned aside, as it is said: "The righteous man ruleth in the fear of God" (II. Sam. xxiii., 3). Moreover, he commanded the just to walk in his way and to become like him. On hearing these words the philosopher turned away and went to the village of Shehalim, where he became known as the Little Joshua. There he applied himself to the study of the secret doctrine and eventually became one of the sages and chief men in that place.

Let us now return to the exposition of the words: "All the nations before him are as nothing." Isa. 40:17 What do they mean? As also: "Who would not fear thee, Oh King of the Gentiles." What is their signification? Is God then the King of the Gentiles and not of Israel? Yea, the Holy One everywhere wishes to be glorified and worshipped by Israel and his name to be attached to Israel only, as it is written: "The God of Israel, the God of the Hebrews" (Ex. v., 3). "The King of Israel" (Is. xliv., 6). But the other nations of the world say: "We have other protectors in heaven. Your king ruleth over you and our king ruleth over us. The Scriptures say: "Who would not fear thee, Oh King of the Gentiles?" Now in heaven there are four great cosmokratores or rulers who derive their power and authority over the nations from the divine ruler and are unable to do anything except by his will and command. By the words: "Wise men of the nations," is

meant the celestial rulers of the Gentiles, from whom these receive all their wisdom. Also the words: "Amongst all their kingdoms," have reference to the dominions of these rulers with their attendant hosts, who control the affairs of the world as executors of the divine will. "There is none like unto thee, Oh Lord, the holy and hidden one, who hath made the heavens and the earth." Of this Holy One we learn: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," but to the nations and their dominions may be applied: "And the earth was without form and void."

Children! exclaimed Rabbi Simeon, let each of you prepare or procure a jewel for the heavenly bride; and thou, Eleazar, my son, be ready when the bridegroom cometh, to offer thy present to-morrow, when he ascendeth the dais with hymns and praises of his retinue.

Then Rabbi Eleazar read aloud: "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness?" (Cant. III., 6). The two words "who" and "this" refer to two holy beings intimately associated and joined together by a tie which is termed olah (sacrifice). Though the literal meaning of this word is to ascend or come up, yet it occultly refers to the "Holy of Holies." Again "who" (Mi) is united to "this" (Zoth) in order that it, the Holy of Holies, may come from the wilderness. "Out of the wilderness" means mystically from or out of the word, and we are taught: "Thy word is comely" (Cant. IV., 3). Also by way of tradition has been imparted to us the signification of the words: "Who shall deliver

us out of the hand of this mighty God?" This is the God that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness" (I. Sam., iv., 8). Why in the wilderness, when we read it was in their own land of Egypt? Now the term bemidhar (in the wilderness) in its real meaning is "by the Word," and everything that was done unto them was done by the Word of the Lord. And this is true generally.

When man rises in the morning he should utter or pronounce a blessing as soon as he opens his eyes, as did the holy men of olden time. They used to place near themselves a vessel of water. When waking they washed their hands and then commenced the study of the secret doctrine. At the time of cock crow, whether it be at midnight or break of day, the Holy One is found in the Garden of Eden, during which the defiled and impure are forbidden to pray or bless. When a man sleeps and his soul quits his body, an impure spirit comes and attaches itself to it and pollutes it. This is why it is forbidden to bless God before first washing the hands and engaging in the study of occult science. This applies also during the day when a man is awake; for then the impure spirit is unable to defile him except he is in some improper place. Even then it is unlawful when leaving it to bless God or recite a single verse of scripture without first washing his hands, though he may not have touched any impure thing. Woe to those who neglect and regard not this rite! They know nothing of the glory of their Lord; nothing of the law or principle upon which the world is founded. In every impure

place there is an impure spirit whose delight is to dwell there and attach itself to man.

Then spake Rabbi Simeon and said: Whoever gives not to God a part of his works or substance is guilty of avarice. Satan hates him, becomes his accuser and takes him out of the world. Great and terrible are the afflictions he has to endure! We give to God when we give to the poor as far as we are able, in the time of their need and necessity. If in times of our rejoicing and feasting the Holy One observes them ignored and forgotten and uncared for he grieves over and sympathizes with them and ascends on high, thinking to destroy the world. Then the souls of just men made righteous gather before him, saying: "Lord of the universe! thy name is called gracious and merciful. Have pity upon thy erring, forgetful children." And the Holy One replies: "Is it not upon mercy that I have founded the world as it is written: "The world is builded up on mercy" (Ps. lxxxix., 2). Then spake the angels: "Ruler of the universe! behold such a man eats and drinks and is able to succor the poor, yet refrains his hand." Then goeth forth the accuser, after obtaining permission, and hurries him out of existence. Who in the world was so great as Abraham, who did good and was kind to all creatures? Yet we learn from tradition that when Isaac, his son, was weaned, Gen. 21:8 he made a great feast and invited thereto all the great men of the place to be present. At the festive gathering it is said that an accusing angel was there in the form of a poor unknown beggar, but no one recognized or took any notice of him.

Abraham busied himself in attending to and waiting upon his royal and noble guests, whilst Sarah suckled the infants of all those who did not believe that she had given birth to a child and said that Isaac was some foundling who had been picked up on the roadside and brought to Sarah. When, therefore, they brought their own infants Sarah suckled all of them in their presence as the scripture states: "Who would have said unto Abraham that Sarah should have given children suck." Gen 21:7 The accusing angel happened to be entering the house when Sarah was uttering the words: "God has made me a subject of laughter." Forthwith he presented himself before the Holy One and said: "Lord of the universe, Thou callest Abraham thy friend. He has made a great feast, but has not remembered the poor and has not even offered a sacrifice of a single turtle dove. Sarah also says Thou hast caused her to become a subject of derisive laughter and jeers." Gen. 21:6 Then replied the Holy One: "Who is there amongst men, kinder and more charitable than Abraham?" The accuser, however, was dissatisfied until he learned that the feast would be followed by sorrow and trouble to Abraham, which came to pass when God commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice, and Sarah died through anguish of heart when she learned what God had commanded with respect to her son. All these misfortunes arose through neglect of the poor."

On another occasion Rabbi Simeon spoke and said: it is written: "And Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall and prayed unto the Lord" (Is. xxxviii., 2).

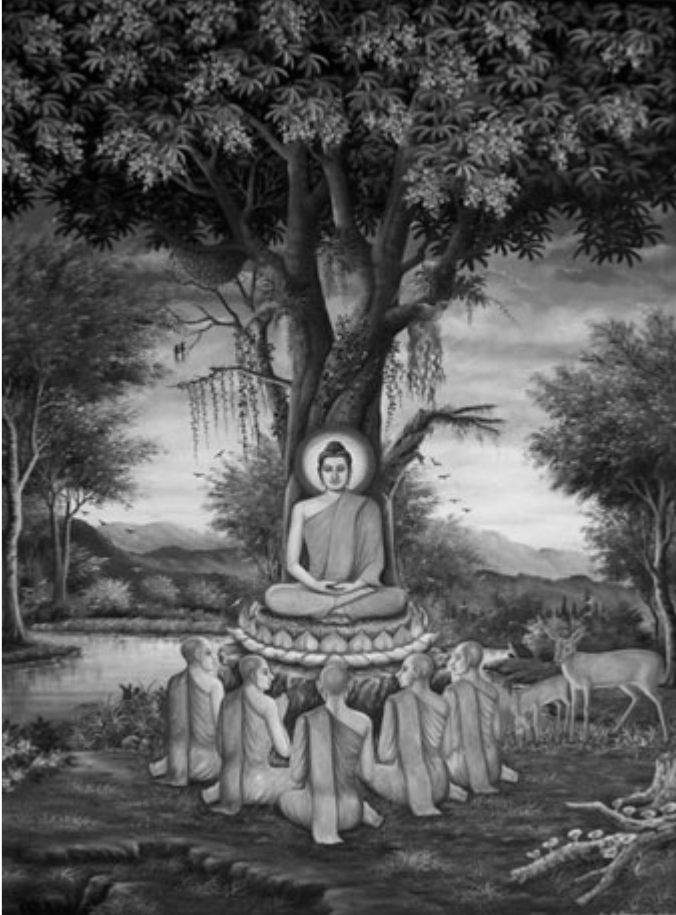
Observe how great the power and influence of a student of the secret doctrine. He is superior to all others, for he fears nothing, being in close touch with the tree of life, from which he receives counsel and instruction all his days. It teaches us in the way of truth and how to avoid evil that may assail us, and also how to direct our ways and walk before the Lord. Therefore, it is necessary we should study the secret doctrine day and night and observe its teachings and doctrines. By night, when reclining on our beds we ought to submit ourselves to the kingdom of heaven and make it our chief object to commend ourselves to the care and guardianship of the Almighty. Then become we freed from all evil influences and demoniacal powers have no sway over us. In the morning the student of esoteric science rises and gives thanks to his Lord and wends his way to the temple and there pours forth his soul in prayer and adoration. Afterwards he should take counsel from the holy patriarchs, as it is written: "I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercies, and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple" (Ps. v. 7). We are taught from tradition never to enter the house of prayer before being instructed by the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who will inspire us with suitable prayers to be addressed to the Holy One, for the words: "In the multitude of thy mercy" designate Abraham; "I will worship in or toward thy holy temple," refer to Isaac; and "in thy fear," to Jacob. Then we render acceptable worship and of us it will be said: "Israel, thou art my servant in whom I will be glorified" (Is. xlix., 3).

Rabbi Pinchus used frequently to go and visit Rabbi Rechumi, whose dwelling was on the borders of the Sea of Genessareth. Rabbi Rechumi was very aged and had become blind. He spake and said to Rabbi Pinchus: I have heard that the son of Jochai, my fellow student in esoteric science, possesses a most precious stone, a pearl I have greatly desired to behold. It radiates rays of light like those of the sun and lightens up the world and will continue to do so until the Ancient of Days sits upon his throne. Thou art his grandson, therefore happy is thy lot. Go thou my son and search for this glittering and lustrous pearl, for now is the most propitious time for finding it.

Rabbi Pinchus with two others, went forth and embarked on a vessel. Observing two birds flying overhead, he cried aloud: Birds! birds! flying over the waters, have you seen the dwelling place of the son of Jochai? After a few moments again he cried: Birds! Birds! come and tell me. Then flew they away, but after a time returned and in the beak of one of them was a slip of paper on which was written: "The son of Jochai has quitted and left the cave in which he dwells with Rabbi Eleazar his son." Then he went and found Rabbi Simeon suffering from bodily sores. To his expressions of sorrow, finding him so ill and afflicted, Rabbi Simeon replied: I am glad, Rabbi Pinchus, thou hast found me thus. If it had been otherwise I should not be what I am. Suffering makes us wiser and better.

Buddhist Mystical Theology

In Conversation with Charaka and Acvagosha



Amitabha Buddha Teaching Disciples

Amitabha:

A Story of Buddhist Theology

By Paul Carus (1906)

*From Ancient Texts Written by Charaka and
Aśvaghoṣa*

THE ORDINATION.

SOON after the time of Aśoka, the great Buddhist emperor of the third century before Christ, India became the theater of protracted invasions and wars. Vigorous tribes from the North conquered the region of the upper Pan jab and founded several states, among which the Kingdom of Gandhâra became most powerful. Despoliations, epidemics, and famines visited the valley of the Ganges, but all these tribulations passed over the religious institutions without doing them any harm. Kings lost their crowns and the wealthy their riches, but the monks chanted their hymns in the selfsame way. Thus the storm breaks down mighty trees, but only bends the yielding reed.

By the virtues, especially the equanimity and thoughtfulness, of the Buddhist priests, the conquerors in their turn were spiritually conquered by the conquered, and they embraced the religion of enlightenment. They recognised the four noble truths taught by the Tathâgata: (1) the prevalence of

suffering which is always in evidence in this world; (2) the origin of suffering as rising from the desire of selfishness; (3) the possibility of emancipation from suffering by abandoning all selfish clinging; and (4) the way of salvation from evil by walking in the noble eightfold path of moral conduct, consisting in right comprehension, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right living, right endeavor, right discipline, and the attainment of the right bliss.

When the kingdom of Gandhâra had been firmly established, commerce and trade began to thrive more than ever, while the vihâras, or Buddhist monasteries, continued to be the home of religious exercises, offering an asylum to those who sought retirement from the turmoil of the world for the sake of finding peace of soul.

It was in one of these vihâras in the mountains near Purushaputra, the present Peshawur, that Charaka, a descendant of the Northern invaders, had decided to join the brotherhood. He was as yet little acquainted with the spirit and purpose of the institution; but being very serious and devoutly religious, the youth had decided, for the sake of attaining perfect enlightenment, to give up everything dear to him, his parents, his home, his brilliant prospect of a promising future, and the love that was secretly budding in his heart.

The vihâra which Charaka entered was excavated in the solid rock of an idyllic gorge. A streamlet gurgled by, affording to the hermits abundance of fresh water,

and the monks could easily sustain their lives by the gifts of the villagers who lived near by, to which they added the harvest of fruit and vegetables which grew near their cave dwellings. In the midst of their small cells was a large chaitya, a hall or church, in which they assembled for daily services, for sermons, meditations, and other pious exercises.

The chaitya, like the cells, was hewn out of the living rock; a row of massive columns on either side divided the hall into a central nave and two aisles.

The ornaments that covered the faces of the rocky walls, though the product of home talent, being made by the untrained hands of monk artists, did not lack a certain refinement and loftiness. The pictures exhibited scenes from the life of Buddha, his birth, his deeds, his miracles, illustrations of his parables, his sermons, and his final entry into Nirvâna.

A procession of monks, preceded by a leader who swung a censer, filed in through the large portal of the chaitya. Two by two they moved along the aisles and solemnly circumambulated the dagoba, standing at the end of the nave in the apse of the hall, just in the place where idol worshipers would erect an altar to their gods. It was in imitation of a tumulus destined to receive some relic of the revered teacher, and the genius of the architect had artfully designed the construction of the cave so that the rays of the sun fell upon the dagoba and surrounded its mysterious presence with a halo of light.

The monks intoned a solemn chant, and its long-drawn cadences filled the hall with a spirit of sanctity, impressing the hearers as though Buddha himself had descended on its notes from his blissful rest in Nirvâna to instruct, to convert, and to gladden his faithful disciples.

The monks chanted a hymn, of which the novice could catch some of the lines as they were sung; and these were the words that rang in his ears:

"In the mountain hall we are taking our seats,
In solitude calming the mind;
Still are our souls, and in silence prepared
By degrees the truth to find."

When they had circumambulated the dagoba, they halted in front of it where the novice now discovered an image of the Buddha in the attitude of teaching, and the monks spoke in chorus:

"I am anxious to lead a life of purity to the end of my earthly career when my life will return to the precious trinity of the Buddha, the Truth and the Brotherhood."

Then the chanting began again:

"Vast as the sea
Our heart shall be,
And full of compassion and love.
Our thoughts shall soar

Forevermore
High like the mountain dove.

"We anxiously yearn
From the Master to learn,
Who found the path of salvation.
We follow His lead
Who taught us to read
The problem of origination."

A venerable old monk who performed the duties of abbot now stepped forth and asked the assembled brethren whether any one had a communication to make that deserved the attention of the assemblage, and after the question had been repeated three times Subhûti, one of the older monks, said:

"There is a young man with us who, having left the world, stayed with me some time for the sake of instruction and discipline. He is here and desires to be admitted to the brotherhood."

The abbot replied: "Let him come forward."

It was Charaka; and when he stepped into the midst of the brethren, the abbot viewed his tall figure with a kindly, searching glance and asked: "What is your name and what your desire?"

Charaka knelt down and said with clasped hands: "My name is Charaka. I entreat the Brotherhood for initiation. May the Brotherhood receive me and raise me up to their height of spiritual perfection. Have

compassion on me, reverend sirs, and grant my request."

The abbot then asked the suppliant a series of questions as prescribed in the regulations of the brotherhood: whether he was free from contagious disease, whether he was a human being, a man, and of age, whether his own master and not a slave nor in the king's service; whether unencumbered with debts and whose disciple he was.

When all the questions had been answered satisfactorily, the abbot submitted the case to the brotherhood, saying: "Reverend sirs, the Brotherhood may hear me. This man Charaka, a disciple of the venerable Subhûti, desires to receive the ordination. He is free from all obstacles to ordination. He has an alms-bowl and a yellow robe, and entreats the Brotherhood for ordination, with the reverent brother Subhûti as his teacher. Let those among the venerable brethren who are in favor of granting the ordination be silent. Let those who are opposed to it step forth and speak."

These words were three times repeated, and as there was no dissenting voice, the abbot declared with solemnity: "The Brotherhood indicates by its silence that it grants to Charaka the ordination, with the reverend brother Subhûti as his teacher."

Having completed the ceremony and having recited the rules of the order including the four great prohibitions, viz., that an ordained monk must

abstain from carnal indulgence, from theft of any kind, from killing even the meanest creature, and from boasts of miraculous powers, the abbot requested the novice to pronounce the refuge formula, which Charaka repeated three times in a clear and ringing voice. Then the congregation again intoned a chant, and, having circumambulated the dagoba, left the assembly hall, marching in solemn procession along the aisles, each brother thereupon betaking himself to his cell.

THE NOVICE.

CHARAKA the novice lived with his brethren in peace, and his senior, the venerable Subhûti, was proud of his learned disciple, for he was patient, docile, modest, earnest, and intelligent, and proved all these good qualities by an abnormally rapid progress. He learned the Sutras perfectly and soon knew them better than his teacher. He had a sonorous voice, and it was a pleasure to hear him recite the sacred formulas or chant the verses proclaiming the glorious doctrine of the Blessed One. To all appearances the Brotherhood had made a good acquisition; but if the venerable Subhûti could have looked into the heart of Charaka he would have beheld a different state of things, for the soul of the novice was full of impatience, dissatisfaction, and excitement. The life of a monk was so different from what he had expected and his dearest hopes found no fulfilment.

Charaka had learned many beautiful sentiments from the mouth of his teacher; some of them fascinated him

by the melodious intonation of their rhythm, some by the philosophical depth of their meaning, some by their truth and lofty morality. How delighted was he with the lines;

"Earnestness leads to the State Immortal
Thoughtlessness is dreary Yama's portal.
Those who earnest are will never die,
While the thoughtless in death's clutches lie."

How powerfully was he affected by the following stanza:

"With goodness meet an evil deed,
With lovingkindness conquer wrath,
With generosity quench greed,
And lies, by walking in truth's path."

But sometimes he was startled and had difficulty in understanding the sense. He wanted peace, not tranquilisation; he wanted Nirvâna, its bliss, and its fulness, not extinction. And yet sometimes it seemed as if the absolute obliteration of his activity were expected of him:

"Only if like a broken gong
Thou utterest no sound:
Then hast thou reached Nirvana,
And the end of strife hast found."

Yet Charaka said to himself: "It is only the boisterous noise that must be suppressed, not work; only evil

intention, not life itself; the weeds, not the wheat." For it is said:

"What should be done, ye do it,
Nor let pass by the day:
With vigor do your duty,
And do it while you may."

Not life, but error and vice, must be attacked. Not existence is evil, but vanity, anger, and sloth:

"As fields are damaged by a bane,
So 'tis conceit destroys the vain.
As palaces are burned by fire,
The angry perish in their ire.
And as strong iron is gnawed by rust,
So fools are wrecked through sloth and lust."

What ambition was beaming in the eyes of Charaka! The venerable Subhûti thought, there is but one danger for this noble novice: it is this, that the brethren may discover his brightness and spoil him by flattery. Instead of freeing himself from the fetters of the world, he may be entangled in the meshes of a spiritual vanity, which, being more subtle, is more perilous than the lust of the world and of its possessions. Then he recited to Charaka the lines:

"No path anywhere
Leadeth through the air.
The multitude delights
In sacrificial rites.
Throughout the world

Ambition is unfurled:
 But from all vanity
 Tathagatas are free."

Charaka knew that there were fools among men considered saints, who claimed to walk through the air. He was not credulous, but when told that to attempt the performance of supernatural deeds was vanity, his ambition revolted against the idea of setting limits to human invention. Man might find paths through the air as well as over water; and he submitted to the sentiment only because he regarded it as a form of discipline by which he would learn to rise higher. So he suppressed his ambition, thinking that if he only abode his time he would find himself richly rewarded by the acquisition of spiritual powers which would be a blessing forever, an imperishable treasure that could not be lost by the accidents of life and would not share the doom of compounds which in due time must be dissolved again. He was yearning for life, not for death, for a fulness of melody and a wealth of harmony, not for the stillness of the broken gong. He had seen the world and he knew life in all its phases. He disdained loud noise and coarse enjoyments but he had not left his home and wandered into homelessness to find the silence of the tomb. A chill came over him, and he shrank from the ideal of sainthood as though it were the path to mental suicide. "No, no!" he groaned, "I am not made to be a monk. Either I am too sinful for a holy life, or the holiness of the cloister is not the path of salvation."

KEVADDHA'S STORY.

"THERE was a priest in Benares, a man of Brahman caste, learned in all the wisdom of the Vedas, not of the common type of priests but an honest searcher after truth. He longed for peace of heart and was anxious to reach Nirvâna; yet he could not understand how it was possible in the flesh to attain perfect tranquillity, for life is restless and in none of the four states of aggregation can that calmness be found which is the condition of the blissful state. So, this priest thought to himself: 'Before I can make any progress, I must solve the question, Where do the four states of aggregation: the solid state, the watery state, the fiery state, and the state of air, utterly cease?'

"Having prepared his mind, the priest entered into a trance in which the path to the gods became revealed to him, and he drew near to where the four great kings of the gods were. And having drawn near, he addressed the four great kings as follows: 'My friends, where do the four states of aggregation: the solid state, the watery state, the fiery state, and the state of air, utterly cease?' When he had thus spoken, the four great kings answered and said: 'We gods, O priest, do not know where the four states of aggregation utterly cease. However, O priest, there are the gods of the higher heavens, who are more glorious and more excellent than we. They would know where the four states of aggregation utterly cease.'

"When the four great kings had thus spoken the priest visited the gods of the higher heavens and

approached their ruler, Ishvara. He propounded the same question and received the same answer. Ishvara, the Lord, advised the priest to go to Yâma. 'He is powerful and has charge over the souls of the dead. He is apt to be versed in problems that are profound and recondite and abstruse and occult. Go to Yâma; he may know where the four states of aggregation utterly cease.'

"The priest acted upon Ishvara's advice, and went to Yâma, but the result was the same. Yâma sent the priest to the satisfied gods, whose chief ruler is the Great Satisfied One. 'They are the gods who are pleased with whatever is. They are the gods of serenity and contentment. If there is any one who can answer your question, they will be able to tell you where the four states of aggregation utterly cease.'

"The priest went to the heaven of the satisfied gods, but here too he was disappointed. Their ruler, the Great Satisfied One, said: 'I, O priest, do not know where these four states of aggregation, the solid state, the watery state, the fiery state, and the state of air, utterly cease. However, O priest, there are the gods of the retinue of Brahma, who are more glorious and more excellent than I. They would know where these four states of aggregation utterly cease.'

"Then, this same priest entered again upon a state of trance, in which his thoughts found the way to the Brahma world. There the priest drew near to where the gods of the retinue of Brahma were, and having drawn near, he spake to the gods of the retinue of

Brahma as follows: 'My friends, where do these four states of aggregation, the solid state, the watery state, the fiery state, and the state of air, utterly cease?'

"When he had thus spoken, the gods of the retinue of Brahma answering spake as follows: 'We, O priest, cannot answer your question. However, there is Brahma, the great Brahma, the First Cause of the All, the Supreme Being, the All-Perfection, the All-Perceiving One, the Controller, the Lord of All, the Creator, the Fashioner, the Chief, the Victor, the Ruler, the All-Father, he who is more glorious, more excellent, than all celestial beings, he will know where the four states of aggregation, the solid state, the watery state, the fiery state, and the state of air, do utterly cease.'

"Said the priest: 'But where, my friends, is the great Brahma at the present moment?' And the gods answered: 'We do not know, O priest, where the great Brahma is, or in what direction the great Brahma can be found. But inasmuch, O priest, as he is omnipresent, you will see signs and notice a radiance and the appearance of an effulgence, and then Brahma will appear. This is the previous sign of the appearance of Brahma, that a radiance is noticed, or an effulgence appears.'

"The priest, having invoked Brahma's appearance with due reverence and according to the rules of the Vedas, in a short time Brahma appeared. Then the priest drew near to where Brahma was, and having drawn near, he spake to Brahma as follows: 'My

friend, where do the four states of aggregation, the solid state, the watery state, the fiery state, and the state of air, utterly cease?

"When he had thus spoken, the great Brahma opened his mouth and spake as follows: 'I, O priest, am Brahma, the great Brahma, the Supreme Being, the All-Perfection, the All-Perceiving One, the Controller, the Lord of All, the Creator, the Fashioner, the Chief, the Victor, the Ruler, the All-Father.'

"A second time the priest asked his question, and the great Brahma gave him the same answer, saying: 'I, O priest, am Brahma, the great Brahma, the Supreme Being, the All-Perfection;' and he did not cease until he had enumerated all the titles applied to him.

"Having patiently listened to Brahma, the priest repeated his question a third time, and added: 'I am not asking you, my friend, Are you Brahma, the great Brahma, the Supreme Being, the All-Perfection, the All-Perceiver, the All-Father, and whatever titles and accomplishments you may have in addition; but this, my friend, is what I ask you: 'Where do the four states of aggregation, the solid state, the watery state, the fiery state, and the state or air, utterly cease?'

"The great Brahma remained unmoved, and answered a third time, saying: 'I, O priest, am Brahma, the great Brahma, the Supreme Being, the All-Perfection, the All-Perceiver,' enumerating again all the titles applied to him.

"Now the priest rose and said: 'Are you truly a living being, or an automaton, that you can do nothing but repeat a string of words?'

"And now the great Brahma rose from his seat and approached the priest, and leading him aside to a place where he could not be overheard by any of the gods, spake to him as follows: 'The gods of my suite and all the worshipers of the world that honor me with sacrifice and adoration, believe that Brahma sees all things, knows all things, has penetrated all things; therefore, O priest, I answered you as I did in the presence of the gods. But I will tell you, O priest, in confidence, that I do not know where the four states of aggregation, the solid state, the watery state, the fiery state, and the state of air, utterly cease. It was a mistake, O priest, that you left the earth where the Blessed One resides, and came up to heaven in quest of an answer which cannot be given you here. Turn back, O priest, and having drawn near to the Blessed One, the Enlightened Buddha, ask him your question, and as the Blessed One shall explain it to you, so believe.'

"Thereupon the priest, as quickly as a strong man might stretch out his bent arm, disappeared from the Brahma heaven and appeared before the Blessed One; and he greeted the Blessed One and sat down respectfully at one side, and spake to the Blessed One as follows: 'Reverend Sir, where do the four states of aggregation, the solid state, the watery state, the fiery state, and the state of air, utterly cease?'

"When he had thus spoken the Blessed One answered as follows: 'Once upon a time, O priest, some sea-faring traders had a land-sighting bird when they sailed out into the sea; and when the ship was in mid-ocean they set free that land-sighting bird. This bird flies in an easterly direction, in a southerly direction, in a westerly direction, and in a northerly direction, and to the intermediate quarters, and if it sees land anywhere it flies thither, but if it does not see land it returns to the ship. In exactly the same way, O priest, when you had searched as far as the Brahma world and found no answer to your question you returned to the place whence you came. The question, O priest, ought never to have been put thus: Where do these four states of aggregation cease? The question ought to be as follows:

"Oh! Where can water, where can wind,
Where fire and earth no footing find?
Where disappear all mine and thine,
Good, bad, long, short, and coarse and fine,
And where do name and form both cease
To find in nothingness release?"

"The answer, however, is this:

"Tis in the realm of radiance bright,
Invisible, eternal light,
And infinite, a state of mind,
There water, earth, and fire, and wind,
And elements of any kind,
Will nevermore a footing find;
There disappear all mine and thine,

Good, bad, long, short, and coarse, and fine,
 There too will name and form both cease,
 To find in nothingness release."

"Then the priest understood that the world of matter is restless and remains restless, but peace of heart is a condition of mind which must be acquired by self-discipline, by wisdom, by devotion. The gods cannot help; nor even can Brahma himself, the Great Brahma, the Supreme Being, the Lord and Creator. Sacrifice is useless and prayer and worship are of no avail. But if we desire to attain the highest state of bliss, which is Nirvâna, we must follow the Blessed One, the Teacher of gods and men; and like him we must by our own effort become lamps unto ourselves and resolutely walk upon the noble eightfold path."

THE CONFESSION.

THE young novice spent his days in study and his nights in doubt. He followed with interest the recitations of his instructor on the philosophy of the Enlightened One; he enjoyed the birthstories of Bodhisattva and the parables of the master with their moral applications, but when he retired in the evening or was otherwise left to his own thoughts he began to ponder on the uselessness of the hermit's life and longed to return to the world with its temptations and struggles, its victories and defeats, its pleasures and pains, its hopes and fears. He enjoyed the solitude of the forest, but he began to think that the restlessness of the world could offer him more peace of mind than the inactivity of a monkish life.

When Charaka had familiarised himself with all the Sutras and wise sayings which were known to the brethren of the monastery, the time began to hang heavy on his hands, and he felt that the religious discourses were becoming tedious.

Weeks elapsed, and Charaka despaired of either becoming accustomed to monkish life or of understanding the deeper meaning of their renunciation of the world, and his conscience began to trouble him; for the more the elder brethren respected him for his knowledge and gentleness, and the more they praised him, the less worthy he deemed himself of their recognition.

The day of confession approached again. He had spent the hours in fasting and self-discipline, but all this availed nothing. He was weary and felt a sadness of heart beyond description.

In the evening all the brethren were gathered together in the chaitya, the large hall where they held their devotional meetings. The aisles lay in mystic darkness, and the pictures on the heavy columns and on the ceiling were half concealed. They appeared and disappeared from time to time in the flicker of the torches that were employed to light the room. The monks sat in silent expectation, their faces showing a quietude and calmness which proved that they were unconcerned about their own fate, ready to live or to die, as their doom might be, only bent on the aim of reaching Nirvâna.

The senior monk arose and addressed the assembly. "Reverend sirs," he said, "let the order hear me. To-day is full moon, and the day of the unburdening of our hearts. If the order is ready, let the order consecrate this day to the recital of the confession. This is our first duty, and so let us listen to the declaration of purity."

The brethren responded, saying: "We are here to listen and will consider the questions punctiliously."

The speaker continued: "Whoever has committed a transgression, let him speak, those who are free from the consciousness of guilt, let them be silent."

At this moment a tall figure rose slowly and hesitatingly from the ground at the further end of the hall. He did not speak but stood there quietly, towering for some time in the dusky recess between two pillars as though he were the apparition of a guilty conscience. The presiding brother at last broke the silence and addressed the brethren, saying: "A monk who has committed a fault, and remembers it, if he endeavors to be pure, should confess his fault. When a fault is confessed it will lie lightly upon him."

Still the shadowy figure stood motionless, which seemed to increase the gloom in the hall.

"One of the brethren has risen, indicating thereby that he desires to speak," continued the abbot. "A monk who does not confess a fault after the question has been put three times is guilty of an intentional lie, and

the Blessed One teaches that an intentional lie cuts a man off from sanctification."

The gloomy figure now lifted his head and with suppressed emotion began to speak. "Venerable father," he said, "and ye, reverend sirs, may I speak out and unburden my heart?" The voice was that of the novice, and a slight commotion passed through the assemblage. Having been encouraged to speak freely and without reserve, Charaka began: "Venerable father, and ye, reverend sirs: I feel guilty of having infringed on one of the great prohibitions. I am as a palm tree, the top of which has been destroyed. I am broken in spirit and full of contrition. I am anxious to be a disciple of the Shakya-Muni, but I am not worthy to be a monk, I never have been and I never shall be." Here his voice faltered, and he sobbed like a child.

The brethren were horror-stricken; they thought at once that the youth was contaminated by some secret crime; he was too young to be free from passion, too beautiful to be beyond temptation, too quick-witted not to be ambitious. True, they loved him, but they felt now that their affection for him was a danger, and there was no one in the assembly who did not feel the youth's self-accusation as partly directed against himself. But the abbot overcame the sentiment that arose so quickly, and encouraged the penitent brother to make a full confession. "Do not despair," he said, "thou art young; it is natural that thy heart should still

cherish dreams of love, and that alluring reminiscences should still haunt thy mind."

"I entered the brotherhood with false hopes and wrong aspirations," replied the novice. "I am longing for wisdom and supernatural powers; I am ambitious to do and to dare, and I hoped to acquire a deeper knowledge through self-discipline and holiness. I am free from any actual transgression, but my holiness is mockery; my piety is not genuine; I am a hypocrite and I find that I am belying you, venerable father, and all the monks of this venerable community. But it grieveth me most that I am false to myself; I am not worthy to wear the yellow robe."

"Thou art not expected to be perfect," replied the abbot, "thou art walking on the path, and hast not as yet reached the goal. Thy fault is impatience with thyself and not hypocrisy."

"Do not palliate my fault, venerable father," said Charaka. "There is something wrong in my heart and in my mind. If I am not a hypocrite, then I am a heretic; and a heretic walks on the wrong road in the wrong direction, and can never reach the goal. Do not extenuate, do not qualify and mitigate my faults, for I feel their grievousness and am anxious to be led out of the darkness into the light. I long for life and the unfoldment of life. I want to comprehend the deepest truths; I want to know and to taste the highest bliss; I want to accomplish the greatest deeds."

"Then thou art worldly; thou longest for power, for fame, for honor, for pleasures," suggested the abbot inquiringly; "thou art not yet free from the illusion of selfhood. It is not the truth, then, that thou wantest, but thyself, to be an owner of the truth; it is self-enhancement, not service; vanity, not helpfulness."

"That may be, reverend father," replied the novice; "thy wisdom shall judge me; though I do not feel myself burdened by selfishness. No, I do not love myself. I would gladly sacrifice myself for any noble cause, for truth, for justice, for procuring bliss for others. Nor do I crave for worldly pleasures, but I do not feel any need of shirking them. Pleasures like pains are the stuff that life is made of, and I do not hate life. I enjoy the unfoldment of life with all its aspirations, not for my sake, but for life's sake. I do not love myself, I love God. That is my fault, and that is the root from which grow all my errors, heresies, hypocrisies, and the false position in which I now am."

The good abbot did not know what to say. He looked at the poor novice and pitied him for his pangs of conscience. Every one present felt that the man suffered, that there was something wrong with him; but no one could exactly say what it was. His ambition was not sinful but noble. And that he loved God was certainly not a crime. At last the abbot addressed Subhûti, Charaka's senior and teacher, and asked him: "Have you, reverend brother, noticed in

this novice's behavior or views anything strange or exceptional?"

Subhûti replied that he had not.

The abbot continued to inquire about Charaka's previous religious relations and the significance of his love of God.

"I do not know, reverend sir," was the elder monk's answer. "He is not a Brahman, but a descendant of a noble family of the northern conquerors that came to India and founded the kingdom of Gandhâra. Yet he knows Brahman writings and is familiar with the philosophy of the Yavanas of the distant West. I discoursed with him and understand that by God he means all that is right and good and true in the world and without whom there can be no enlightenment . . ."

Having thus discussed the case of the novice Charaka, the abbot addressed himself to the Brotherhood, asking the reverend sirs what they would deem right in the present case. Was the brother at all guilty of the fault of which he accused himself and if so what should he do to restore his good standing and set himself aright in the Brotherhood?

Then Subhûti arose and said: "Charaka is a man of deep comprehension and of an earnest temper. The difficulty which he encounters is not for us to judge him or to advise him about. But there is a philosopher living in the kingdom of Magadha, by the name of

Açvaghosha. If there is any one in the world that can set an erring brother right, it is Acvagosha whose wisdom is so great that since Buddha entered Nirvana there has been no man on earth who might have surpassed him either in knowledge or judgment." So Subhûti proposed to write a letter of introduction to Açvaghosha commending the brother Charaka to his care and suggesting to him to dispel his doubts and to establish him again firmly in the faith in which the truth shines forth more brilliantly than in any other religion.

The abbot agreed with Subhûti and the general opinion among the brethren was in favor of sending Charaka to the kingdom of Magadha to the philosopher Açvaghosha to have his doubts dispelled and his heart established again in the faith of Buddha, the Blessed One, the teacher of truth.

Before they could carry out their plan the session was interrupted by a messenger from the royal court of Gandhâra, who inquired for a novice by the name of Charaka,—a man well versed in medicine and other learned arts. A dreadful epidemic had spread in the country, and the old king had died while two of his sons were afflicted with the disease and now lay at the point of death. The oldest son and heir to the throne was in the field defending his country against the Parthians, and some mountaineers of the East, nominally subject to the kingdom of Magadha but practically independent had utilised the opportunity

afforded by these circumstances to descend into the fertile valleys of Gandhâra and to pillage the country.

The regard in which Charaka had been held in the Brotherhood during his novitiate had not suffered through his confession and was even heightened. It had been known in the cloister that the young novice was of a noble family, but he had made nothing of it and so the intimate connection with the royal family of the country created an uncommon sensation among his venerable brethren. Now, a special awe attached to his person since it was known that the young king knew of Charaka, and needing his wisdom, sent a special messenger to call him back to the capital.

In spite of the interruption the ceremony of confession was continued and closed in the traditional way; all the questions regarding transgressions that might have been committed were asked and in some cases sins were punctiliously reported by those who felt a need of unburdening their conscience. Penances were imposed which were willingly and submissively assumed. When everything had been attended to, the abbot turned again to Charaka saying, "If you had concealed your secret longings, you would have been guilty of hypocrisy, but now since you have openly laid bare the state of your mind, there is no longer any falsehood in you. Therefore I find no fault with your conduct; should you find that you cannot remain a monk, you must know that there is no law that

obliges you to remain in the Brotherhood against your will."

The abbot then granted Charaka permission to obey the King's call, saying, "You are free to leave the order in peace and goodwill, but I enjoin you to make a vow that you will not leave your doubts unsettled, but that as soon as you have attended to the pressing duties which will engage your attention at the capital you will make a pilgrimage to the philosopher Aṣvaghosha, who lives in the kingdom of Magadha. He will be a better adviser than I, and he shall decide whether or not you are fit to be a monk of our Lord the Buddha."

AṢVAGHOSHA.

BUDDHA'S birthday was celebrated with greater rejoicing than usual in the year following king Kanishka's invasion, which took place in the fifth century after the Nirvâna. The formidable invaders had become friends and the people were joyful that the war clouds had dispersed so rapidly.

Kanishka was in good spirits. He was elated by his success, but it had not made him overbearing, and he was affable to all who approached him. In a short time he had become the most powerful monarch of India, his sway extending far beyond the boundaries of his own kingdom. His generals had been victorious over the Parthians in the far west, and his alliance with the king of Magadha made him practically ruler over the valley of the Ganges. But more effective than

his strategy and the might of his armies was the kindness which he showed to his vanquished enemies. Princes of smaller dominions willingly acknowledged his superiority and submitted to him their difficulties because they cherished an unreserved confidence in his fairness and love of justice. Thus was laid the foundation of a great empire upon whose civilisation the religion of the Enlightened One exercised a decided influence. Peace was established, commerce and trade flourished, and Greek sculptors flocked to Gandhâra, transplanting the art of their home to the soil of India.

It was the beginning of India's golden age which lasted as long as the Dharma, the doctrine of the Tathâgata, was kept pure and undefiled. A holy enthusiasm seized the hearts of the people and there were many who felt an anxiety to spread the blessings of religion over the whole world. Missionaries went out who reached Thibet and China and even far-off Japan where they sowed the seeds of truth and spread the blessings of lovingkindness and charity.

Kanishka and the king of Magadha enjoyed each other's company. The two allied monarchs started on a peaceful pilgrimage to the various sacred spots of the country. They visited Lumbinî, the birthplace of the Bodhisattva. Thence passing over the site of Kapilavastu, the residence of Shuddhodana, Buddha's father in the flesh and the haunt of Prince Siddhârtha in his youth, they went to the Bodhi tree at Buddhagaya and returned to the capital Benares, to

celebrate the birth festival of the Buddha in the Deer Park, on the very spot where the revered Teacher had set the wheel of truth in motion to roll onward for the best of mankind,—the wheel of truth which no god, no demon, nor any other power, be it human, divine or infernal, should ever be able to turn back.

A procession went out to the holy place and circumambulated the stupa, erected on the sacred spot in commemoration of the memorable event, and the two monarchs, who had but a short time before met as foes on the battlefield, walked together like brothers, preceded by white-robed virgins bearing flowers, and followed by priests chanting gâthâs of the blessings of the good law and swinging censers. No display of arms was made but multitudes of peaceful citizens hailed the two rulers and blessed the magnanimity of the hero of Gandhâra.

When the procession halted, Kanishka and his brother king stood in front of a statue of the Buddha and watched the process of depositing flowers. "Who is the beautiful maiden that is leading the flower carriers?" asked Kanishka of the king of Magadha in a whisper; and the latter replied: "It is Bhadrâçrî, my only daughter."

Kanishka followed with his eye the graceful movements of the princess and breathed a prayer: "Adoration to the Buddha!" he said to himself in the silent recesses of his heart. "The Buddha has guided my steps and induced me to make peace before the demons of war could do more mischief. I now vow to

myself that if the princess will accept me I shall lead her as queen to my capital and she shall be the mother of the kings of Gandhâra to come. May the Tathâgata's blessing be on us and my people!"

At the stupa of the first sermon of the Buddha, peace was definitely concluded. The king of Magadha delivered to his powerful ally the sacred bowl, a treasure which, though small in size, was esteemed worth more than half the kingdom of Magadha; and Aṣvaghosha, the old philosopher, was bidden to appear at court and be ready to accompany the ruler of Gandhâra to his home in the northwest of India.

Aṣvaghosha arrived at the Deer Park in a royal carriage drawn by white horses, and there he was presented to King Kanishka. He bowed reverently and said: "Praised be the Lord Buddha for his blessed teachings! Gladness fills my heart when I think how your majesty treats your vanquished foe. The victorious enemy has become a friend and brother, making an end of all hostility forever."

"Good, my friend," replied Kanishka; "if there is any merit in my action I owe thanks for my karma to the Tathâgata. He is my teacher and I bless the happy day on which I became his disciple. My knowledge, however, is imperfect and even my learned friend Charaka is full of doubts on subjects of grave importance. Therefore I invite you to accompany me to Gandhâra, where my people and myself are sorely in need of your wisdom and experience."

"Your invitation is flattering," said the philosopher, "and it is tendered in kindly words; but I pray you, noble sir, leave me at home. I am an aged man and could scarcely stand the exertion of the journey. But I know a worthy scholar, Jñanayaça, who is well versed in the doctrine of our Lord and much younger than I. He may go in my place; and should I grow stronger I shall be glad to visit you in Gandhâra."

"Charaka!" said the king, "have a room fitted up for Açvaghosha in our residence at Benares, and so long as we remain here he shall pass the time in our company. Let him be present at our meals, and when we rest in the evening from the labors of the day let us listen to the words of the philosopher who is regarded as the best interpreter of the significance of Buddha's teachings."

THE PARABLE OF THE ELEPHANT.

AÇVAGHOSHA saw that every eye was intent upon him, and so he told the story of the white Elephant. He said:

"There was a noble and mighty elephant, an elephant white in color, with a strong trunk and long tusks, trained by a good master, and willing and serviceable in all the work that elephants are put to. And this noble and mighty elephant being led by his guide, the good master who had trained him, came to the land of the blind. And it was noised about in the land of the blind that the noble and mighty elephant, the king of all beasts, the wisest of all animals, the strongest

and yet the meekest and kindest of creatures, had made his appearance in their country. So the wise men and teachers of the blind came to the place where the elephant was and every one began to investigate his shape and figure and form. And when the elephant was gone they met and discussed the problem of the noble and mighty beast, and there were some who said he was like a great thick snake; others said he was like a snake of medium size. The former had felt the trunk, the latter the tail. Further there were some who claimed that his figure was like that of a high column, others declared he was large and bulky like a big barrel, still others maintained he was smooth and hard but tapering. Some of the blind had taken hold of one of the legs, others had reached the main body, and still others had touched the tusks. Every one proposed his view and they disputed and controverted, and wrangled, and litigated, and bickered, and quarreled, and called each other names, and each one imprecated all the others, and each one denounced all the others, and they abused and scolded, and they anathematised and excommunicated, and finally every one of them swore that every one else was a liar and was cursed on account of his heresies. These blind men, every one of them honest in his contentions, being sure of having the truth and relying upon his own experience, formed schools and sects and factions and behaved in exactly the same way as you see the priests of the different creeds behave. But the master of the noble, mighty elephant knows them all, he knows that every one of them has a parcel of the

truth, that every one is right in his way, but wrong in taking his parcel to be the whole truth.

"Not one of these sectarians observed the fact that the elephant was perfectly white and a marvel to see, for all of them were purblind. Yet I would not say that they were either dishonest or hypocrites. They had investigated the truth to the best of their ability.

"The master of the elephant is the Tathâgata, the Enlightened One, the Buddha. He has brought the white elephant representing the truth, the noble and mighty elephant, symbolising strength and wisdom and devotion, into the land of the blind, and he who listens to the Tathâgata will understand all the schools, and all the sects and all the factions that are in possession of parcels of the truth. His doctrine is all-comprehensive, and he who takes refuge in Him will cease to bicker, and to contend, and to quarrel."

* * *

When Aṣvaghosha had finished the parable of the noble and mighty elephant, the two kings returned from the summer palace carrying with them in a solemn procession the slain tiger, and close behind on a white charger decked with garlands and gay ribbons, rode the hero of the day, one of the generals from the South, whose dart had struck the tiger with fatal precision and death-dealing power.

"Behold the hero of the day!" said Charaka. "And had the conspiracy not miscarried the same man might now be an assassin and a miscreant."

"There is a lesson in it!" replied Aṣvaghosha, "existence is not desirable for its own sake. That which gives worth to life is the purpose to which it is devoted.

"Our aim is not to live, but whether we die or live, to avoid wrong doing and to let right and justice and lovingkindness prevail. Says the Tathâgata:

"Commit no wrong, but good deeds do,
And let thy heart be pure.
All Buddhas teach this doctrine true
Which will for aye endure."

Christian Mystical Theology

In Conversation with Jacob Boehme



The Signature of All Things

By Jacob Boehme, 1912

OF HEAVEN AND HELL

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN JUNIUS A SCHOLAR AND THEOPHORUS HIS MASTER

THE scholar asked his master, saying; Whither goeth the soul when the body dieth?

His master answered him; There is no necessity for it to go any whither.c

What not! said the inquisitive Junius: Must not the soul leave the body at death, and go either to heaven or hell?

It needs no going forth, replied the venerable Theophorus: Only the outward mortal life with the body shall separate themselves from the soul. The soul hath heaven and hell within itself before, according as it is written, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! For behold the kingdom of God is within you." And which soever of the two, that is,

either heaven or hell is manifested in it, in that the soul standeth.

Here Junius said to his master; This is hard to understand. Doth it not enter into heaven or hell, as a man entereth into an house; or as one goeth through an hole or casement, into an unknown place; so goeth it not into another world?

The master spake and said; No. There is verily no such kind of entering in; forasmuch as heaven and hell are everywhere, being universally co-extended.

How is that possible? said the scholar. What, can heaven and hell be here present, where we are now sitting? And if one of them might, can you make me believe that ever both should be here together?

Then spoke the master in this manner: I have said that heaven is everywhere present; and it is true. For God is in heaven; and God is everywhere. I have said also, that hell must be in like manner everywhere; and that is also true. For the wicked one, who is the devil, is in hell; and the whole world, as the apostle hath taught us, lieth in the wicked one, or the evil one; which is as much as to say, not only that the devil is in the world, but also that the world is in the devil; and if in the devil, then in hell too, because he is there. So hell therefore is everywhere, as well as heaven; which is the thing that was to be proved.

The scholar, startled hereat, said, Pray make me to understand this.

To whom the master: Understand then what heaven is: it is but the turning in of the will into the love of God. Wheresoever thou findest God manifesting himself in love, there thou findest heaven, without travelling for it so much as one foot. And by this understand also what hell is, and where it is. I say unto thee, it is but the turning in of the will into the wrath of God. Wheresoever the anger of God doth more or less manifest itself, there certainly is more or less of hell, in whatsoever place it be. So that it is but the turning in of thy will either into his love, or into his anger; and thou art accordingly either in heaven or in hell. Mark it well. And this now cometh to pass in this present life, whereof St. Paul speaking, saith, "Our conversation is in heaven." And the Lord Christ saith also; "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them the eternal life; and none shall pluck them out of my hand." Observe, he saith not, I *will* give them, after this life is ended; but I *give* them, that is, now in the time of this life. And what else is this gift of Christ to his followers but an eternity of life; which for certain, can be nowhere but in heaven. And also if Christ be certainly in heaven, and they who follow him in the regeneration are in his hand, then are they where he is, and so cannot be out of heaven: Yea, moreover none shall be able to pluck them out of heaven, because it is he who holdeth them there, and they are in his hand which nothing can resist. All therefore doth consist in the turning in, or entering of the will into heaven, by hearing the voice of Christ, and both

knowing him, and following him. And so on the contrary it is also: Understandest thou this?

His scholar said to him; I think, in part, I do. But how cometh this entering of the will into heaven to pass?

The master answered him; This then I will endeavour to satisfy thee in; but thou must be very attentive to what I shall say unto thee. Know then, my son, that when the ground of the will yieldeth up itself to God, then it sinketh out of its own self, and out of and beyond all ground and place, that is or can be imagined, into a certain unknown deep, where God only is manifest, and where he only worketh and willeth. And then it becometh nothing to itself, as to its own working and willing; and so God worketh and willeth in it. And God dwells in this resigned will; by which the soul is sanctified, and so fitted to come into divine rest. Now in this case when the body breaketh, the soul is so thoroughly penetrated all over with the divine love, and so thoroughly illuminated with the divine light, even as a glowing hot iron is by the fire, by which being penetrated throughout, it loseth its darkness, and becometh bright and shining. Now this is the hand of Christ, where God's love thoroughly inhabiteth the soul, and is in it a shining light, and a new glorious life. And then the soul is in heaven, and is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and is itself the very heaven of God, wherein he dwelleth. Lo, this is the entering of the will into heaven; and thus it cometh to pass.

Be pleased, sir, to proceed, said the scholar, and let me know how it fareth on the other side.

The master said: The godly soul, you see, is in the hand of Christ, that is in heaven, as he himself hath told us; and in what manner this cometh to be so, you have also heard. But the ungodly soul is not willing in this life-time to come into the divine resignation of its will, or to enter into the will of God; but goeth on still in its own lust and desire, in vanity and falsehood, and so entereth into the will of the devil. It receiveth thereupon into itself nothing but wickedness; nothing but lying, pride, covetousness, envy, and wrath; and thereinto it giveth up its will and whole desire. This is the vanity of the will; and this same vanity or vain shadow must also in like manner be manifested in the soul, which hath yielded up itself to be its servant; and must work therein, even as the love of God worketh in the regenerated will, and penetrate it all over, as fire doth iron.

And it is not possible for this soul to come into the rest of God; because God's anger is manifested in it, and worketh in it. Now when the body is parted from this soul, then beginneth the eternal melancholy and despair; because it now findeth that it is become altogether vanity, even a vanity most vexatious to itself, and a distracting fury, and a self-tormenting abomination. Now it perceiveth itself disappointed of everything which it had before fancied, and blind, and naked, and wounded, and hungry, and thirsty; without the least prospect of being ever relieved, or

obtaining so much as one drop of the water of eternal life. And it feeleth itself to be a mere devil to itself, and its own vile executioner and tormentor; and is affrighted at its own ugly dark form, appearing as a most hideous and monstrous worm, and fain would flee from itself, if it could, but it cannot, being fast bound with the chains of the dark nature, whereinto it had sunk itself when in the flesh. And so not having learned nor accustomed itself to sink down into the divine grace, and being also strongly possessed with the idea of God, as an angry and jealous God, the poor soul is both afraid and ashamed to bring its will into God, by which deliverance might possibly come to it. The soul is afraid to do it, as fearing to be consumed by so doing, under the apprehension of the Deity as a mere devouring fire. The soul is also ashamed to do it, as being confounded at its own nakedness and monstrosity; and therefore would, if it were possible, hide itself from the majesty of God, and cover its abominable form from his most holy eye, though by casting itself still deeper into the darkness, wherefore then it will not enter into God; nay, it cannot enter with its false will; yea, though it should strive to enter, yet can it not enter into the love, because of the will which hath reigned in it. For such a soul is thereby captivated in the wrath; yea, is itself but mere wrath, having by its false desire, which it had awakened in itself, comprehended and shut up itself therewith, and so transformed itself into the nature and property thereof.

And since also the light of God Both not shine in it, nor the love of God incline it, the soul is moreover a great darkness, and is withal an anxious fire-source, carrying about an hell within itself, and not being able to discern the least glimpse of the light of God, or to feel the least spark of his love. Thus it dwelleth in itself as in hell, and needeth no entering into hell at all, or being carried thither; for in what place soever it may be, so long as it is in itself, it is in the hell. And though it should travel far, and cast itself many hundred thousand leagues from its present place, to be out of hell; yet still would it remain in the hellish source and darkness.

If this be so, how then cometh it, said the scholar to Theoporus, that an heavenly soul doth not in the time of this life perfectly perceive the heavenly light and joy; and the soul which is without God in the world, doth not also here feel hell, as well as hereafter? Why should they not both be perceived and felt as well in this life as in the next, seeing that both of them are in man, and one of them (as you have shewed) worketh in every man?

To whom Theoporus presently returneth this answer: The kingdom of heaven is in the saints operative and manifestative of itself by faith. They who carry God within them, and live by his Spirit, find the kingdom of God in their faith; and they feel the love of God in their faith, by which the will hath given up itself into God, and is made Godlike. In a word, all is transacted within them by faith, which is

to them the evidence of the eternal invisibles, and a great manifestation in their spirit of this divine kingdom, which is within them. But their natural life is nevertheless encompassed with flesh and blood; and this standing in a contrariety thereto, and being placed through the Fall in the principle of God's anger, and environed about with the world, which by no means can be reconciled to faith, these faithful souls cannot but be very much exposed to attacks from this world, wherein they are sojourners; neither can they be insensible of their being thus compassed about with flesh and blood, and with this world's vain lust, which ceaseth not continually to penetrate the outward mortal life, and to tempt them manifold ways, even as it did Christ. Whence the world on one side, and the devil on the other, not without the curse of God's anger in flesh and blood, do thoroughly penetrate and sift the life; whereby it cometh to pass that the soul is often in anxiety when these three are all set upon it together, and when hell thus assaulteth the life, and would manifest itself in the soul. But the soul hereupon sinketh down into the hope of the grace of God, and standeth like a beautiful rose in the midst of thorns, until the kingdom of this world shall fall from it in the death of the body: And then the soul first becometh truly manifest in the love of God, and in his kingdom, which is the kingdom of love; having henceforth nothing more to hinder it. But during this life she must walk with Christ in this world; and then Christ delivereth her out of her own hell, by penetrating her with his love throughout, and

standing by her in hell, and even changing her hell into heaven.

But in that thou moreover sayest, why do not the souls which are without God feel hell in this world? I answer: They bear it about with them in their wicked consciences, but they know it not; because the world hath put out their eyes, and its deadly cup hath cast them likewise into a sleep, a most fatal sleep. Notwithstanding which it must be owned that the wicked do frequently feel hell within them during the time of this mortal life, though they may not apprehend that it is hell, because of the earthly vanity which cleaveth unto them from without, and the sensible pleasures and amusements wherewith they are intoxicated. And moreover it is to be noted, that the outward life in every such one hath yet the light of the outward nature, which ruleth in that life; and so the pain of hell cannot, so long as that hath the rule, be revealed. But when the body dieth or breaketh away, so as the soul cannot any longer enjoy such temporal pleasure and delight, nor the light of this outward world, which is wholly thereupon extinguished as to it; then the soul stands in an eternal hunger and thirst after such vanities as it was here in love withal, but yet can reach nothing but that false will, which it had impressed in itself while in the body; and wherein it had abounded to its great loss. And now whereas it had too much of its will in this life, and yet was not contented therewith, it hath after this separation by death, as little of it; which createth in it an everlasting thirst after that which it can

henceforth never obtain more, and causeth it to be in a perpetual anxious lust after vanity, according to its former impression, and in a continual rage of hunger after those sorts of wickedness and lewdness whereinto it was immersed, being in the flesh. Fain would it do more evil still, but that it hath not either wherein or wherewith to effect the same, left it; and therefore it doth perform this only in itself. All is now internally transacted, as if it were outward; and so the ungodly is tormented by those furies which are in his own mind, and begotten upon himself by himself. For he is verily become his own devil and tormentor; and that by which he sinned here, when the shadow of this world is passed away, abideth still with him in the impression, and is made his prison and his hell. But this hellish hunger and thirst cannot be fully manifested in the soul, till the body which ministered to the soul what it lusted after, and with which the soul was so bewitched, as to doat thereupon, and pursue all its cravings, be stripped off from it.

I perceive then, said Junius to his master, that the soul having played the wanton with the body in all voluptuousness, and served the lusts thereof during this life, retaineth still the very same inclinations and affections which it had before, then when it hath no opportunity nor capacity to satisfy them longer; and that when this cannot be, there is then hell opened in that soul, which had been shut up in it before, by means of the outward life in the body, and of the light of this world. Do I rightly understand?

Theophorus said, It is very rightly understood by you. Go on.

On the other hand (said he) I clearly perceive by what I have heard, that heaven cannot but be in a loving soul, which is possessed of God, and bath subdued thereby the body to the obedience of the spirit in all things, and perfectly immersed itself into the will and love of God. And when the body dieth, and this soul is hence redeemed from the earth, it is now evident to me, that the life of God which was hidden in it, will display itself gloriously, and heaven consequently be then manifested. But notwithstanding, if there be not also a local heaven besides, and a local hell, I am still at a loss where to place no small part of the creation, if not the greatest, For where must all the intellectual inhabitants of it abide?

In their own principle, answered the master, whether it be of light or of darkness. For every created intellectual being remaineth in its deeds and essences, in its wonders and properties, in its life and image; and therein it beholdeth and feeleth God, as who is everywhere, whether it be in the love, or in the wrath.

If it be in the love of God, then beholdeth it God accordingly, and feeleth him as he is love. But if it bath captivated itself in the wrath of God, then it cannot behold God otherwise than in the wrathful nature, nor perceive him otherwise than as an incensed and vindictive spirit. All places are alike to it, if it be in God's love; and if it be not there, every place is hell alike. What place can bound a thought?

Or what needeth any understanding spirit to be kept here or there, in order to its happiness or misery? Verily, wheresoever it is, it is in the abyssal world, where there is neither end nor limit. And whither, I pray, should it go? since though it should go a thousand miles off, or a thousand time ten thousand miles, and this ten thousand times over, beyond the bounds of the universe, and into the imaginary spaces above the stars, yet it were then still in the very same point from whence it went out. For God is the place of spirit; if it may be lawful to attribute to him such a name, to the which body hath a relation: And in God there is no limit; both near and afar off is here all one; and be it in his love, or be it in his anger, the abyssal will of the spirit is altogether unconfined. It is swift as thought, passing through all things; it is magical, and nothing corporeal or from without can let it; it dwelleth in its wonders, and they are its house.

Thus it is with every intellectual, whether of the order of angels, or of human souls; and you need not fear but there will be room enough for them all, be they ever so many; and such also as shall best suit them, even according to their election and determination; and which may thence very well be called his own place.

At which, said the scholar; I remember, indeed, that it is written concerning the great traitor, that he went after death to his own place.

The master here said: The same is true of every soul, when it departeth this mortal life: And it is true in like

manner of every angel, or spirit whatsoever; which is necessarily determined by its own choice. As God is everywhere, so also the angels are everywhere; but each one in its own principle, and in its own property, or (if you had rather) in its own place. The same essence of God, which is as a place to spirits, is confessed to be everywhere; but the appropriation, or participation hereof is different to every one, according as each hath attracted magically in the earnestness of the will. The same divine essence which is with the angels of God above, is with us also below: And the same divine nature which is with us, is likewise with them; but after different manners and in different degrees, communicated and participated.

And what I have said here of the divine, is no less to be considered by you in the participation of the diabolical essence and nature, which is the power of darkness, as to the manifold modes, degrees, and appropriations thereof in the false will. In this world there is strife between them: But when this world hath reached in any one the limit, then the principle catcheth that which is its own; and so the soul receiveth companions accordingly, that is, either angels or devils.

To whom the scholar again: Heaven and hell then being in us at strife in the time of this life, and God himself being also thus near unto us, where can angels and devils dwell?

And the master answered him thus: Where thou dost not dwell as to thy self-hood, and to thine own will,

there the holy angels dwell with thee, and everywhere all over round about thee. Remember this well. On the contrary, where thou dwellest as to thyself, in self-seeking, and self-will, there to be sure the devils will be with thee, and will take up their abode with thee, and dwell all over thee, and round about thee everywhere. Which God in his mercy prevent.

I understand not this, said the scholar, so perfectly well as I could wish. Be pleased to make it a little more clear to me.

The master then spake: Mark well what I am going to say. Where the will of God in anything willeth, there is God manifested; and in this very manifestation of God, the angels do dwell. But where God in any creature willeth not with the will of that creature, there God is not manifested to it, neither can he be; but dwelleth in himself, without the co-operation thereof, and subjection to him in humility. There God is an unmanifested God to the creature: So the angels dwell not with such an one; for wherever they dwell, there is the glory of God; and they make his glory. What then dwelleth in such a creature as this? God dwelleth not therein; the angels dwell not therein; God willeth not therein, the angels also will not therein. The case is evidently this, in that soul or creature its own will is without God's will, and there the devil dwelleth; and with him all whatever is without God, and without Christ. This is the truth; lay it to heart.

The Scholar. It is possible I may ask several impertinent questions; but I beseech you, good sir, to have patience with me, and to pity my ignorance, if I ask what may appear to you perhaps ridiculous, or may not be at all fit for me to expect an answer to. For I have several questions still to propound to you; but I am ashamed of my own thoughts in this matter.

The Master. Be plain with me, and propose whatever is upon your mind; yea, be not ashamed even to appear ridiculous, so that by querying you may but become wiser.

The scholar thanked his master for this liberty, and said: How far then are heaven and hell asunder?

To whom he answered thus: As far as day and night; or as far as something and nothing. They are in one another, and yet they are at the greatest distance one from the other. Nay, the one of them is as nothing to the other; and yet notwithstanding they cause joy and grief to one another. Heaven is throughout the whole world, and it is also without the world over all, even everywhere that is, or that can be but so much as imagined. It filleth all, it is within all, it is without all, it encompasseth all; without division, without place; working by a divine manifestation, and flowing forth universally, but not going in the least out of itself. For only in itself it worketh, and is revealed, being one, and undivided in all. It appeareth only through the manifestation of God; and never but in itself only: And in that being which cometh into it, or in that wherein it is manifested; there also it is that God is

manifested. Because heaven is nothing else but a manifestation or revelation of the Eternal One, wherein all the working and willing is in quiet love,

So in like manner hell also is through the whole world, and dwelleth and worketh but in itself, and in that wherein the foundation of hell is manifested, namely, in self-hood, and in the false will. The visible world hath both in it; and there is no place but heaven and hell may be found or revealed in it. Now man as to his temporal life, is only of the visible world; and therefore during the time of this life, he seeth not the spiritual world. For the outward world with its substance, is a cover to the spiritual world, even as the body is to the soul. But when the outward man dieth, then the spiritual world, as to the soul, which hath now its covering taken away, is manifested either in the eternal light with the holy angels, or in the eternal darkness, with the devils.

The scholar further queried: What is an angel, or a human soul, that they can be thus manifested either in God's love or anger, either in light or darkness?

To whom Theophorus answered: They come from one and the self-same original: They are little branches of the divine wisdom, of the divine will, sprung from the divine word, and made objects of the divine love. They are out of the ground of eternity, whence light and darkness do spring: Darkness, which consisteth in the receiving of self-desire; and light, which consisteth in willing the same thing with God. For in the conformity of the will with God's will,

is heaven; and wheresoever there is this willing with God, there the love of God is undoubtedly in the working, and his light will not fail to manifest itself. But in the self-attraction of the soul's desire, or in the reception of self into the willing of any spirit, angelical or human, the will of God worketh difficultly, and is to that soul or spirit nought but darkness; out of which, notwithstanding, the light may be manifested. And this darkness is the hell of that spirit wherein it is. For heaven and hell are nought else but a manifestation of the divine will either in light or darkness, according to the properties of the spiritual world.

WHAT THE BODY OF MAN IS; AND WHY THE SOUL IS CAPABLE OF RECEIVING GOOD AND EVIL

Scholar. What then is the body of man?

Master. It is the visible world; an image and quintessence, or compound of all that the world is; and the visible world is a manifestation of the inward spiritual world, come out of the eternal light, and out of the eternal darkness, out of the spiritual compaction or connection; and it is also an image or figure of eternity, whereby eternity hath made itself visible; where self-will and resigned will, viz. evil and good, work one with the other.

Such a substance is the outward man. For God created man of the outward world, and breathed into him the inward spiritual world for a soul and an

intelligent life; and therefore in the things of the outward world man can receive and work evil and good.

OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD; OF MAN'S BODY, IN AND AFTER THE RESURRECTION; WHERE HEAVEN AND HELL SHALL BE; OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT; AND WHEREFORE THE STRIFE IN THE CREATURE MUST BE

Scholar. What shall be after this world, when all things perish and come to an end?

Master. The material substance only ceaseth; viz. the four elements, the sun, moon, and stars. And then the inward world will be wholly visible and manifest. But whatsoever hath been wrought by the will or spirit of man in this world's time, whether evil or good. T say, every such work shall there separate itself in a spiritual manner, either into the eternal light, or into the eternal darkness. For that which is born from each will penetrateth and passeth again into that which is like itself. And there the darkness is called hell, and is an eternal forgetting of all good; and the light is called the kingdom of God, and is an eternal joy in and to the saints, who continually glorify and praise God, for having delivered them from the torment of evil.

The last judgement is a kindling of the fire both of God's love and anger, in which the matter of every substance perisheth, and each fire shall attract into itself its own, that is, the substance that is like itself:

Thus God's fire of love will draw into it whatsoever is born in the love of God, or love-principle, in which also it shall burn after the manner of love, and yield itself into that substance. But the torment will draw into itself what is wrought in the anger of God in darkness, and consume the false substance; and then there will remain only the painful aching will in its own proper nature, image, and figure.

Scholar. With what matter and form shall the human body rise?

Master. It is sown a natural gross and elementary body, which in this life-time is like the outward elements; yet in this gross body there is a subtle power and virtue. As in the earth also there is a subtle good virtue, which is like the sun, and is one and the same with the sun; which also in the beginning of time did spring and proceed out of the divine power and virtue, from whence all the good virtue of the body is likewise derived. This good virtue of the mortal body shall come again and live for ever in a kind of transparent chrystalline material property, in spiritual flesh and blood; as shall return also the good virtue of the earth, for the earth likewise shall become chrystalline, and the divine light shine in everything that hath a being, essence, or substance. And as the gross earth shall perish and never return, so also the gross flesh of man shall perish and not live for ever. But all things must appear before the judgement, and in the judgement be separated by the fire; yea, both the earth, and also the ashes of the human body. For

when God shall once move the spiritual world, every spirit shall attract its spiritual substance to itself. A good spirit and soul shall draw to itself its good substance, and an evil one its evil substance. But we must here understand by substance, such a material power and virtue, the essence of which is mere virtue, like a material tincture (such a thing as hath all figures, colours, and virtues in it, and is at the same time transparent), the grossness whereof is perished in all things.

Scholar. Shall we not rise again with our visible bodies, and live in them for ever? See *The Forty Questions of the Soul*, quest. xxi. ver. 12.

Master. When the visible world perisheth, then all that hath come out of it, and hath been external, shall perish with it. There shall remain of the world only the heavenly chrystalline nature and form, and of man also only the spiritual earth; for man shall be then wholly like the spiritual world, which as yet is hidden.

Scholar. Shall there be husband and wife, or children or kindred, in the heavenly life, or shall one associate with another, as they do in this life?

Master. Why art thou so fleshly-minded? There will be neither husband nor wife, but all will be like the angels of God, viz. masculine virgins. There will be neither son nor daughter, brother nor sister, but all of one stock and kindred. For all are but one in Christ, as a tree and its branches are one, though distinct as

creatures; but God is all in all. Indeed, there will be spiritual knowledge of what every one hath been, and done, but no possessing or enjoying, or desire of possessing earthly things, or enjoying fleshly relations any more.

Scholar. Shall they all have that eternal joy and glorification alike?

Master. The Scripture saith, "Such as the people is, such is their God." And in another place, "With the holy thou art holy, and with the perverse thou art perverse." And St. Paul saith, "In the resurrection one shall differ from another in glory, as do the sun, moon, and stars." Therefore know, that the blessed shall indeed all enjoy the divine working in and upon them; but their virtue, and illumination or glory, shall be very different, according as they have been endued in this life with different measures and degrees of power and virtue in their painful working. For the painful working of the creature in this life-time is the opening and begetting of divine power, by which that power is made moveable and operative. Now those who have wrought with Christ in this life-time, and not in the lust of the flesh, shall have great power and transcendent glorification in and upon them. But others, who have only expected, and relied upon, an imputed satisfaction, and in the meanwhile have served their belly-god, and yet at last have turned, and obtained grace; those, I say, shall not attain to so high a degree of power and illumination. So that there will be as great a difference of degrees between them,

as is between the sun, moon, and stars; or between the flowers of the field in their varieties of beauty, power, and virtue.

Scholar. How shall the world be judged, and by whom?

Master. Jesus Christ, that "word of God which became man," shall by the power of his divine stirring or motion separate from himself all that belongeth not to him, and shall wholly manifest his kingdom in the place or space where this world now is; for the separating motion worketh all over the universe, through all at once.

Scholar. Whither shall the devils and all the damned be thrown, when the place of this world is become the kingdom of Christ, and such as shall be glorified? Shall they be cast out of the place of this world? Or shall Christ have, and manifest his dominion, out of the sphere or place of this world?

Master. Hell shall remain in the place or sphere of this world everywhere, but hidden to the kingdom of heaven, as the night is hidden in and to the day. "The light shall shine for ever in the darkness, but the darkness can never comprehend, or reach it." And the light is the kingdom of Christ; but the darkness is hell, wherein the devils and the wicked dwell; and thus they shall be suppressed by the kingdom of Christ, and made his footstool, viz. a reproach.

Scholar. How shall all people and nations be brought to judgement?

Master. The eternal word of God, out of which every spiritual creaturely life hath proceeded, will move itself at that hour, according to love and anger, in every life which is come out of the eternity, and will draw every creature before the judgement of Christ, to be sentenced by this motion of the world. The life will then be manifested in all its works, and every soul shall see and feel its judgement and sentence in itself. For the judgement is, indeed, immediately at the departure of the body, manifested in and to every soul: And the last judgement is but a return of the spiritual body, and a separation of the world, when the evil shall be separated from the good, in the substance of the world, and of the human body, and everything enter into its eternal receptacle. And thus is it a manifestation of the mystery of God in every substance and life.

Scholar. How will the sentence be pronounced?

Master. Here consider the words of Christ. "He will say to those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick, and ye visited me, in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Then shall they answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison, and ministered thus unto thee?

"Then shall the King answer and say unto them; Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

"And unto the wicked on his left hand he will say, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, and in prison, and ye ministered not unto me.

"And they shall also answer him, and say, When did we sec thee thus, and ministered not unto thee?

"And he will answer them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

"And these shall depart into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

Scholar. Loving master, pray tell me why Christ saith, "What you have done to the least of these, you have done to me; and what you have not done to them, neither have you done it to me." And how doth a man this so, as that he doth it to Christ himself!

Master. Christ dwelleth really and essentially in the faith of those that wholly yield up themselves to him, and giveth them his flesh for food, and his blood for

drink; and thus possesseth the ground of their faith, according to the interior or inward man. And a Christian is called a branch of the vine Christ, and a Christian, because Christ dwelleth spiritually in him; therefore whatsoever good any shall do to such a Christian in his bodily necessities, it is done to Christ himself, who dwelleth in him. For such a Christian is not his own, but is wholly resigned to Christ, and become his peculiar possession, and consequently the good deed is done to Christ himself. Therefore also, whosoever shall withhold their help from such a needy Christian, and forbear to serve him in his necessity, they thrust Christ away from themselves, and despise him in his members. When a poor person that belongeth thus to Christ, asketh anything of thee, and thou deniest it him in his necessity, thou deniest it to Christ himself. And whatsoever hurt any shall do to such a Christian, they do it to Christ himself. When any mock, scorn, revile, reject, or thrust away such a one, they do all that to Christ; but he that receiveth him, giveth him meat and drink, or apparel, and assisteth him in his necessities, doth it likewise to Christ, and to a fellow-member of his own body. Nay, he doth it to himself if he be a Christian; for we are all one in Christ, as a tree and its branches are.

Scholar. How then will those subsist in the day of that fierce judgement, who afflict and vex the poor and distressed, and deprive them of their very sweat; necessitating and constraining them by force to submit to their wills, and trampling upon them as their footstools, only that they themselves may live in

pomp and power, and spend the fruits of this poor people's sweat and labour in voluptuousness, pride, and vanity?

Master. Christ suffereth in the persecution of his members. Therefore all the wrong that such hard exactors do to the poor wretches under their control, is done to Christ himself; and falleth under his severe sentence and judgement: And besides that, they help the devil to augment his kingdom; for by such oppression of the poor they draw them off from Christ, and make them seek unlawful ways to fill their bellies. Nay, they work for, and with the devil himself, doing the very same thing which he doth; who, without intermission, opposeth the kingdom of Christ, which consisteth only in love. All these oppressors, if they do not turn with their whole hearts to Christ, and minister to, or serve him, must go into hell-fire, which is fed and kept alive by nothing else but such mere self, as that which they have exercised over the poor here.

Scholar. But how will it fare with those, and how will they be able to stand that severe trial, who in this time do so fiercely contend about the kingdom of Christ, and slander, revile, and persecute one another for their religion, as they do?

Master. All such have not yet known Christ; and they are but as a type or figure of heaven and hell, striving with each other for the victory.

All rising, swelling pride, which contendeth about opinions, is an image of self. And whosoever hath not faith and humility, nor liveth in the spirit of Christ, which is love, is only armed with the anger of God, and helpeth forward the victory of the imaginary self, that is, the kingdom of darkness, and the anger of God. For at the day of judgement all self shall be given to the darkness, as shall also all the unprofitable contentions of men; in which they seek not after love, but merely after their imaginary self, that they may exalt themselves by exalting and establishing their opinions; stirring up princes to wars for the sake of the same, and by that means occasioning the desolation of whole countries of people. All such things belong to the judgement, which will separate the false from the true; and then all images or opinions shall cease, and all the children of God shall dwell for ever in the love of Christ, and that in them.

All whosoever in this time of strife, namely, from the Fall to the Resurrection, are not zealous in the spirit of Christ, and desirous to promote peace and love, but seek and strive for themselves only, are of the devil, and belong to the pit of darkness, and must consequently be separated from Christ. For in heaven all serve God their Creator in humble love.

Scholar. Wherefore then doth God suffer such strife and contention to be in this time?

Master. The life itself standeth in strife, that it may be made manifest, sensible, and palpable, and that the wisdom may be made separable and known.

The strife also constituteth the eternal joy of the victory. For there will arise great praise and thanksgiving in the saints from the experimental sense and knowledge that Christ in them hath overcome darkness, and all the self of nature, and that they are at length totally delivered from the strife; at which they shall rejoice eternally, when they shall know how the wicked are recompenced. And therefore God suffereth all souls to stand in a free-will, that the eternal dominion both of love and anger, of light and of darkness, may be made manifest and

I known; and that every life might cause and find its own sentence in itself. For that which is now a strife and pain to the saints in their wretched warfare here, shall in the end be turned into great joy to them; and that which hath been a joy and pleasure to ungodly persons in this world, shall afterwards be turned into eternal torment and shame to them. Therefore the joy of the saints must arise to them out of death, as the light ariseth out of a candle by the destruction and consumption of it in its fire; that so the life may be freed from the painfulness of nature, and possess another world.

And as the light hath quite another property than the fire hath, for it giveth and yieldeth itself forth; whereas the fire draweth in and consumeth itself; so the holy life of meekness springeth forth through the death of self-will, and then God's will of love only ruleth, and doth all in all. For thus the Eternal One hath attained feeling and separability, and brought

itself forth again with the feeling, through death in great joyfulness; that there might be an eternal delight in the infinite unity, and an eternal cause of joy; and therefore that which was before painfulness, must now be the ground and cause of this motion or stirring to the manifestation of all things. And herein lieth the mystery of the hidden wisdom of God.

"Every one that asketh receiveth, every one that seeketh findeth; and to every one that knocketh it shall be opened. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us all. Amen."

Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

"Thank ye the Lord, for ye are now come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first born, who are written in heaven. "And to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.

"And to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. Amen.

"Praise, glory, and thanksgiving; honour, wisdom and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, to our God, and the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen."

A DISCOURSE

**BETWEEN A SOUL HUNGRY AND THIRSTY
AFTER THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE, THE SWEET
LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST, AND A SOUL
ENLIGHTENED.**

Which Way one Soul should seek after and comfort another, and bring it by Means of its Knowledge into the Paths of Christ's Pilgrimage, and faithfully warn it of the thorny Way of the World, which leadeth the fallen Soul that naturally walketh therein, into the Abyss or Pit of Hell.

Composed by a Soul that loveth all who are the Children of Jesus Christ under the Cross.

THE WAY FROM DARKNESS TO TRUE ILLUMINATION

THERE was a poor soul that had wandered out of paradise, and come into the kingdom of this world; where the devil met with it, and said to it, "Whither dost thou go, thou soul that art half blind?"

The Soul said: I would see and speculate into the creatures of the world, which the Creator hath made.

The Devil said: How wilt thou see and speculate into them, when thou canst not know their essence and property? Thou wilt look upon their outside only, as

upon a graven image, and canst not know them throughly.

The Soul said: How may I come to know their essence and property?

The Devil said: Thine eyes would be opened to see them throughly, if thou didst but eat of that from whence the creatures themselves are come to be good and evil. Thou wouldst then be as God himself is, and know what the creature is.

The Soul said: I am now a noble and holy creature; but if I should do so, the Creator hath said, that I should die.

The Devil said: No, thou shouldst not die at all; but thy eyes would be opened, and thou wouldst be as God himself, and be master of good and evil. Also, thou shouldst be mighty, powerful, and very great, as I am; all the subtilty that is in the creatures would be made known to thee.

The Soul said: If I had the knowledge of nature and of the creatures, I would then rule the whole world as I listed.

The Devil said: The whole ground of that knowledge lieth in thee. Do but turn thy will and desire from God or goodness into nature and the creatures, and then there will arise in thee a lust to taste; and so thou mayest eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and by that means come to know all things.

The Soul said: Well then, I will eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, that I may rule all things by my own power; and be of myself a lord on earth, and do what I will, as God himself doth.

The Devil said: T am the prince of this world; and if thou wouldst rule on earth, thou must turn thy lust towards my image, or desire to be like me, that thou mayest get the cunning, wit, reason, and subtilty, that my image hath.

Thus did the devil present to the soul the Vulcan in the Mercury (the power that is in the fiery root of the creature), that is, the fiery wheel of essence or substance, in the form of a serpent. Upon which,

The Soul said: Behold, this is the power which can do all things.—What must I do to get it?

The Devil said: Thou thyself art also such a fiery Mercury. If thou dost break thy will off from God, and bring it into this power and skill, then thy hidden ground will be manifested in thee, and thou mayest work in the same manner. But thou must eat of that fruit, wherein each of the four elements in itself ruleth over the other, and is in strife; the heat striving against the cold, and the cold against the heat; and so all the properties of nature work feelingly. And then thou wilt instantly be as the fiery wheel is, and so bring all things into thine own power, and possess them as thine own.

The Soul did so, and what happened thereupon

Now when the soul broke its will thus off from God, and brought it into the Mercury, or the fiery will (which is the root of life and power), there presently arose in it a lust to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; and the soul did eat thereof. Which as soon as it had done, Vulcan (or the artificer in the fire) instantly kindled the fiery wheel of its substance, and thereupon all the properties of nature awoke in the soul and exercised each its own lust and desire.

First arose the lust of pride; a desire to be great, mighty, and powerful; to bring all things under subjection to it, and so to be lord itself without control; despising all humility and equality, as esteeming itself the only prudent, witty, and cunning one, and accounting everything folly that is not according to its own humour and liking.

Secondly arose the lust of covetousness; a desire of getting, which would draw all things to itself, into its own possession. For when the lust of pride had turned away the will from God, then the life of the soul would not trust God any further, but would take care for itself; and therefore brought its desire into the creatures, viz. into the earth, metals, trees, and other creatures. Thus the kindled fiery life became hungry and covetous, when it had broken itself off from the unity, love, and meekness of God, and attracted to itself the four elements and their essence, and brought itself into the condition of the beasts; and so the life became dark, empty, and wrathful; and the heavenly

virtues and 'colours went out, like a candle extinguished.

Thirdly, there awoke in this fiery life the stinging thorny lust of envy; a hellish poison, a property which all devils have, and a torment which makes the life a mere enmity to God, and to all creatures. Which envy raged 'furiously in the desire of covetousness, as a venomous sting doth in the body. Envy cannot endure, but hateth and would hurt or destroy that which covetousness cannot draw to itself, by which hellish passion the noble love of the soul is smothered.

Fourthly, there awoke in this fiery life a torment like fire, viz. anger; which would murder and remove out of the way all who would not be subject to pride. Thus the ground and foundation of hell, which is called the anger of God, was wholly manifested in this soul. Whereby it lost the fair paradise of God and the kingdom of heaven, and became such a worm as the fiery serpent was, which the devil presented to it in his own image and likeness. And so the soul began to rule on earth in a bestial manner, and did all things according to the will of the devil; living in mere pride, covetousness, envy, and anger, having no longer any true love towards God. But there arose in the stead thereof an evil bestial love of filthy lechery, wantonness, and vanity, and there was no purity left in the heart; for the soul had forsaken paradise, and taken the earth into its possession. Its mind was wholly bent upon cunning knowledge, subtilty, and

getting together a multitude of earthly things. No righteousness nor virtue remained in it at all; but whatsoever evil and wrong it committed, it covered all cunningly and subtilly under the cloak of its power and authority by law, and called it by the name of right and justice, and accounted it good.

The Devil came to the Soul

Upon this the devil drew near to the soul, and brought it on from one vice to another, for he had taken it captive in his essence, and set joy and pleasure before it therein, saying thus to it: Behold, now thou art powerful, mighty, and noble, endeavour to be greater, richer, and more powerful still. Display thy knowledge, wit, and subtilty, that every one may fear thee, and stand in awe of thee, and that thou mayest be respected, and get a great name in the world.

The Soul did so

The soul did as the devil counselled it, and yet knew not that its counsellor was the devil; but thought it was guided by its own knowledge, wit, and understanding, and that it did very well and right all the while.

Jesus Christ met with the Soul

The soul going on in this course of life, our dear and loving Lord Jesus Christ, who was come into this world with the love and wrath of God, to destroy the

works of the devil, and to execute judgement upon all ungodly deeds, on a time met with it, and spake by a strong power, viz. by his passion and death, into it, and destroyed the works of the devil in it, and discovered to it the way to his grace, and shone upon it with his mercy, calling it to return and repent; and promising that he would then deliver it from that monstrous deformed shape or image which it had gotten, and bring it into paradise again.

How Christ wrought in the Soul

Now when the spark of the love of God, or the divine light, was accordingly manifested in the soul, it presently saw itself with its will and works to be in hell, in the wrath of God, and found that it was a misshapen ugly monster in the divine presence and the kingdom of heaven; at which it was so affrighted, that it fell into the greatest anguish possible, for the judgement of God was manifested in it.

What Christ said

Upon this the Lord Christ spake into it with the voice of his grace, and said, "Repent and forsake vanity, and thou shalt attain my grace."

What the Soul said

Then the soul in its ugly misshapen image, with the defiled coat of vanity, went before God, and entreated for grace and the pardon of its sins, and came to be strongly persuaded in itself, that the satisfaction and

atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ did belong to it. But the evil properties of the serpent, formed in the astral spirit, or reason of the outward man, would not suffer the will of the soul to come before God, but brought their lusts and inclinations thereinto. For those evil properties would not die to their own lusts, nor leave the world, for they were come out of the world, and therefore they feared the reproach of it, in case they should forsake their worldly honour and glory.

But the poor soul turned its countenance towards God, and desired grace from him, even that he would bestow his love upon it.

The Devil came to it again

But when the devil saw that the soul thus prayed to God, and would enter into repentance, he drew near to it, and thrust the inclinations of the earthly properties into its prayers, and disturbed its good thoughts and desires which pressed forward towards God, and drew them back again to earthly things that they might have no access to him.

The Soul sighed

The central will of the soul indeed sighed after God, but the thoughts arising in the mind, that it should penetrate into him, were distracted, scattered, and destroyed, so that they could not reach the power of God. At which the poor soul was still more affrighted, and began to pray more earnestly. But the devil with

his desire took hold of the mercurial kindled fiery wheel of life, and awakened the evil properties, so that evil or false inclinations arose in the soul, and went into that thing wherein they had taken most pleasure and delight before.

The poor soul would very fain go forward to God with its will, and therefore used all its endeavours; but its thoughts continually fled away from God into earthly things, and would not go to him.

Upon this the soul sighed and bewailed itself to God; but was as if it were quite forsaken by him, and cast out from his presence. It could not get so much as one look of grace, but was in mere anguish, fear, and terror, and dreaded every moment that the wrath and severe judgement of God would be manifested in it, and that the devil would take hold of it and have it. And thereupon fell into such great heaviness and sorrow, that it became weary of all the temporal things, which before were its chief joy and happiness.

The earthly natural will indeed desired those things still, but the soul would willingly leave them altogether, and desired to die to all temporal lust and joy whatsoever, and longed only after its first native country, from whence it originally came. But found itself to be far from thence, in great distress and want, and knew not what to do, yet resolved to enter into itself, and try to pray more earnestly.

The Devil's Opposition

But the devil opposed it, and withheld it so that it could not bring itself into any greater fervency of repentance.

He awakened the earthly lusts in its heart, that they might still keep their evil nature and false right therein, and set them at variance with the new-born will and desire of the soul. For they would not die to their own will and light, but would still maintain their temporal pleasures, and so kept the poor soul captive in their evil desires, that it could not stir, though it sighed and longed never so much after the grace of God. For whensoever it prayed, or offered to press forward towards God, then the lusts of the flesh swallowed up the rays and ejaculations that went forth from it, and brought them away from God into earthly thoughts, that it might not partake of divine strength. Which caused the poor soul to think itself forsaken of God, not knowing that he was so near it, and did thus attract it. Also the devil got access to it, and entered into the fiery Mercury, or fiery wheel of its life, and mingled his desires with the earthly lusts of the flesh, and tempted the poor soul; saying to it in the earthly thoughts, "Why dost thou pray? Dost thou think that God knoweth thee or regardeth thee? Consider but what thoughts thou hast in his presence; are they not altogether evil? Thou hast no faith or belief in God at all; how then should he hear thee? He heareth thee not, leave off; why wilt thou needlessly torment and vex thyself? Thou hast time enough to repent at leisure. Wilt thou be mad? Do but look upon the world, I pray thee, a little; doth it not live in jollity

and mirth? yet it will be saved well enough for all that. Hath not Christ paid the ransom and satisfied for all men? Thou needest only persuade and comfort thyself that it is done for thee, and then thou shalt be saved. Thou canst not possibly in this world come to any feeling of God; therefore leave off, and take care for thy body, and look after temporal glory. What dost thou suppose will become of thee, if thou turn to be so stupid and melancholy? Thou wilt be the scorn of everybody, and they will laugh at thy folly; and so thou wilt spend thy days in mere sorrow and heaviness, which is pleasing neither to God nor nature. I pray thee, look upon the beauty of the world; for God hath created and placed thee in it, to be a lord over all creatures, and to rule them. Gather store of temporal goods beforehand, that thou mayest not be beholden to the world, or stand in need hereafter. And when old age cometh, or that thou growest near thy end, then prepare thyself for repentance. God will save thee, and receive thee into the heavenly mansions then. There is no need of such ado in vexing, bewailing, and stirring up thyself, as thou makest."

The Condition of the Soul

In these and the like thoughts the soul was ensnared by the devil, and brought into the lusts of the flesh, and earthly desires; and so bound as it were with fetters and strong chains, that it did not know what to do. It looked back a little into the world and the pleasures thereof, but still felt in itself a hunger after divine grace, and would always rather enter into

repentance, and favour with God. For the hand of God had touched and bruised it, and therefore it could rest nowhere; but always sighed in itself after sorrow for the sins it had committed, and would fain be rid of them. Yet could not get true repentance, or even the knowledge of sin, though it had a mighty hunger and longing desire after such penitential sorrow.

The soul being thus heavy and sad, and finding no remedy or rest, began to cast about where it might find a fit place to perform true repentance in, where it might be free from business, cares, and the hinderances of the world; and also by what means it might win the favour of God. And at length purposed to betake itself to some private solitary place, and give over all worldly employments and temporal things; and hoped, that by being bountiful and pitiful to the poor, it should obtain God's mercy. Thus did it devise all kinds of ways to get rest, and gain the love, favour, and grace of God again. But all would not do; for its worldly business still followed it in the lusts of the flesh, and it was ensnared in the net of the devil now, as well as before, and could not attain rest. And though for a little while it was somewhat cheered with earthly things, yet presently it fell to be as sad and heavy again, as it was before. The truth was, it felt the awakened wrath of God in itself, but knew not how that came to pass, nor what it ailed. For many times great trouble and terror fell upon it, which made it comfortless, sick, and faint with very fear; so mightily did the first bruising it with the ray or

influence of the stirring of grace work upon it. And yet it knew not that Christ was in the wrath and severe justice of God, and fought therein with Satan that spirit of error, which was incorporated in soul and body; nor understood that the hunger and desire to turn and repent came from Christ himself, by which it was drawn in this manner; neither did it know what hindered that it could not yet attain to divine feeling. It knew not that itself was a monster, and did bear the image of the serpent, in which the devil had such power and access to it, and had confounded all its good desires, thoughts, and motions, and brought them away from God and goodness; concerning which Christ himself said, "The devil snatcheth the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

An enlightened and regenerate Soul met the distressed Soul

By the providence of God, an enlightened and regenerate soul met this poor afflicted and distressed soul, and said, "What ailest thou, thou distressed soul, that thou art so restless and troubled?"

The distressed Soul answered

The Creator hath hid his countenance from me, so that I cannot come to his rest; therefore I am thus troubled, and know not what I shall do to get his loving-kindness again. For great cliffs and rocks lie in my way to his grace, so that I cannot come to him. Though I sigh and long after him never so much, yet I

am kept back, that I cannot partake of his power, virtue, and strength.

The enlightened Soul said

Thou bearest the monstrous shape of the devil, and art clothed therewith; in which, being his own property or principle, he hath access or power of entrance into thee, and thereby keepeth thy will from penetrating into God. For if thy will might penetrate into God, it would be anointed with the highest power and strength of God, in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that unction would break in pieces the monster which thou carriest about thee; and thy first image of paradise would revive in the centre; which would destroy the devil's power therein, and thou wouldst become an angel again. And because the devil envieth thee this happiness, he holdeth thee captive in his desire in the lusts of the flesh; from which if thou art not delivered, thou wilt be separated from God, and canst never enter into our society.

The distressed Soul terrified

At this speech the poor distressed soul was so terrified and amazed, that it could not speak one word more. When it found that it stood in the form and condition of the serpent, which separated it from God; and that the devil was so nigh it in that condition, who injected evil thoughts into the will of the soul, and had so much power over it thereby, that it was near damnation, and sticking fast in the abyss

or bottomless pit of hell, in the anger of God; it would have even despaired of divine mercy; but that the power, virtue, and strength of the first stirring of the grace of God, which had before bruised the soul, upheld and preserved it from total despair. But still it wrestled in itself between hope and doubt; whatsoever hope built up, that doubt threw down again. And thus was it agitated with such continual disquiet, that at last the world and all the glory thereof became loathsome to it, neither would it enjoy worldly pleasures any more; and yet for all this, could it not come to rest.

The enlightened Soul came again, and spoke to the troubled Soul

On a time the enlightened soul came again to this soul, and finding it still in so great trouble, anguish, and grief of mind, said to it:

What dost thou? Wilt thou destroy thyself in thy anguish and sorrow? Why dost torment thyself in thy own power and will, who art but a worm, seeing thy torment increaseth thereby more and more? Yea, if thou shouldst sink thyself down to the bottom of the sea, or couldst fly to the uttermost coasts of the morning, or raise thyself above the stars, yet thou wouldst not be released. For the more thou grieveest, tormentest, and troublest thyself, the more painful thy nature will be; and yet thou wilt not be able to come to rest. For thy power is quite lost; and as a dry stick burnt to a coal cannot grow green and spring afresh by its own power, nor get sap to flourish again with

other trees and plants; so neither canst thou reach the place of God by thy own power and strength, and transform thyself into that angelical image which thou hadst at first. For in respect to God thou art withered and dry, like a dead plant that hath lost its sap and strength, and so art become a dry tormenting hunger. Thy properties are like heat and cold, which continually strive one against the other, and can never unite.

The distressed Soul said

What then shall I do to bud forth again, and recover the first life, wherein I was at rest before I became an image?

The enlightened Soul said

Thou shalt do nothing at all but forsake thy own will, viz. that which thou callest I, or thyself. By which means all thy evil properties will grow weak, faint, and ready to die; and then thou wilt sink down again into that one thing, from which thou art originally sprung. For now thou liest captive in the creatures; but if thy will forsaketh them, the creatures, with their evil inclinations, will die in thee, which at present stay and hinder thee, that thou canst not come to God. But if thou takest this course, thy God will meet thee with his infinite love, which he hath manifested in Christ Jesus in the humanity, or human nature. And that will impart sap, life, and vigour to thee; whereby thou mayest bud, spring, flourish again, and rejoice in the living God, as a branch growing on his true vine.

And so thou wilt at length recover the image of God, and be delivered from the image or condition of the serpent: Then shalt thou come to be my brother, and have fellowship with the angels.

The poor Soul said

How can I forsake my will, so that the creatures which lodge therein may die, seeing I must be in the world, and also have need of it as long as I live?

The enlightened Soul said

Now thou hast worldly power and riches, which thou possessest as thy own, to do what thou wilt with, and regardest not how thou gettest or usest the same; employing them in the service and indulgence of thy carnal and vain desires. Nay, though thou seest the poor and needy wretch, who wanteth thy help, and is thy brother, yet thou helpest him not, but layest heavy burdens upon him, by requiring more of him than his abilities will bear, or his necessities afford; and oppressest him, by forcing him to spend his labour and sweat for thee, and the gratification of thy voluptuous will. Thou art moreover proud, and insultest over him, and behavest roughly and sternly to him, exalting thyself above him, and making small account of him in respect of thyself. Then that poor oppressed brother of thine cometh, and complaineth with sighs towards God, that he cannot reap the benefit of his labour and pains, but is forced by thee to live in misery. By which sighings and groanings of his he raiseth up the wrath of God in thee; which

maketh thy flame and unquietness still the greater. These are the creatures which thou art in love with, and hast broken thyself off from God for their sakes, and brought thy love into them, or them into thy love, so that they live therein. Thou nourishest and keepest them by continually receiving them into thy desire, for they live in and by thy receiving them into thy mind; because thou thereby bringest the lust of thy life into them. They are but unclean, filthy, and evil births, and issues of the bestial nature, which yet, by thy receiving them in thy lust or desire, have gotten an image, and formed themselves in thee. And that image is a beast with four heads: First, Pride. Secondly, Covetousness. Thirdly, Envy. Fourthly, Anger. And in these four properties the foundation of hell consisteth, which thou carriest in thee and about thee. It is imprinted and engraven in thee, and thou art wholly taken captive thereby. For these properties live in thy natural life; and thereby thou art severed from God, neither canst thou ever come to him, unless thou so forsake these evil creatures that they may die in thee.

But since thou desirest me to tell thee how to forsake thy own perverse creaturely will, that the creatures might die, and that yet thou mightest live with them in the world. I must assure thee that there is but one way to do it, which is narrow and straight, and will be very hard and irksome to thee at the beginning, but afterwards thou wilt walk in it cheerfully.

Thou must seriously consider, that in the course of this worldly life thou walkest in the anger of God and in the foundation of hell; and that this is not thy true native country; but that a Christian should, and must live in Christ, and in his walking truly follow him; and that he cannot be a Christian, unless the spirit and power of Christ so live in him, that he becometh wholly subject to it. Now seeing the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, but in heaven, therefore thou must always be in a continual ascension towards heaven, if thou wilt follow Christ; though thy body must dwell among the creatures and use them.

The narrow way to which perpetual ascension into heaven and imitation of Christ is this: Thou must despair of all thy own power and strength, for in and by thy own power thou canst not reach the gates of God; and firmly purpose and resolve wholly to give thyself up to the mercy of God, and to sink down with thy whole mind and reason into the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, always desiring to persevere in the same, and to die from all thy creatures therein. Also thou must resolve to watch and guard thy mind, thoughts, and inclinations that they admit no evil into them, neither must thou suffer thyself to be held fast by temporal honour or profit. Thou must resolve likewise to put away from thee all unrighteousness, and whatsoever else may hinder the freedom of thy motion and progress. Thy will must be wholly pure, and fixed in a firm resolution never to return to its old idols any more, but that thou wilt that very instant leave them, and separate thy mind from

them, and enter into the sincere way of truth and righteousness, according to the plain and full doctrine of Christ. And as thou dost thus purpose to forsake the enemies of thine own inward nature, so thou must also forgive all thy outward enemies, and resolve to meet them with thy love; that there may be left no creature, person, or thing at all able to take hold of thy will and captivate it; but that it may be sincere, and purged from all creatures. Nay further; if it should be required, thou must be willing and ready to forsake all thy temporal honour and profit for Christ's sake, and regard nothing that is earthly so as to set thy heart and affections upon it; but esteem thyself in whatsoever state, degree, and condition thou art, as to worldly rank or riches, to be but a servant of God and of thy fellow-Christians; or as a steward in the office wherein thy Lord hath placed thee. All arrogance and self-exaltation must be humbled, brought low, and so annihilated that nothing of thine own or of any other creature may stay in thy will to bring thy thoughts or imagination to be set upon it.

Thou must also firmly impress it on thy mind, that thou shalt certainly partake of the promised grace in the merit of Jesus Christ, viz. of his outflowing love, which indeed is already in thee, and which will deliver thee from thy creatures, and enlighten thy will, and kindle it with the flame of love, whereby thou shalt have victory over the devil. Not as if thou couldst will or do anything in thine own strength, but only enter into the suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and take them to thyself, and with them

assault and break in pieces the kingdom of the devil in thee, and mortify thy creatures. Thou must resolve to enter into this way this very hour, and never to depart from it, but willingly to submit thyself to God in all thy endeavours and doings, that he may do with thee what he pleaseth.

When thy will is thus prepared and resolved, it hath then broken through its own creatures, and is sincere in the presence of God, and clothed with the merits of Jesus Christ. It may then freely go to the Father with the Prodigal Son, and fall down in his presence and pour forth its prayers; and putting forth all its strength in this divine work, confess its sins and disobedience; and how far it hath departed from God. This must be done not with bare words, but with all its strength, which indeed amounteth only to a strong purpose and resolution; for the soul of itself hath no strength or power to effect any good work.

Now when thou art thus ready, and that thy Heavenly Father shall see thy coming and returning to him in such repentance and humility, he will inwardly speak to thee, and say in thee, "Behold, this is my son which I had lost, he was dead and is alive again." And he will come to meet thee in thy mind with the grace and love of Jesus Christ, and embrace thee with the beams of his love, and kiss thee with his Spirit and strength; and then thou shalt receive grace to pour out thy confession before him, and to pray powerfully. This indeed is the right place where thou must wrestle in the light of his countenance. And if

thou standest resolutely here, and shrinkest not back, thou shalt see or feel great wonders. For thou shalt find Christ in thee assaulting hell, and crushing thy beasts in pieces, and that a great tumult and misery will arise in thee; also thy secret undiscovered sins will then first awake, and labour to separate thee from God, and to keep thee back. Thus shalt thou truly find and feel how death and life fight one against the other, and shalt understand by what passeth within thyself, what heaven and hell are. At all which be not moved, but stand firm and shrink not; for at length all thy creatures will grow faint, weak, and ready to die; and then thy will shall wax stronger, and be able to subdue and keep down the evil inclinations. So shall thy will and mind ascend into heaven every day, and thy creatures gradually die away. Thou wilt get a mind wholly new, and begin to be a new creature, and getting rid of the bestial deformity, recover the divine image. Thus shalt thou be delivered from thy present anguish, and return to thy original rest.

The poor Soul's Practice

Then the poor soul began to practise this course with such earnestness, that it conceived it should get the victory presently; but it found that the gates of heaven were shut against it in its own strength and power, and it was, as it were, rejected and forsaken by God, and received not so much as one look or glimpse of grace from him. Upon which it said to itself, "Surely thou hast not sincerely submitted thyself to God. Desire nothing at all of him, but only submit thyself to his judgement and condemnation, that he

may kill thy evil inclinations. Sink down into him beyond the limits of nature and creature, and submit thyself to him, that he may do with thee what he will, for thou art not worthy to speak to him." Accordingly the soul took a resolution to sink down, and to forsake its own will; and when it had done so, there fell upon it presently the greatest repentance that could be for the sins it had committed; and it bewailed bitterly its ugly shape, and was truly and deeply sorry that the evil creatures did dwell in it. And because of its sorrow it could not speak one word more in the presence of God, but in its repentance did consider the bitter passion and death of Jesus Christ, viz. what great anguish and torment he had suffered for its sake, in order to deliver it out of its anguish, and change it into the image of God. In which consideration it wholly sunk down, and did nothing but complain of its ignorance and negligence, and that it had not been thankful to its Redeemer, nor once considered the great love he had shewn to it, but had idly spent its time, and not at all regarded how it might come to partake of his purchased and proffered grace; but instead thereof had formed in itself the images and figures of earthly things, with the vain lusts and pleasures of the world. Whereby it had gotten such bestial inclinations, that now it must lie captive in great misery, and for very shame dared not lift up its eyes to God, who hid the light of his countenance from it, and would not so much as look upon it. And as it was thus sighing and crying, it was drawn into the abyss or pit of horror, and laid it as it were at the gates of hell, there to perish. Upon which

the poor troubled soul was, as it were, bereft of sense, and wholly forsaken, so that it in a manner forgot all its doings, and would willingly yield itself to death, and cease to be a creature. Accordingly it did yield itself to death, and desired nothing else but to die and perish in the death of its Redeemer Jesus Christ, who had suffered such torments and death for its sake. And in this perishing it began to sigh and pray in itself very inwardly to the divine goodness, and to sink down into the mere mercy of God.

Upon this there suddenly appeared unto it the amiable countenance of the love of God, which penetrated through it as a great light, and made it exceedingly joyful. It then began to pray aright, and to thank the Most High for such grace, and to rejoice abundantly, that it was delivered from the death and anguish of hell. Now it tasted of the sweetness of God, and of his promised truth; and now all the evil spirits which had harassed it before, and kept it back from the grace, love, and inward presence of God, were forced to depart from it. The "wedding of the Lamb" was now kept and solemnised, that is, the noble Sophia espoused or betrothed herself to the soul; and the seal-ring of Christ's victory was impressed into its essence, and it was received to be a child and heir of God again.

When this was done, the soul became very joyful, and began to work in this new power, and to celebrate with praise the wonders of God, and thought thenceforth to walk continually in the same light,

strength, and joy. But it was soon assaulted; from without, by the shame and reproach of the world, and from within, by great temptation, so that it began to doubt whether its ground was truly from God, and whether it had really partaken of his grace. For the accuser Satan went to it, and would fain lead it out of this course, and make it doubtful whether it was the true way; whispering thus to it inwardly, "This happy change in thy spirit is not from God, but only from thine own imagination." Also the divine light retired in the soul, and shone but in the inward ground, as fire raked up in embers, so that reason was perplexed, and thought itself forsaken, and the soul knew not what had happened to itself, nor whether it had really and truly tasted of the heavenly gift or not. Yet it could not leave off struggling; for the burning fire of love was sown in it, which had raised in it a vehement and continual hunger and thirst after the divine sweetness. So at length it began to pray aright, and to humble itself in the presence of God, and to examine and try its evil inclinations and thoughts, and to put them away. By which means the will of reason was broken, and the evil inclinations inherent in it were killed, and extirpated more and more. This process was very severe and painful to the nature of the body, for it made it faint and weak, as if it had been very sick; and yet it was no natural sickness that it had, but only the melancholy of its earthly nature, feeling and lamenting the destruction of its evil lusts.

Now when the earthly reason found itself thus forsaken, and the poor soul saw that it was despised

outwardly, and derided by the world, because it would walk no longer in the way of wickedness and vanity; and also that it was inwardly assaulted by the accuser Satan, who mocked it, and continually set before it the beauty, riches, and glory of the world, and called it a fool for not embracing them; it began to think and say thus within itself: "O eternal God! What shall I now do to come to rest?"

The enlightened Soul met it again, and spoke to it

While it was in this consideration, the enlightened soul met with it again, and said, "What ailest thou, my brother, that thou art so heavy and sad?"

The distressed Soul said

I have followed thy counsel, and thereby attained a ray, or emanation of the divine sweetness, but it is gone from me again, and I am now deserted. Moreover I have outwardly very great trials and afflictions in the world; for all my good friends forsake and scorn me; and am also inwardly assaulted with anguish, and doubt, and know not what to do.

The enlightened Soul said

Now I like thee very well; for now our beloved Lord Jesus Christ is performing that pilgrimage or process on earth with thee and in thee, which he did himself when he was in this world, who was continually reviled, despised, and evil spoken of, and had nothing of his own in it; and now thou bearest his

mark or badge. But do not wonder at it, or think it strange; for it must be so, in order that thou mayest be tried, refined, and purified. In this anguish and distress thou wilt necessarily hunger and cry after deliverance; and by such hunger and prayer thou wilt attract grace to thee both from within and from without. For thou must grow from above and from beneath to be the image of God again. Just as a young plant is agitated by the wind, and must stand its ground in heat and cold, drawing strength and virtue to it from above and from beneath by that agitation, and must endure many a tempest, and undergo much danger before it can come to be a tree, and bring forth fruit. For through that agitation the virtue of the sun moveth in the plant, whereby its wild properties come to be penetrated and tintured with the solar virtue, and grow thereby.

And this is the time wherein thou must play the part of a valiant soldier in the spirit of Christ, and co-operate thyself therewith. For now the Eternal Father by his fiery power begetteth his son in thee, who changeth the fire of the Father, namely, the first principle, or wrathful property of the soul, into the flame of love, so that out of fire and light (viz. wrath and love) there cometh to be one essence, being, or substance, which is the true temple of God. And now thou shalt bud forth out of the vine Christ, in the vineyard of God, and bring forth fruit in thy life, and by assisting and instructing others, shew forth thy love in abundance, as a good tree. For paradise must thus spring up again in thee, through the wrath of

God, and hell he changed into heaven in thee. Therefore be not dismayed at the temptations of the devil, who seeketh and striveth for the kingdom which he once had in thee; but, having now lost it, must be confounded, and depart from thee. And he covereth thee outwardly with the shame and reproach of the world, that his own shame may not be known, and that thou mayest be hidden to the world. For with thy new birth or regenerated nature thou art in the divine harmony in heaven. Be patient, therefore, and wait upon the Lord; and whatsoever shall befall thee, take it all from his hands, as intended by him for thy highest good. And so the enlightened soul departed from it.

The distressed Soul's Course

The distressed soul began its course now under the patient suffering of Christ, and depending solely upon the strength and power of God in it, entered into hope. Thenceforth it grew stronger every day, and its evil inclinations died more and more in it. So that it arrived at length to a high state or degree of grace; and the gates of the divine revelation, and the kingdom of heaven, were opened to, and manifested in it.

And thus the soul through repentance, faith, and prayer, returned to its original and true rest, and became a right and beloved child of God again; to which may he of his infinite mercy help us all. Amen.

Islamic Mystical Theology

In Conversation with Imam Ghazzali



Imam Ghazzali

Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory

By Duncan B. MacDonald, 1903

CHAPTER IV

Al-Ghazzali, his life, times, and work; Sufiism formally accepted into Islam.

WITH the time came the man. He was al-Ghazzali, the greatest, certainly the most sympathetic figure in the history of Islam, and the only teacher of the after generations ever put by a Muslim on a level with the four great Imams. The equal of Augustine in philosophical and theological importance, by his side the Aristotelian philosophers of Islam, Ibn Rushd and all the rest, seem beggarly compilers and scholiasts. Only al-Farabi, and that in virtue of his mysticism, approaches him. In his own person he took up the life of his time on all its sides and with it all its problems. He lived through them all and drew his theology from his experience. Systems and classifications, words and arguments about words, he swept away; the facts of life as he had known them in his own soul he grasped. When his work was done the revelation of the mystic (*kashf*) was not only a full part but the basal part in the structure of Muslim theology. That basis, in spite, or rather on account of the work of the

mutakallims had previously been lacking. Such a scepticism as their atomic system had practically amounted to, could disprove much but could prove little. If all the categories but substance and quality are mere subjectivities, existing in the mind only, what can we know of things? An ultra-rational basis had to be found and it was found in the ecstasy of the Sufis. But al-Ghazzali brought another element into fuller and more effective working. With him passes away the old-fashioned kalam, a thing of shreds and patches, scraps of metaphysics and logic snatched up for a moment of need, without grasp of the full sweep of philosophy, and incapable, in the long run, of meeting it. Even its atomic system is a philosophy of amateurs, with all their fantastic one-sidedness, their vigor and rigor. But al-Ghazzali was no amateur. His knowledge and grasp of the problems and objects of philosophy were truer and more vital than in any other Muslim up to his time--perhaps after it, too. Islam has not fully understood him any more than Christendom fully understood Augustine, but until long after him the horizon of Muslims was wider and their air clearer for his work. Then came a new scholasticism, reigning to this day.

So much by way of preface. We must now give some account of the life and experiences, the ideas and sensations, of this great leader and reformer. For his life and his work were one. Everything that he thought and wrote came with the weight and reality of personal experience. He recognized this connection himself, and has left us a book--the *Munqidh min ad-*

dalal, "Rescuer from Error"--almost unique in Islam, which, in the form of an apology for the faith, is really an *Apologia pro vita sua*. This book is our main source for what follows.

Al-Ghazzali was born at Tus in 450. He lost his father when young and was educated and brought up by a trusted Sufi friend. He early turned to the study of theology and canon law, but, as he himself confesses, it was only because they promised wealth and reputation. Very early he broke away from *taqlid*, simple acceptance of religious truth on authority, and he began to investigate theological differences before he was twenty. His studies were of the broadest, embracing canon law, theology, dialectic, science, philosophy, logic and the doctrines and practices of the Sufis. It was a Sufi atmosphere in which he moved, but their religious fervors do not seem to have laid hold of him. Pride in his own intellectual powers, ambition and contempt for others of less ability mastered him. The latter part of his life as a student was spent at Naysabur as pupil and assistant of the Imam al-Haramayn. Through the Imam he stood in the apostolic succession of Ash'arite teachers, being the fourth from al-Ash'ari himself. There he remained till the death of the Imam in 478, when he went out to seek his fortune and found it with the great wazir, Nizam al-Mulk. By him al-Ghazzali was appointed, in 484, to teach in the Nizamite Academy at Baghdad. There he had the greatest success as a teacher and consulting lawyer, and his worldly hopes seemed safe. But suddenly he was struck down by

mysterious disease. His speech became hampered; his appetite and digestion failed. His physicians gave him up; his malady, they said, was mental and could only be mentally treated. His only hope lay in peace of mind. Then he suddenly quitted Baghdad, in 488, ostensibly on pilgrimage to Mecca. This flight, for it was so in effect, of al-Ghazzali was unintelligible to the theologians of the time; since that time it has marked the greatest epoch in the church of Islam after the return of al-Ash'ari.

That it should be unintelligible was natural. No cause could be seen on the surface, except some possible political complications; the cause in reality lay in al-Ghazzali's mind and conscience. He was wandering in the labyrinth of his time. From his youth he had been a sceptical, ambitious student, playing with religious influences yet unaffected by them. But the hollowness of his life was ever present with him and pressing upon him. Like some with us, he sought to be converted and could not bring it to pass. His religious beliefs gradually gave way and fell from him, piece by piece.

At last, the strain became too great and at the court of Nizam al-Mulk he touched for two months the depths of absolute scepticism. He doubted the evidence of the senses; he could see plainly that they often deceived. No eye could perceive the movement of a shadow, but still the shadow moved; a gold piece would cover any star, but a star was a world larger than the earth. He doubted even the primary ideas of

the mind. Is ten more than three? Can a thing be and not be? Perhaps; he could not tell. His senses deceived him, why not his mind? May there not be something behind the mind and transcending it, which would show the falsity of its convictions even as the mind showed the falsity of the information given by the senses? May not the dreams of the Sufis be true, and their revelations in ecstasy the only real guides? When we awake in death, may it not be into a true but different existence? All this--perhaps. And so he wandered for two months. He saw clearly that no reasoning could help him here; he had no ideas on which he could depend, from which he could begin. But the mercy of God is great; He sends His light to whom He wills, a light that flows in, and is given by no reasoning. By it al-Ghazzali was saved; he regained the power to think, and the task which he now set before him was to use this power to guide himself to truth.

When he looked around, he saw that those who gave themselves to the search for truth might be divided into four groups. There were the scholastic theologians, who were much like the theologians of all times and faiths. Second, there were the Ta'limites, who held that to reach truth one must have an infallible living teacher, and that there was such a teacher. Third, there were the followers of philosophy, basing on logical and rational proofs. Fourth, there were the Sufis, who held that they, the chosen of God, could reach knowledge of Him directly in ecstasy. With all these he had, of course,

been acquainted to a greater or less degree; but now he settled down to examine them one by one, and find which would lead him to a certainty to which he could hold, whatever might come. He felt that he could not go back to the unconscious faith of his childhood; *that* nothing could restore. All his mental being must be made over before he could find rest. He began with scholastic theology, but found no help there. Grant the theologians their premises and they could argue; deny them and there was no common ground on which to meet. Their science had been founded by al-Ash'ari to meet the Mu'tazilites; it had done that victoriously, but could do no more. They could hold the faith against heretics, expose their inconsistencies; against the sceptic they availed nothing. It is true that they had attempted to go further back and meet the students of philosophy on their own ground; to deal with substances and attributes and first principles generally; but their efforts had been fruitless. They lacked the necessary knowledge of the subject, had no scientific basis, and were constrained eventually to fall back on authority. After study of them and their methods it became clear to al-Ghazzali that the remedy for his ailment was not in scholastic theology.

Then he turned to philosophy. He had seen already that the weakness of the theologians lay in their not having made a sufficient study of primary ideas and the laws of thought. Three years he gave up to this. He was at Baghdad at the time, teaching law and writing legal treatises, and probably the three years

extended from the beginning of 484 to the beginning of 487. Two years he gave, without a teacher, to the study of the writings of the different schools. of philosophy, and almost another to meditating and working over his results. He felt that he was the first Muslim doctor to do this with the requisite thoroughness. And it is noteworthy that at this stage he seems to have again felt himself to be a Muslim, and in an enemy's country when he was studying philosophy. He speaks of the necessity of understanding what is to be refuted; but this may be only a confusion between his attitude when writing after 500, and his attitude when investigating and seeking truth, fifteen years earlier. He divides the followers of philosophy in his time into three: Materialists, Deists (*Tabi'is*, i.e. Naturalists), and Theists. The materialists reject a creator; the world exists from all eternity; the animal comes from the egg and the egg from the animal. The wonder of creation compels the deists to admit a creator, but the creature is a machine, has a certain poise (*i'tidal*) in itself which keeps it running; its thought is a part of its nature and ends with death. They thus reject a future life, though admitting God and His attributes.

He deals at much greater length with the teachings of those whom he calls theists, but through all his statements of their views his tone is not that of a seeker but that of a partisan; he turns his own experiences into a warning to others, and makes of their record a little guide to apologetics. Aristotle he regards as the final master of the Greek school; his

doctrines are best represented for Arabic readers in the books of Ibn Sina and al-Farabi; the works of their predecessors on this subject are a mass of confusion. Part of these doctrines must be stamped as unbelief, part as heresy, and part as theologically indifferent. He then divides the philosophical sciences into six, mathematics, logic, physics, metaphysics, political economy, ethics; and discusses these in detail, showing what must be rejected, what is indifferent, what dangers arise from each to him who studies or to him who rejects without study.

Throughout, he is very cautious to mark nothing as unbelief that is not really so; to admit always those truths of mathematics, logic, and physics that cannot intellectually be rejected; and only to warn against an attitude of intellectualism and a belief that mathematicians, with their success in their own department, are to be followed in other departments, or that all subjects are susceptible of the exactness and certainty of a syllogism in logic. The damnable errors of the theists are almost entirely in their metaphysical views. Three of their propositions mark them as unbelievers. *First*, they reject the resurrection of the body and physical punishment hereafter; the punishments of the next world will be spiritual only. That there will be spiritual punishments, al-Ghazzali admits, but there will be physical as well. *Second*, they hold that God knows universals only, not particulars. *Third*, they hold that the world exists from all eternity and to all eternity. When they reject the attributes of God and hold that He knows by His essence and not

by something added to His essence, they are only heretics and not unbelievers. In physics he accepts the constitution of the world as developed and explained by them; only all is to be regarded as entirely submitted to God, incapable of self-movement, a tool of which the Creator makes use. Finally, he considers that their system of ethics is derived from the Sufis. At all times there have been such saints, retired from the world--God has never left himself without a witness; and from their ecstasies and revelations our knowledge of the human heart, for good and for evil, is derived.

Thus in philosophy he found little light. It did not correspond entirely to his needs, for reason cannot answer all questions nor unveil all the enigmas of life. He would probably have admitted that he had learned much in his philosophical studies--so at least we may gather from his tone; he never speaks disrespectfully of philosophy and science in their sphere; his continual exhortation is that he who would understand them and refute them must first study them; that to do otherwise, to abuse what we do not know, brings only contempt on ourselves and on the cause which we champion. But with his temperament he could not found his religion on intellect. As a lawyer he could split hairs and define issues; but once the religious instinct was aroused, nothing could satisfy him but what he eventually found. And so, two possibilities and two only were before him, though one was hardly a real possibility, if we consider his training and mental powers. He

might fall back on authority. It could not be the authority of his childish faith, "Our fathers have told us," he himself confesses, could never again have weight with him. But it might be some claimer of authority in a new form, some infallible teacher with a doctrine which he could accept for the authority behind it. As the Church of Rome from time to time gathers into its fold men of keen intellect who seek rest in submission, and the world marvels, so it might have been with him. Or again, he might turn directly to God and to personal intercourse with Him; he might seek to know Him and to be taught of Him without any intermediary, in a word to enter on the path of the mystic.

He came next to examine the doctrine of the Ta'limites. They, a somewhat outlying wing of the Fatimid propaganda, had come at this time into alarming prominence. In 483 Hasan ibn as-Sabbah had seized Alamut and entered on open rebellion. The sect of the Assassins was applying its principles. But the poison of their teaching was also spreading among the people. The principle of authority in religion, that only by an infallible teacher could truth be reached and that such an infallible teacher existed if he could only be found, was in the air. For himself, al-Ghazzali found the Ta'limites and their teaching eminently unsatisfactory: They had a lesson which they went over parrot-fashion, but beyond it they were in dense ignorance. The trained theologian and scholar had no patience with their slackness and shallowness of thought. He labored long, as ash-

Shahrastani later confesses that he, too, did, to penetrate their mystery and learn something from them; but beyond the accustomed formulæ there was nothing to be found. He even admitted their contention of the necessity of a living, infallible teacher, to see what would follow--but nothing followed. "You admit the necessity of an Imam," they would say. "It is your business now to seek him; we have nothing to do with it." But though neither al-Ghazzali nor ash-Shahrastani, who died 43 (lunar) years after him, could be satisfied with the Ta'limites, many others were. The conflict was hot, and al-Ghazzali himself wrote several books against them.

The other possibility, the path of the mystic, now lay straight before him. In the *Munqidh* he tells us how, when he had made an end of the Ta'limites, he began to study the books of the Sufis, without any suggestion that he had had a previous acquaintance with them and their practices. But probably this means nothing more than it does when he speaks in a similar way of studying the scholastic theologians; namely, that he now took up the study in earnest and with a new and definite purpose. He therefore read carefully the works of al-Harith al-Muhasibi, the fragments of al-Junayd, ash-Shibli, and Abu Yazid al-Bistami. He had also the benefit of oral teaching; but it became plain to him that only through ecstasy and the complete transformation of the moral being could he really understand Sufiism. He saw that it consisted in feelings more than in knowledge, that he must be

initiated as a Sufi himself; live their life and practise their exercises, to attain his goal.

On the way upon which he had gone up to this time, he had gained three fixed points of faith. He now believed firmly in God, in prophecy, and in the fast judgment. He had also gained the belief that only by detaching himself from this world, its life, enjoyments, honors, and turning to God could he be saved in the world to come. He looked on his present life, his writing and his teaching, and saw of how little value it was in the face of the great fact of heaven and hell. All he did now was for the sake of vainglory and had in it no consecration to the service of God. He felt on the edge of an abyss. The world held him back; his fears urged him away. He was in the throes of a conversion wrought by terror; his religion, now and always, in common with ail Islam, was other-worldly. So he remained in conflict with himself for six months from the middle of 488. Finally, his health broke down under the strain. In his feebleness and overthrow he took refuge with God, as a man at the end of his resources. God heard him and enabled him to make the needed sacrifices. He abandoned all and wandered forth from Baghdad as a Sufi. He had put his brilliant present and brilliant future absolutely behind him; had given up everything for the peace of his soul. This date, the end of 488, was the great era in his life; but it marked an era, too, in the history of Islam. Since al-Ash'ari went back to the faith of his fathers in 300, and cursed the Mu'tazilites and all their works, there had been no

such epoch as this flight of al-Ghazzali. It meant that the reign of mere scholasticism was over; that another element was to work openly in the future Church of Islam, the element of the mystical life in God, of the attainment of truth by the soul in direct vision.

He went to Syria and gave himself up for two years to the religious exercises of the Sufis. Then he went on pilgrimage, first to Jerusalem; then to the tomb of Abraham at Hebron; finally to Mecca and al-Madina. With this religious duty his life of strict retirement ended. It is evident that he now felt that he was again within the fold of Islam. In spite of his former resolution to retire from the world, he was drawn back. The prayers of his children and his own aspirations broke in upon him, and though he resolved again and again to return to the contemplative life, and did often actually do so, yet events, family affairs, and the anxieties of life, kept continually disturbing him.

This went on, he tells us, for almost ten years, and in that time there were revealed to him things that could not be reckoned and the discussion of which could not be exhausted. He learned that the Sufis were on the true and only path to the knowledge of God; that neither intelligence nor wisdom nor science could change or improve their doctrine or their ethics. The light in which they walk is essentially the same as the light of prophecy; Muhammad was a Sufi when on his way to be a prophet. There is none other light to light any man in this world. A complete purifying of

the heart from all but God is their Path; a seeking to plunge the heart completely in the thought of God, is its beginning, and its end is complete passing away in God. This last is only its end in relation to what can be entered upon and grasped by a voluntary effort; in truth, it is only the first step in the Path, the vestibule to the contemplative life. Revelations (*mukashafas*, unveilings) came to the disciples from the very beginning; while awake they see angels and souls of prophets, hear their voices and gain from them guidance. Then their State (*hal*, a Sufi technicality for a state of ecstasy) passes from the beholding of forms to stages where language fails and any attempt to express what is experienced must involve some error. They reach a nearness to God which some have fancied to be a *hulul*, fusion of being, others an *ittihad*, identification, and others a *wusul*, union; but these are all erroneous ways of indicating the thing. Al-Ghazzali notes one of his books in which he has explained wherein the error lies. But the thing itself is the true basis of all faith and the beginning of prophecy; the *karamat* of the saints lead to the miracles of the prophets. By this means the possibility and the existence of prophecy can be proved, and then the life itself of Muhammad proves that he was a prophet. Al-Ghazzali goes on to deal with the nature of prophecy, and how the life of Muhammad shows the truth of his mission; but enough has been given to indicate his attitude and the stage at which he had himself arrived.

During this ten years he had returned to his native country and to his children, but had not undertaken public duty as a teacher. Now that was forced upon him. The century was drawing to a close. Everywhere there was evident a slackening of religious fervor and faith. A mere external compliance with the rules of Islam was observed, men even openly defended such a course. He adduces as an example of this the *Wasiya* of Ibn Sina. The students of philosophy went their way, and their conduct shook the minds of the people; false Sufis abounded, who taught antinomianism; the lives of many theologians excited scandal; the Ta'limites were still spreading. A religious leader to turn the current was absolutely needed, and his friends looked to al-Ghazzali to take up that duty; some distinguished saints had dreams of his success; God had promised a reformer every hundred years and the time was up. Finally, the Sultan laid a command upon him to go and teach in the academy at Naysabur, and he was forced to consent. His departure for Naysabur fell at the end of 499, exactly eleven years after his flight from Baghdad. But he did not teach there long. Before the end of his life we find him back at Tus, his native place, living in retirement among his disciples, in a Madrasa or academy for students and a Khanqah or monastery for Sufis.

There he settled down to study and contemplation. We have already seen what theological position he had reached. Philosophy had been tried and found wanting. In a book of his called *Tahafut*, or

"Destruction," he had smitten the philosophers hip and thigh; he had turned, as in earlier times al-Ash'ari, their own weapons against them, and had shown that with their premises and methods no certainty could be reached. In that book he goes to the extreme of intellectual scepticism, and, seven hundred years before Hume, he cuts the bond of causality with the edge of his dialectic and proclaims that we can know nothing of cause or effect, but simply that one thing follows another. He combats their proof of the eternity of the world, and exposes their assertion that God is its creator. He demonstrates that they cannot prove the existence of the creator or that that Creator is one; that they cannot prove that He is incorporeal, or that the world has any creator or cause at all; that they cannot prove the nature of God or that the human soul is a spiritual essence. When he has finished there is no intellectual basis left for life; he stands beside the Greek sceptics and beside Hume. We are thrown back on revelation, that given immediately by God to the individual soul or that given through prophets. All our real knowledge is derived from these sources. So it was natural that in the latter part of his life he should turn to the traditions of the Prophet. The science of tradition must certainly have formed part of his early studies, as of those of all Muslim theologians, but he had not specialized in it; his bent had lain in quite other directions. His master, the Imam al-Haramayn, had been no student of tradition; among his many works is not one dealing with that subject. Now he saw that the truth and the knowledge of the truth lay

there, and he gave himself, with all the energy of his nature, to the new pursuit.

The end of his wanderings came at Tus, in 505. There he died while seeking truth in the traditions of Muhammad, as al-Ash'ari, his predecessor, had done. The stamp of his personality is ineffaceably impressed on Islam. The people of his time revered him as a saint and wonder-worker. He himself never claimed to work *karamat* and always spoke modestly of the light which he had reached in ecstasy. After his death legends early began to gather round him, and the current biographies of him are untrustworthy to a degree. It says much for the solidity of his work that he did not pass into a misty figure of popular superstition. But that work remained and remains among his disciples and in his books. We must now attempt to estimate its bearing and scope.

For him, as for the mutakallims in general, the fundamental thing in the world and the starting-point of all speculation is will. The philosophers in their intellectualism might picture God as thought--thought thinking itself and evolving all things thereby. Their source was Plotinus; that of the Muslims was the terrific "Be!" of creation. But how can we know this will of God if we are simply part of what it has produced? In answering this, al-Ghazzali and his followers have diverged from the rest of Islam, but not into heresy. Their view is admitted to be a possible interpretation of Qur'anic passages, if not that commonly held. The soul of man, al-Ghazzali

taught, is essentially different from the rest of the created things. We read in the Qur'an (xv, 29; xxxviii, 72) that God breathed into man of His spirit (*ruh*). This is compared with the rays of the sun reaching a thing on the earth and warming it. In virtue of this, the soul of man is different from everything else in the world. It is a spiritual substance (*jawhar ruhani*), has no corporeality, and is not subject to dimension, position or locality. It is not in the body or outside of the body; to apply such categories to it is as absurd as to speak of the knowledge or ignorance of a stone. Though created, it is not shaped; it belongs to the spiritual world and not to this world of sensible things. It contains some spark of the divine and it is restless till it rests again in that primal fire; but, again, it is recorded in tradition that the Prophet said, "God Most High created Adam in His own form (*sura*)." Al-Ghazzali takes that to mean that there is a likeness between the spirit of man and God in essence, quality, and actions. Further, the spirit of man rules the body as God rules the world. Man's body is a microcosm beside the macrocosm of this world, and they correspond, part by part. Is, then, God simply the *anima mundi*? No, because He is the creator of all by His will, the sustainer and destroyer by His will. Al-Ghazzali comes to this by a study of himself. His primary conception is, *volo ergo sum*. It is not thought which impresses him, but volition. From thought he can develop nothing; from will can come the whole round universe. But if God, the Creator, is a Willer, so, too, is the soul of man. They are kin, and, therefore, man can know and recognize God. "He

who knows his own soul, knows his Lord," said another tradition.

This view of the nature of the soul is essential to the Sufi position and is probably borrowed from it. But there are in it two possibilities of heresy, if the view be pushed any further. It tends (1) to destroy the important Muslim dogma of God's Difference (*mukhalafa*) from all created things, and (2) to maintain that the souls of men are partakers of the divine nature and will return to it at death. Al-Ghazzali labored to safeguard both dangers, but they were there and showed themselves in time. Just as the Aristotelian plus neo-Platonic philosophers reached the position that the universe with all its spheres was God, so, later, Sufis came to the other pantheistic position that God was the world. Before the atomic scholastics the same danger also lay. It is part of the irony of the history of Muslim theology that the very emphasis on the transcendental unity should lead thus to pantheism. Al-Ghazzali's endeavor was to strike the *via media*. The Hegelian Trinity might have appealed to him.

To return, his views on science, as we have already seen, were the same as those of the contemporary students of natural philosophy. Their teachings he accepted, and, so far, he can be compared to a theologian of the present day, who accepts evolution and explains it to suit himself. His world was framed on what is commonly called the Ptolemaic system. He was no fiat-earth man like the present Ulama of Islam;

God had "spread out the earth like a carpet," but that did not hinder him from regarding it as a globe. Around it revolve the spheres of the seven planets and that of the fixed stars; Alphonso the Wise had not yet added the crystalline sphere and the *primum mobile*. All that astronomers and mathematicians teach us of the laws under which these bodies move is to be accepted. Their theory of eclipses and of other phenomena of the heavens is true, whatever the ignorant and superstitious may clamor. Yet it is to be remembered that the most important facts and laws have been divinely revealed. As the weightiest truths of medicine are to be traced back to the teaching of the prophets, so there are conjunctions in the heavens which occur only once in a thousand years and which man can yet calculate because God has taught him their laws. And all this structure of the heavens and the earth is the direct work of God, produced out of nothing by His will, guided by His will, ever dependent for existence on His will, and one day to pass away at His command. So al-Ghazzali joins science and revelation. Behind the order of nature lies the personal, omnipotent God who says; "Be!" and it is. The things of existence do not proceed from Him by any emanation or evolution, but are produced directly by Him.

Further, there is another side of al-Ghazzali's attitude toward the physical universe that deserves attention, but which is very difficult to grasp or express. Perhaps it may be stated thus: Existence has three modes; there is existence in the *alam al-mulk*, in the

alam al-jabarut, and in the *alam al-malakut*. The first is this world of ours which is apparent to the senses; it exists by the power (*qudra*) of God, one part proceeding from another in constant change. The *alam al-malakut* exists by God's eternal decree, without development, remaining in one state without addition or diminution. The *alam al-jabarut* comes between these two; it seems externally to belong to the first, but in respect of the power of God which is from all eternity (*al-qudra al-azaliya*) it is included in the second. The soul (*nafs*) belongs to the *alam al-malakut*, is taken from it and returns to it. In sleep and in ecstasy, even in this world, it can come into contact with the world from which it is derived. This is what happens in dreams--"sleep is the brother of death," says al-Ghazzali; and thus, too, the saints and the prophets attain divine knowledge. Some angels belong to the world of *malakut*; some to that of *jabarut*, apparently those who have shown themselves here as messengers of God. The things in the heavens, the preserved tablet, the pen, the balance, etc., belong to the world of *malakut*. On the one hand, these are not sensible, corporeal things, and, on the other, these terms for them are not metaphors. Thus al-Ghazzali avoids the difficulty of Muslim eschatology with its bizarre concreteness. He rejects the right to allegorize--these things are real, actual; but he relegates them to this world of *malakut*. Again, the Qur'an, Islam, and Friday (the day of public worship) are personalities in the world of *malakut* and *jabarut*. So, too, the world of *mulk* must appear as a personality at the bar of these other worlds at the last day. It will come as an ugly

old woman, but Friday as a beautiful young bride. This personal Qur'an belongs to the world of *jabarut*, but Islam to that of *malakut*.

But just as those three worlds are not thought of as separate in time, so they are not separate in space. They are not like the seven heavens and seven earths of Muslim literalists, which stand, story-fashion, one above the other. Rather they are, as expressed above, modes of existence, and might be compared to the speculations on another life in space of n dimensions, framed, from a very different starting-point and on a basis of pure physics, by Balfour Stewart and Tait in their "Unseen Universe." On another side they stand in close kinship to the Platonic world of ideas, whether through neo-Platonism or more immediately. Sufism at its best, and when stripped of the trap-pings of Muslim tradition and Qur'anic exegesis, has no reason to shrink from the investigation either of the physicist or of the metaphysician. And so it is not strange to find that all Muslim thinkers have been tinged with mysticism to a greater or less degree, though they may not all have embraced formal Sufiism and accepted its vocabulary and system. This is true of al-Farabi, who was avowedly a Sufi; true also of Ibn Sina, who, though nominally an Aristotelian, was essentially a neo-Platonist, and admitted the possibility of intercourse with superior beings and with the Active Intellect, of miracles and revelations; true even of Ibn Rushd, who does not venture to deny the immediate knowledge of the Sufi saints, but only argues that experience of it is not

sufficiently general to be made a basis for theological science.

In ethics, as we have already seen, the position of al-Ghazzali is a simple one. All our laws and theories upon the subject, the analysis of the qualities of the mind, good and bad, the tracing of hidden defects to their causes--all these things we owe to the saints of God to whom God Himself has revealed them. Of these there have been many at all times and in all countries, and without them and their labors and the light which God has vouchsafed to them, we could never know ourselves. Here, as everywhere, comes out al-Ghazzali's fundamental position that the ultimate source of all knowledge is revelation from God. It may be major revelation, through accredited prophets who come forward as teachers, divinely sent and supported by miracles and by the evident truth of their message appealing to the human heart, or it may be minor revelation--subsidiary and explanatory -- through the vast body of saints of different grades, to whom God has granted immediate knowledge of Himself. Where the saints leave off, the prophets begin; and, apart from such teaching, man, even in physical science, would be groping in the dark.

This position becomes still more prominent in his philosophical system. His agnostic attitude toward the results of pure thought has been already sketched. It is essentially the same as that taken up by Mansell in his Bampton lectures on "The Limits of Religious Thought." Mansell, a pupil and continuator of

Hamilton, developed and emphasized Hamilton's doctrine of the relativity of knowledge, and applied it to theology, maintaining that we cannot know or think of the absolute and infinite, but only of the relative and finite. Hence, he went on to argue, we can have no positive knowledge of the attributes of God. This, though disguised by the methods and language of scholastic philosophy, is al-Ghazzali's attitude in the *Tahafut*. Mansell's opponents said that he was like a man sitting on the branch of a tree and sawing off his seat. Al-Ghazzali, for the support of his seat, went back to revelation, either major, in the books sent down to the prophets, or minor, in the personal revelations of God's saints. Further, it was not only in the Muslim schools that this attitude toward philosophy prevailed. Yehuda Halevi (d. A.D. 1145; al-Ghazzali, d. 1111) also maintains in his *Kusari* the insufficiency of philosophy in the highest questions of life, and bases religious truth on the incontrovertible historical facts of revelation. And Maimonides (d. A.D. 1204) in his *Moreh Nebuchim* takes essentially the same position.

Of his views on dogmatic theology little need be said. Among modern theologians he stands nearest to Ritschl. Like Ritschl, he rejects metaphysics and opposes the influence of any philosophical system on his theology. The basis must be religious phenomena, simply accepted and correlated. Like Ritschl, too, he was emphatically ethical in his attitude; he lays stress on the *value for us* of a doctrine or a piece of knowledge. Our source of religious knowledge is

revelation, and beyond a certain point we must not inquire as to the how and why of that knowledge. To do so would be to enter metaphysics and the danger-zone where we lose touch with vital realities and begin to use mere words. On one point he goes beyond Ritschl, and, on another, Ritschl goes beyond him. In his devotion to the facts of the religious consciousness Ritschl did not go so far as to become a mystic, indeed rejected mysticism with a conscious indignation; al-Ghazzali did become a mystic. But, on the other hand, Ritschl refused absolutely to enter upon the nature of God or upon the divine attributes—all that was mere metaphysics and heathenism; al-Ghazzali did not so far emancipate himself, and his only advance was to keep the doctrine on a strictly Qur'anic basis. So it stands written; not, so man is compelled by the nature of things to think.

His work and influence in Islam may be summed up briefly as follows: *First*, he led men back from scholastic labors upon theological dogmas to living contact with, study and exegesis of, the Word and the traditions. What happened in Europe when the yoke of mediæval scholasticism was broken, what is happening with us now, happened in Islam under his leadership. He could be a scholastic with scholastics, but to state and develop theological doctrine on a Scriptural basis was emphatically his method. We should now call him a Biblical theologian.

Second, in his teaching and moral exhortations he reintroduced the element of fear. In the *Munqidh* and

elsewhere he lays stress on the need of such a striking of terror into the minds of the people. His was no time, he held, for smooth, hopeful preaching; no time for optimism either as to this world or the next. The horrors of hell must be kept before men; he had felt them himself. We have seen how other-worldly was his own attitude, and how the fear of the Fire had been the supreme motive in his conversion; and so he treated others.

Third, it was by his influence that Sufiism attained a firm and assured position in the Church of Islam.

Fourth, he brought philosophy and philosophical theology within the range of the ordinary mind. Before his time they had been surrounded, more or less, with mystery. The language used was strange; its vocabulary and terms of art had to be specially learned. No mere reader of the Arabic of the street or the mosque or the school could understand at once a philosophical tractate. Greek ideas and expressions, passing through a Syriac version into Arabic, had strained to the uttermost the resources of even that most flexible tongue. A long training had been thought necessary before the elaborate and formal method of argumentation could be followed. All this al-Ghazzali changed, or at least tried to change. His *Tahafut* is not addressed to scholars only; he seeks with it a wider circle of readers, and contends that the views, the arguments, and the fallacies of the philosophers should be perfectly intelligible to the general public.

Of these four phases of al-Ghazzali's work, the first and the third are undoubtedly the most important. He made his mark by leading Islam back to its fundamental and historical facts, and by giving a place in its system to the emotional religious life. But it will have been noticed that in none of the four phases was he a pioneer. He was not a scholar who struck out a new path, but a man of intense personality who entered on a path already blazed and made it the common highway. We have here his character. Other men may have been keener logicians, more learned theologians, more gifted saints; but he, through his personal experiences, had attained so overpowering a sense of the divine realities that the force of his character--once combative and restless, now narrowed and intense--swept all before it, and the Church of Islam entered on a new era of its existence.

So much space it has been necessary to give to this great man. Islam has never outgrown him, has never fully understood him. In the renaissance of Islam which is now rising to view his time will come and the new life will proceed from a renewed study of his works.

From this time on, the Ash'arites may be fairly regarded as the dominant school so far as the East is concerned. Saladin (d. 589) did much to aid in the establishment of this hegemony. He was a devout Muslim with the taste of an amateur for theological literature. Anecdotes tell how he had a special little

catechism composed, and used himself to instruct his children in it. He founded theological academies in Egypt at Alexandria and Cairo, the first there except the Fatimid Hall of Science. One of the few blots on his name is the execution of the pantheistic Sufi, Shihab ad-Din as-Suhrawardi, at Aleppo in 587. Meanwhile, in the farther East, Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi (d. 606) was writing his great commentary on the Qur'an, the *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, "The Keys of the Unseen," and carrying on the work of al-Ghazzali. The title of his commentary itself shows the dash of mysticism in his teaching, and he was in correspondence with Ibn Arabi, the arch-Sufi of the time. He studied philosophy, too, commented on works of Ibn Sina, and fought the philosophers on their own ground as al-Ghazzali had done. Kalam and philosophy are now, in the eyes of the theologians, a true philosophy and a false. Philosophy has taken the place of Mu'tazilism and the other heresies. The enemies of the faith are outside its pale, and the scholasticizing of philosophy goes on steadily. According to some, a new stage was marked by al-Baydawi (d. 685), who confused inextricably philosophy and kalam, but the newness can have been comparative only. A century later al-Iji (d. 756) writes a book, *al-Mawagif*, on kalam, half of which is given to metaphysics and the other half to dogmatics. At-Taftazani is another name worthy of mention. He died in 791, after a laborious life as a controversialist and commentator. When we reach Ibn Khaldun (d. 808), the first philosophical historian and the greatest until the nineteenth century of our era, we find that

kalam has fallen again from its high estate. It has become a scholastic discipline, useful only to repel the attacks of heretics and unbelievers; and of heretics, says Ibn Khaldun, there are now none left. Reason, he goes on, cannot grasp the nature of God; cannot weigh His unity nor measure His qualities. God is unknowable and we must accept what we are told about Him by His prophets. Such was the result of the destruction of philosophy in Islam.

A SHORT CREED BY AL-GHAZZALI

An exposition of the Creed of the People of the Sunna on the two Words of Witnessing (*kalimatan ash-shahada*) which form one of the Foundations of Islam.

[Intended to be committed to memory by children. It forms the first section of the second book of his *Ihya*, vol. ii, pp. 17-42 of edit. of Cairo with commentary of the Sayyid Murtadà.]

We say--and in God is our trust--Praise belongeth unto God, the Beginner, the Bringer back, the Doer of what He willeth, the Lord of the Glorious Throne and of Mighty Grasp, the Guider of His chosen creatures to the right path and to the true way, the Granter of benefits to them after the witness to the Unity (*tawhid*) by guarding their articles of belief from obscurities of doubt and opposition, He that bringeth them to follow His Apostle, the Chosen one (*al-Mustafa*), and to imitate the traces of his Companions, the most honored, through His aid and right guidance revealed to them in His essence and His works by His

beautiful qualities which none perceives, save he who inclines his ear. He is the witness who maketh known to them that He in His essence is One without any partner (*sharik*). Single without any similar, Eternal without any opposite, Separate without any like. He is One, Prior (*qadim*) with nothing before Him, from eternity (*azali*) without any beginning, abiding in existence with none after Him, to eternity (*abadi*) without any end, subsisting without ending, abiding without termination. He hath not ceased and He will not cease to be described with glorious epithets; finishing and ending, through the cutting off of the ages and the terminating of allotted times, have no rule over Him, but He is the First and Last, the External and the Internal, and He knoweth everything.

We witness that He is not a body possessing form, nor a substance possessing bounds and limits: He does not resemble bodies, either in limitation or in accepting division. He is not a substance and substances do not exist in Him; and He is not an accident and accidents do not exist in Him, nay He does not resemble an entity, and no entity resembles Him; nothing is like Him and He is not like anything; measure does not bound Him and boundaries do not contain Him; the directions do not surround Him and neither the earth nor the heavens are on different sides of Him. Lo, He is seated firmly upon His Throne (*arsh*), after the manner which He has said, and in the sense in which He willed a being seated firmly (*istiwa*), which is far removed from contact and fixity

of location and being established and being enveloped and being removed. The Throne does not carry Him, but the Throne and those that carry it are carried by the grace of His power and mastered by His grasp. He is above the Throne and the Heavens and above everything unto the limit of the Pleiades, with an aboveness which does not bring Him nearer to the Throne and the Heavens, just as it does not make Him further from the earth and the Pleiades. Nay, He is exalted by degrees from the Throne and the Heavens, just as He is exalted by degrees from the earth and the Pleiades; and He, in spite of that, is near to every entity and is "nearer to a creature than the artery of his neck" (Qur. 50, 15), and He witnesseth everything, since His nearness does not resemble the nearness of bodies, just as His essence does not resemble the essence of bodies. He does not exist in anything, just as nothing exists in Him: He has exalted Himself far therefrom that a place should contain Him, just as He has sanctified Himself far therefrom that time should limit Him. Nay, He was before He had created Time and Place and He is now above that which He was above, and distinct from His creatures through His qualities. There is not in His essence His equal, nor in His equal His essence. He is far removed from change of state or of place. Events have no place in Him, and mishaps do not befall him. Nay, He does not cease, through His glorious epithets, to be far removed from changing, and through His perfect qualities to be independent of perfecting increase. The existence of His essence is known by reason; His essence is seen with the eyes, a

benefit from Him and a grace to the pious, in the Abiding Abode and a completion in beatitude from Him, through gazing upon His gracious face.

We witness that He is living, powerful, commanding, conquering; inadequacy and weakness befall Him not; slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep. Passing away does not happen to Him, nor death. He is Lord of the Worlds, the Visible and the Invisible, that of Force and that of Might; He possesses Rule and Conquest and Creation and Command; the heavens are rolled in His right hand and the created things are overcome in His grasp; He is separate in creating and inventing; He is one in bringing into existence and innovating; He created the creation and their works and decreed their sustenance and their terms of life; not a decreed thing escapes His grasp and the mutations of things are not distant from His power; the things which He hath decreed cannot be reckoned and the things which He knoweth have no end.

We witness that He knoweth all the things that can be known, comprehending that which happeneth from the bounds of the earths unto the topmost heavens; no grain in the earth or the heavens is distant from His knowledge. Yea, He knows the creeping of the black ant upon the rugged rock in a dark night, and He perceives the movement of the mote in the midst of the air; He knows the secret and the concealed and has knowledge of the suggestions of the minds and the movements of the thoughts and the concealed things of the inmost parts, by a knowledge which is

prior from eternity; He has not ceased to be describable by it, from the ages of the ages, not by a knowledge which renews itself and arises in His essence by arrival and removal.

We witness that He is a Willer of the things that are, a Director of the things that happen; there does not come about in the world, seen or unseen, little or much, small or great, good or evil, advantage or disadvantage, faith or unbelief, knowledge or ignorance, success or loss, increase or diminution, obedience or rebellion, except by His will. What He wills is, and what He wills not is not. Not a glance of one who looks, or a slip of one who thinks is outside of His will: He is the Creator, the Bringer back, the Doer of that which He wills. There is no opponent of His command and no repeater of His destiny and no refuge for a creature from disobeying Him, except by His help and His mercy, and no strength to a creature to obey Him except by His will. Even though mankind and the Jinn and the Angels and the Shaytans were to unite to remove a single grain in the world or to bring it to rest without His will, they would be too weak for that. His will subsists in His essence as one of His qualities; He hath not ceased to be described through it as a Willer, in His infinity, of the existence of things at their appointed times which He hath decreed. So they come into existence at their appointed times even as He has willed in His infinity without precedence or sequence. They happen according to the agreement of His knowledge and His will, without exchange or change in planning of

things, nor with arranging of thoughts or awaiting of time, and therefore one thing does not distract Him from another.

And we witness that He is a Hearer and a Seer. He hears and sees, and no audible thing is distant from His hearing, and no visible thing is far from His seeing, however fine it may be. Distance does not curtain off His hearing and darkness does not dull His seeing; He sees without eyeball or eyelid, and hears without earholes or ears, just as He knows without a brain and seizes without a limb and creates without an instrument, since His qualities do not resemble the qualities of created things, just as His essence does not resemble the essences of created things.

And we witness that He speaks, commanding, forbidding, praising, threatening, with a speech from all eternity, prior, subsisting in His essence not resembling the speech of created things. It is not a sound which originates through the slipping out of air, or striking of bodies; nor is it a letter which is separated off by closing down a lip or moving a tongue. And the Qur'an and the Tawrat [the Law of Moses] and the Injil [the Gospel] and the Zabbur [the Psalms] are His book revealed to His Apostles. And the Qur'an is repeated by tongues, written in copies, preserved in hearts: yet it, in spite of that, is prior, subsisting in the essence of God, not subject to division and separation through being transferred to hearts and leaves. And Musa heard the speech of God

without a sound and without a letter, just as the pious see the essence of God, in the other world, without a substance or an attribute.

And since He has those qualities, He is Living, Knowing, Powerful, a Willer, a Hearer, a Seer, a Speaker, through Life, Power, Knowledge, Will, Hearing, Seeing, Speech, not by a thing separated from His essence.

We witness that there is no entity besides Him, except what is originated from His action and proceeds from His justice, after the most beautiful and perfect and complete and just of ways. He is wise in His actions, just in His determinations; there is no analogy between His justice and the justice of creatures, since tyranny is conceivable in the case of a creature, when he deals with the property of some other than himself, but tyranny is not conceivable in the case of God. For He never encounters any property in another besides Himself, so that His dealing with it might be tyranny. Everything besides Him, consisting of men and Jinn and Angels and Shaytans and the heavens and the earth and animals and plants and inanimate things and substance and attribute and things perceived and things felt, is an originated thing, which He created by His power, before any other had created it, after it had not existed, and which He invented after that it had not been a thing, since He in eternity was an entity by Him-self, and there was not along with Him any other than He. So He originated the creation thereafter, by way of manifestation of His power, and

verification of that which had preceded of His Will, and of that which existed in eternity of His Word; not because He had any lack of it or need of it. And He is gracious in creating and in making for the first times and in imposing of duty--not of necessity--and He is generous in benefiting; and well-doing and gracious helping belong to Him, since He is able to bring upon His creatures different kinds of punishment and to test them with different varieties of pains and ailments. And if He did that, it would be justice on His part, and would not be a vile action or tyranny in Him. He rewardeth His believing creatures for their acts of obedience by a decision which is of generosity and of promise and not of right and of obligation, since no particular action toward anyone is incumbent upon Him, and tyranny is inconceivable in Him, and no one possesses a right against Him. And His right to acts of obedience is binding upon the creatures because He has made it binding through the tongues of His prophets, not by reason alone. But He sent apostles and manifested their truth by plain miracles, and they brought His commands and forbiddings and promisings and threatenings. So, belief in them as to what they have brought is incumbent upon the creation.

THE SECOND WORD OF WITNESSING is witnessing that the apostolate belongs to the apostle, and that God sent the unlettered Qurayshite prophet, Muhammad, with his apostolate to the totality of Arabs and foreigners and Jinn and men. And He abrogated by his law the other laws, except so much

of them as He confirmed; and made him excellent over the rest of the prophets and made him the Lord of Mankind and declared incomplete the Faith that consists in witnessing the Unity, which is saying, "There is no god except God," so long as there is not joined to that a witnessing to the Apostle, which is saying, "Muhammad is the Apostle of God." And He made obligatory upon the creation belief in him, as to all which he narrated concerning the things of this world and the next. And that He would not accept the faith of a creature, so long as he did not believe in that which the Prophet narrated concerning things after death. The first of that is the question of Munkar and Nakir; these are two awful and terrible beings who will cause the creature to sit up in his grave, complete, both soul and body; and they will ask him, "Who is thy Lord, and what is thy religion (*din*), and who is thy Prophet?" They are the two testers in the grave and their questioning is the first testing after death. And that he should believe in the punishment of the grave--that it is a Verity and that its judgment upon the body and the soul is just, according to what God wills. And that he should believe in the Balance--it with the two scales and the tongue, the magnitude of which is like unto the stages of the heavens and the earth. In it, deeds are weighed by the power of God Most High; and its weights in that day will be of the weight of motes and mustard seeds, to show the exactitude of its justice. The leaves of the good deeds will be placed in a beautiful form in the scale of light; and then the Balance will be weighed down by them according to the measure of their degree with God, by

the grace of God. And the leaves of the deeds will be cast in a vile form into the scale of darkness, and the Balance will be light with them, through the justice of God. And that he should believe that the Bridge (*as-sirat*) is a Verity; it is a bridge stretched over the back of Hell (*jahannam*), sharper than a sword and finer than a hair. The feet of the unbelievers slip upon it, by the decree of God, and fall with them into the Fire. But the feet of believers stand firm upon it, by the grace of God, and so they pass into the Abiding Abode. And that he should believe in the Tank (*hawd*), to which the people shall go down, the Tank of Muhammad from which the believers shall drink before entering the Garden and after passing the Bridge. Whoever drinks of it a single draught will never thirst again thereafter. Its breadth is a journey of a month; its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey; around it are ewers in numbers like the stars of heaven; into it flow two canals from *al-Kawthar* (Qur. 108). And that he should believe in the Reckoning and in the distinctions between men in it, him with whom it will go hard in the Reckoning and him to whom compassion will be shown therein, and him who enters the Garden without any reckoning,--these are the honored (*muqarrab*). God Most High will ask whomsoever He will of the prophets, concerning the carrying of His message, and whomsoever He will of the unbelievers, concerning the rejection of the messengers; and He will ask the innovators (*mubtadi's*) concerning the Sunna; and the Muslims concerning works. And that he should believe that the attestors of God's Unity (*muwahhids*) will be brought

forth from the Fire, after vengeance has been taken on them, so that there will not remain in Hell an attestor of God's Unity. And that he should believe in the intercession (*shafa'a*) of the prophets, next of the learned (*ulama*), next of the martyrs, next of the rest of the believers--each according to his dignity and rank with God Most High. And he who remains of the believers, and has no intercessor, shall be brought forth of the grace of God, whose are Might and Majesty. So there shall not abide eternally in the Fire a single believer, but whoever has in his heart the weight of a single grain of faith shall be brought forth therefrom. And that he should confess the excellence of the Companions--May God be well pleased with them!--and their rank; and that the most excellent of mankind, after the Prophet, is Abu Bakr, next Umar, next Uthman, next Ali--May God be well pleased with them! And that he should think well of all the Companions and should praise them like as he praises God, whose are Might and Majesty, and His Apostles. All this is of that which has been handed down in traditions from the Prophet and in narratives from the followers. He who confesses all this, relying upon it, is of the People of the Truth and the Company of the Sunna, and hath separated himself from the band of error and the sect of innovation (*bid'a*). So we ask from God perfection of certainty and firm standing in the Faith (*din*) for us and for all Muslims through His compassion.--lo! He is the Most Compassionate!--and may the blessing of God be upon our Lord Muhammad and upon every chosen creature.

Bahai Mystical Theology

In Conversation with Bahauallah



Bahauallah

Teachings of Baha'u'llah

By Baha'u'llah, circa 1900

THE DIVINE STANDARD OF KNOWLEDGE

During my visit to London and Paris last year I had many talks with the materialistic philosophers of Europe. The basis of all their conclusions is that the acquisition of knowledge of phenomena is according to a fixed, invariable law,--a law mathematically exact in its operation through the senses. For instance, the eye sees a chair; therefore there is no doubt of the chair's existence. The eye looks up into the heavens and beholds the sun; I see flowers upon this table; I smell their fragrance; I hear sounds outside, etc, etc. This, they say, is a fixed mathematical law of perception and deduction, the operation of which admits of no doubt whatever; for inasmuch as the universe is subject to our sensing, the proof is self-evident that our knowledge of it must be gained through the avenues of the senses. That is to say, the materialists announce, that the criterion and standard of human knowledge is sense perception. Among the Greeks and Romans the criterion of knowledge was reason; that whatever is provable and acceptable by reason must necessarily be admitted as true. A third standard or criterion is the opinion held by theologians that traditions or prophetic statement and interpretations constitute the basis of human knowing. There is still another, a fourth criterion,

upheld by religionists and metaphysicians who say that the source and channel of all human penetration into the unknown is through inspiration. Briefly then, these four criteria according to the declarations of men are: First--Sense Perception; Second--Reason; Third--Traditions; Fourth--Inspiration.

In Europe I told the philosophers and scientists of materialism that the criterion of the senses is not reliable. For instance, consider a mirror and the images reflected in it. These images have no actual corporeal existence. Yet if you had never seen a mirror you would firmly insist and believe that they were real. The eye sees a mirage upon the desert as a lake of water but there is no reality in it. As we stand upon the deck of a steamer the shore appears to be moving, yet we know the land is stationary and we are moving. The earth was believed to be fixed and the sun revolving about it but although this appears to be so, the reverse is now known to be true. A whirling torch makes a circle of fire appear before the eye, yet we realize there is but one point of light. We behold a shadow moving upon the ground but it has no material existence, no substance. In deserts the atmospheric effects are particularly productive of illusions which deceive the eye.

Once I saw a mirage in which a whole caravan appeared traveling upward into the sky. In the far north other deceptive phenomena appear and baffle human vision. Sometimes three or four suns called by scientists "mock suns" will be shining at the same time whereas we know the great solar orb is one and that it remains fixed and single. In brief, the senses

are continually deceived and we are unable to separate that which is reality from that which is not.

As to the second criterion, reason, this likewise is unreliable and not to be depended upon. This human world is an ocean of varying opinions. If reason is the perfect standard and criterion of knowledge, why are opinions at variance and why do philosophers disagree so completely with each other? This is a clear proof that human reason is not to be relied upon as an infallible criterion.

For instance, great discoveries and announcements of former centuries are continually upset and discarded by the wise men of today. Mathematicians, astronomers, chemical scientists continually disprove and reject the conclusions of the ancients; nothing is fixed, nothing final; everything continually changing because human reason is progressing along new roads of investigation and arriving at new conclusions every day. In the future much that is announced and accepted as true now will be rejected and disproved.

And so it will continue *ad infinitum*. When we consider the third criterion, traditions, upheld by theologians as the avenue and standard of knowledge, we find this source equally unreliable and unworthy of dependence. For religious traditions are the report and record of understanding and interpretation of the Book. By what means has this understanding, this interpretation been reached? By the analysis of human reason. When we read the Book of God the faculty of comprehension by which we form conclusions is reason. Reason is mind. If we

are not endowed with perfect reason, how can we comprehend the meanings of the Word of God? Therefore human reason, as already pointed out, is by its very nature finite and faulty in conclusions.

It cannot surround the Reality Itself, the Infinite Word. Inasmuch as the source of traditions and interpretations is human reason, and human reason is faulty, how can we depend upon its findings for real knowledge?

The fourth criterion I have named is inspiration through which it is claimed the reality of knowledge is attainable. What is inspiration? It is the influx of the human heart. But what are satanic promptings which afflict mankind? They are the influx of the heart also. How shall we differentiate between them? The question arises, How shall we know whether we are following inspiration from God or satanic promptings of the human soul? Briefly, the point is that in the human material world of phenomena these four are the only existing criteria or avenues of knowledge, and all of them are faulty and unreliable. What then remains? How shall we attain the reality of knowledge? By the breaths and promptings of the Holy Spirit which is light and knowledge Itself. Through it the human mind is quickened and fortified into true conclusions and perfect knowledge. This is conclusive argument showing that all available human criteria are erroneous and defective, but the divine standard of knowledge is infallible. Therefore man is not justified in saying: "I know because I perceive through my senses"; or: "I know because it is proved through my faculty of reason"; or: "I know

because it is according to tradition and interpretation of the holy book"; or: "I know because I am inspired." All human standard of judgment is faulty, finite.

THE QUICKENING SPIRIT

The greatest power in the realm and range of human existence is spirit,--the divine breath which animates and pervades all things. It is manifested throughout creation in different degrees or kingdoms. In the vegetable kingdom it is the spirit augmentative or power of growth, the animus of life and development in plants, trees and organisms of the floral world. In this degree of its manifestation, spirit is unconscious of the powers which qualify the kingdom of the animal. The distinctive virtue or plus of the animal is sense perception; it sees, hears, smells, tastes and feels but is incapable in turn, of conscious ideation or reflection which characterize and differentiate the human kingdom. The animal neither exercises nor apprehends this distinctive human power and gift. From the visible it cannot draw conclusions regarding the invisible whereas the human mind from visible and known premises attains knowledge of the unknown and invisible. For instance, Christopher Columbus from information based upon known and provable facts drew conclusions which led him unerringly across the vast ocean to the unknown continent of America. Such power of accomplishment is beyond the range of animal intelligence.

Therefore this power is a distinctive attribute of the human spirit and kingdom. The animal spirit cannot penetrate and discover the mysteries of things. It is a captive of the senses. No amount of teaching, for instance, would enable it to grasp the fact that the sun is stationary and the earth moves around it. Likewise the human spirit has its limitations. It cannot comprehend the phenomena of the kingdom transcending the human station, for it is a captive of powers and life forces which have their operation upon its own plane of existence and it cannot go beyond that boundary.

There is however another spirit which may be termed the divine, to which Jesus Christ refers when He declares that man must be born of its quickening and baptized with its living fire. Souls deprived of that spirit are accounted as dead, though they are possessed of the human spirit. His Holiness Jesus Christ has pronounced them dead inasmuch as they have no portion of the divine spirit. He says: "Let the dead bury their dead." In another instance He declares: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." By this He means that souls though alive in the human kingdom are nevertheless dead if devoid of this particular spirit of divine quickening. They have not partaken of the divine life of the higher kingdom; for the soul which partakes of the power of the divine spirit is verily living.

This quickening spirit has spontaneous emanation from the Sun of Truth, from the reality of divinity and is not a revelation or a manifestation. It is like the

rays of the sun. The rays are emanations from the sun. This does not mean that the sun has become divisible; that a part of the sun has come out into space. This plant beside me has risen from the seed; therefore it is a manifestation and unfoldment of the seed. The seed, as you can see, has unfolded in manifestation and the result is this plant. Every leaf of the plant is a part of the seed. But the reality of divinity is indivisible and each individual of human kind cannot be a part of it as is often claimed. Nay, rather, the individual realities of mankind when spiritually born are emanations from the reality of divinity, just as the flame, heat and light of the sun are the effulgence of the sun and not a part of the sun itself. Therefore a spirit has emanated from the reality of divinity, and its effulgences have become visible in human entities or realities. This ray and this heat are permanent. There is no cessation in the effulgence. As long as the sun exists the heat and light will exist, and inasmuch as eternality is a property of divinity, this emanation is everlasting. There is no cessation in its outpouring. The more the world of humanity develops, the more the effulgences or emanations of divinity will become revealed, just as the stone when it becomes polished and pure as a mirror will reflect in fuller degree the glory and splendor of the sun.

The mission of the prophets, the revelation of the holy books, the manifestation of the heavenly teachers and the purpose of divine philosophy all center in the training of the human realities so that they may become clear and pure as mirrors and reflect the light

and love of the Sun of Reality. Therefore I hope that whether you be in the east or the west you will strive with heart and soul in order that day by day the world of humanity may become glorified, more spiritual, more sanctified; and that the splendor of the Sun of Reality may be revealed fully in human hearts as in a mirror. This is worthy of the world of mankind. This is the true evolution and progress of humanity. This is the supreme bestowal. Otherwise, by simple development along material lines man is not perfected. At most, the physical aspect of man, his natural or material conditions may become stabilized and improved but he will remain deprived of the spiritual or divine bestowal. He is then like a body without a spirit, a lamp without the light, an eye without the power of vision, an ear that hears no sound, a mind incapable of perceiving, an intellect minus the power of reason.

Man has two powers, and his development two aspects. One power is connected with the material world and by it he is capable of material advancement. The other power is spiritual and through its development his inner, potential nature is awakened. These powers are like two wings. Both must be developed, for flight is impossible with one wing. Praise be to God! material advancement has been evident in the world but there is need of spiritual advancement in like proportion. We must strive unceasingly and without rest to accomplish the development of the spiritual nature in man, and endeavor with tireless energy to advance humanity toward the nobility of its true and intended station.

For the body of man is accidental; it is of no importance. The time of its disintegration will inevitably come. But the spirit of man is essential and therefore eternal. It is a divine bounty. It is the effulgence of the Sun of Reality and therefore of greater importance than the physical body.

SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE IS IMMORTALITY

According to divine philosophy, there are two important and universal conditions in the world of material phenomena; one which concerns life, the other concerning death; one relative to existence, the other non-existence; one manifest in composition, the other in decomposition. Some define existence as the expression of reality or being, and non-existence as non-being, imagining that death is annihilation. This is a mistaken idea, for total annihilation is an impossibility. At most, composition is ever subject to decomposition or disintegration; that is to say, existence implies the grouping of material elements in a form or body, and non-existence is simply the decomposing of these groupings. This is the law of creation in its endless forms and infinite variety of expression.

Certain elements have formed the composite creature man. This composite association of the elements in the form of a human body is therefore subject to disintegration which we call death, but after disintegration the elements themselves persist unchanged. Therefore total annihilation is an impossibility, and existence can never become non-

existence. This would be equivalent to saying that light can become darkness, which is manifestly untrue and impossible.

As existence can never become non-existence, there is no death for man; nay, rather, man is everlasting and everliving. The rational proof of this is that the atoms of the material elements are transferable from one form of existence to another, from one degree and kingdom to another, lower or higher. For example, an atom of the soil or dust of earth may traverse the kingdoms from mineral to man by successive incorporations into the bodies of the organisms of those kingdoms. At one time it enters into the formation of the mineral or rock; it is then absorbed by the vegetable kingdom and becomes a constituent of the body and fibre of a tree; again it is appropriated by the animal, and at a still later period is found in the body of man. Throughout these degrees of its traversing the kingdoms from one form of phenomenal being to another, it retains its atomic existence and is never annihilated nor relegated to non-existence.

Non-existence therefore is an expression applied to change of form, but this transformation can never be rightly considered annihilation, for the elements of composition are ever present and existent as we have seen in the journey of the atom through successive kingdoms, unimpaired; hence there is no death; life is everlasting.

So to speak, when the atom entered into the composition of the tree, it died to the mineral kingdom, and when consumed by the animal, it died

to the vegetable kingdom, and so on until its transference or transmutation into the kingdom of man; but throughout its traversing it was subject to transformation and not annihilation. Death therefore is applicable to a change or transference from one degree or condition to another. In the mineral realm there was a spirit of existence; in the world of plant life and organisms it reappeared as the vegetative spirit; thence it attained the animal spirit and finally aspired to the human spirit. These are degrees and changes but not obliteration; and this is a rational proof that man is everlasting, everliving. Therefore death is only a relative term implying change. For example, we will say that this light before me, having reappeared in another incandescent lamp, has died in the one and lives in the other. This is not death in reality. The perfections of the mineral are translated into the vegetable and from thence into the animal, the virtue always attaining a plus or superlative degree in the upward change. In each kingdom we find the same virtues manifesting themselves more fully, proving that the reality has been transferred from a lower to a higher form and kingdom of being. Therefore non-existence is only relative and absolute non-existence inconceivable.

This rose in my hand will become disintegrated and its symmetry destroyed, but the elements of its composition remain changeless; nothing affects their elemental integrity. They cannot become non-existent; they are simply transferred from one state to another.

Through his ignorance, man fears death; but the

death he shrinks from is imaginary and absolutely unreal; it is only human imagination.

The bestowal and grace of God have quickened the realm of existence with life and being. For existence there is neither change nor transformation; existence is ever existence; it can never be translated into non-existence. It is gradation; a degree below a higher degree is considered as non-existence. This dust beneath our feet, as compared with our being is non-existent. When the human body crumbles into dust we can say it has become non-existent; therefore its dust in relation to living forms of human being is as non-existent but in its own sphere it is existent, it has its mineral being. Therefore it is well proved that absolute non-existence is impossible; it is only relative.

The purpose is this;--that the everlasting bestowal of God vouchsafed to man is never subject to corruption. Inasmuch as He has endowed the phenomenal world with being, it is impossible for that world to become non-being, for it is the very genesis of God; it is the realm of origination; it is a creational and not a subjective world, and the bounty descending upon it is continuous and permanent. Therefore man the highest creature of the phenomenal world is endowed with that continuous bounty bestowed by divine generosity without cessation. For instance, the rays of the sun are continuous, the heat of the sun emanates from it without cessation; no discontinuance of it is conceivable. Even so the bestowal of God is descending upon the world of humanity, never

ceasing, continuous, forever. If we say that the bestowal of existence ceases or falters it is equivalent to saying that the sun can exist with cessation of its effulgence. Is this possible? Therefore the effulgences of existence are ever-present and continuous.

The conception of annihilation is a factor in human degradation, a cause of human debasement and lowliness, a source of human fear and abjection. It has been conducive to the dispersion and weakening of human thought whereas the realization of existence and continuity has upraised man to sublimity of ideals, established the foundations of human progress and stimulated the development of heavenly virtues; therefore it behoves man to abandon thoughts of non-existence and death which are absolutely imaginary and see himself ever living, everlasting in the divine purpose of his creation. He must turn away from ideas which degrade the human soul, so that day by day and hour by hour he may advance upward and higher to spiritual perception of the continuity of the human reality. If he dwells upon the thought of non-existence he will become utterly incompetent; with weakened will-power his ambition for progress will be lessened and the acquisition of human virtues will cease.

Therefore you must thank God that He has bestowed upon you the blessing of life and existence in the human kingdom. Strive diligently to acquire virtues befitting your degree and station. Be as lights of the world which cannot be hid and which have no setting in horizons of darkness. Ascend to the zenith of an existence which is never beclouded by the fears

and forebodings of non-existence.

When man is not endowed with inner perception he is not informed of these important mysteries. The retina of outer vision though sensitive and delicate may nevertheless be a hindrance to the inner eye which alone can perceive. The bestowals of God which are manifest in all phenomenal life are sometimes hidden by intervening veils of mental and mortal vision which render man spiritually blind and incapable but when those scales are removed and the veils rent asunder, then the great signs of God will become visible and he will witness the eternal light filling the world. The bestowals of God are all and always manifest. The promises of heaven are ever present. The favors of God are all-surrounding but should the conscious eye of the soul of man remain veiled and darkened he will be led to deny these universal signs and remain deprived of these manifestations of divine bounty. Therefore we must endeavor with heart and soul in order that the veil covering the eye of inner vision may be removed, that we may behold the manifestations of the signs of God, discern His mysterious graces, and realize that material blessings as compared with spiritual bounties are as nothing. The spiritual blessings of God are greatest.

When we were in the mineral kingdom, although endowed with certain gifts and powers, they were not to be compared with the blessings of the human kingdom. In the matrix of the mother we were the recipients of endowments and blessings of God, yet these were as nothing compared to the powers and

graces bestowed upon us after birth into this human world. Likewise if we are born from the matrix of this physical and phenomenal environment into the freedom and loftiness of the life and vision spiritual, we shall consider this mortal existence and its blessings as worthless by comparison.

In the spiritual world, the divine bestowals are infinite, for in that realm there is neither separation nor disintegration which characterize the world of material existence. Spiritual existence is absolute immortality, completeness and unchangeable being. Therefore we must thank God that He has created for us both material blessings and spiritual bestowals. He has given us material gifts and spiritual graces, outer sight to view the lights of the sun and inner vision by which we may perceive the glory of God. He has designed the outer ear to enjoy the melodies of sound and the inner hearing wherewith we may hear the voice of our creator. We must strive with energies of heart, soul and mind to develop and manifest the perfections and virtues latent within the realities of the phenomenal world, for the human reality may be compared to a seed. If we sow the seed, a mighty tree appears from it. The virtues of the seed are revealed in the tree; it puts forth branches, leaves, blossoms, and produces fruits. All these virtues were hidden and potential in the seed. Through the blessing and bounty of cultivation these virtues became apparent. Similarly the merciful God our creator has deposited within human realities certain virtues latent and potential. Through education and culture, these virtues deposited by the loving God will become

apparent in the human reality even as the unfoldment of the tree from within the germinating seed.

Comparative Religious Mystical Theology

Out-of-Body Travel in World Religion

Compiled By Marilyn Hughes

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