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JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
The Victoria Institute,
OR,
Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

EDITED BY THE SECRETARY.

VOL. XLIII.



LONDON :

(Published by the Institute, 1, Adelphi Terrace House, Charing Cross, W.C.)

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1911.

510TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.

MONDAY, JANUARY 9TH, 1911, 4.30 P.M.

DR. A. T. SCHOFIELD IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

Announcement was made of the election of the following :—

MEMBER : Rev. J. J. B. Coles, M.A.

ASSOCIATES : Rev. Samuel Roberts ; H. Lance Gray, Esq. ; H. Nugent Sharp, Esq.

The CHAIRMAN, in introducing the lecturer, said that Mr. Coles was a gentleman of profound study ; the subject has depths perhaps few of us realised. Anything that comes from him comes with authority.

The following paper was then read by the author :—

THEOSOPHY. By the Rev. J. J. B. COLES.

Θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην. 1 Cor. ii, 7.

LET me first give in outline a brief summary of Theosophical teaching.

BRIEF SUMMARY.

“The word Theosophy means not the ‘Wisdom of God’ but the ‘wisdom of the gods,’ or Universal Wisdom. This wisdom is the inner, hidden, spiritual truth which underlies all the outward forms of religion, and its central thought is the belief that the Universe is in its essence spiritual, that man is a spiritual being in a state of evolution and development, and that by proper physical, mental, and spiritual training humanity can so progress on this path of evolution as to develop faculties and powers which will enable it to get behind the outward veil of what we call matter and to enter into conscious relations with the underlying Reality. To the Theosophist, man is composed of seven principles, which are resolvable into the lower and the higher parts of his nature, the four lower principles forming the personality, which is his non-permanent side, disintegrating after death, and the three higher forming the individuality, the intelligent and spiritual side, which is permanent and eternal.

“The whole Universe is in a continual state of progression ; the spiritual, having descended into matter, is ever and always working its way upwards, and the duty of man is to assist this upward

evolution by every means in his power. So far as regards himself, this evolution cannot be completed in one lifetime, and the Theosophist therefore believes in *Reincarnation*. That part of man's intelligent nature which reincarnates in successive personalities and lives is called the Reincarnating Ego. The spirit or monad has to pass through all the stages of evolution, mineral, vegetable and animal. In man, self-consciousness and moral responsibility are attained, and the duty then at once arises to subordinate the animal and passionate part of the nature and to develop the spiritual, so as to prepare for the next incarnation. At the change, which is called death, the Reincarnating Ego passes, not into any particular place, like heaven or hell, but into a state of subjective consciousness called Devachan, remaining thus for a longer or shorter period according to the way in which the earth life has been passed. When the time comes for it to take up another body the Ego again incarnates, and this goes on till all experience has been gained, and till by spiritual advancement the necessity for reincarnation ceases, the ultimate destiny of the higher spiritual principle in man being its conscious union with the Absolute, the Universal All. The whole of this evolution and reincarnation are governed by law, for the Theosophist does not believe in anything *miraculous* or *supernatural*. This law is called *Karma*, and its meaning is that as a man sows so shall he reap; that every life depends on and has to work itself out in accordance with what has been done in previous lives, and that the whole Universe is one unbroken chain of cause and effect. It is especially to be remembered that this holds good in the moral and spiritual realms which are the reality, *thought* being the vital and the moulding force.

“The great fundamental idea of Theosophy is universal brotherhood, and this is based on the spiritual unity of man. The Theosophical Society is the outward expression of Theosophy, and the only pledge which is asked of its members is that they should faithfully and loyally work, by thought and action, for the realization of this brotherhood, which does not depend on race, sex, creed, caste, or colour, but on the imperishable spiritual unity of mankind.”

Theosophy teaches a profound Pantheism which recognises that in manifestation intelligence is everywhere, guiding, moulding, controlling matter. It holds that the devas of the Hindu and the angels of the Christian have their places and work in the Universe, but jealously guards from all limitations that source of which the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere, in which the immeasurable universe is but as a grain of sand, and which is yet the life of the spirit in man.

In the matter of divine incarnation Theosophy teaches that the Krishna of the Hindu, the Buddha of the Buddhist, the

Christ of the Christian are not antagonistic concepts, but complementary aspects of a fact in nature. While each is looked on as unique by the adherents of each religion, all are looked on as repeated examples of the same truth by the follower of the Wisdom Religion. Every man is regarded as the incarnation of God, and the work of evolution is the gradual manifestation of that divine nature.

The Supreme Teachers of the race, the Divine Founders of great religions, are men who, during ages of evolutionary progress, and reincarnations have so purified and sublimed their human nature that it has become translucent to the God within.

The Buddhist should see in every man a potential Buddha and the Christian in every man a potential Christ. To recognise this esoteric truth under the exoteric veil will not only soften religious antagonism, but will help religious teachers to appeal to the divine nature in man instead of treating man as being naturally inclined to evil and only to be held back by threats.

The above short explanation of this Wisdom Religion almost in the very words of its principal teachers, is intended, as will be seen, for anyone who may take up this paper without having had any previous acquaintance with Theosophy.

In order to interest those who for many years have been students of Theosophy, and especially the Members and Associates of the Victoria Institute who may wish for suggestions as to the proper attitude which an educated Christian should assume towards it, we shall now consider the claims of Theosophy to be a science, a philosophy and a religion.

In *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, by Madame Blavatsky; *A Study in Consciousness* and *Esoteric Christianity*, by Annie Besant; *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, and *The Gospel* and *The Gospels*, by G. R. S. Mead; *Man Visible and Invisible*, by C. W. Leadbeater, and *Thought Forms and Occult Chemistry*, by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater—not to mention many other works such as *Nature's Finer Forces*, by Râma Prâsad, and *The Perfect Way* and *Clothed with the Sun*, by Dr. Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland—we have a fair and ample selection from Theosophical writings on which to form our judgment as to this attempt at a synthesis of all knowledge relating to God, Man and the Universe.

Let us turn over the pages of *Occult Chemistry*, a series

of Clairvoyant Observations on the Chemical Elements, by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater. I give a few extracts—

“The first thing which is noticed by an observer, when he turns his attention to the chemical atoms, is that they show certain definite forms, and that within these forms modified in various ways, sub-groupings are observable which recur in connection with the same modified form.” (p. 11.)

“The tetrahedron seems to be one of the favourite forms of nature, and repeatedly appears in the internal arrangements. ‘Gold contains no less than 20 tetrahedra.’”

“The Cube appears to be the form of triads.” The Octahedron—the simplest example of this is carbon.

“We have a regular series of the Platonic solids, and the question suggests itself, will further evolution develop elements shaped to the dodecahedron and the icosahedron?”

Those of us who have studied the Geometrical Philosophy of the ancients, and who are aware that Moses, the writer of the Pentateuch, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and that he introduced in an esoteric manner, into Genesis, the science of geometrical form and number, will have read this book of *Occult Chemistry* with very great interest.

On my writing table before me I have three of the regular polyhedra or platonic solids, the icosahedron being one of them. Some of us will remember Lord Kelvin's *Molecular Tactics of a Crystal* and the diagram representing a small sphere in the centre of twelve other similar spheres, and we note with close attention this reference to the dodecahedron and icosahedron in connection with the suggestion as to further evolution. Many of us have but little doubt that this further evolution will soon be an accomplished fact.

But let us continue our perusal of this interesting book, all the more interesting from the fact that at a recent meeting of scientists in Milan, a well-known Professor of Chemistry, Dr. Ubaldo Antony, spoke very favourably of the results of this clairvoyant excursion into a hitherto unoccupied field.

After noticing the diagram of radium on p. 89 and the allusion to the “extraordinary vivid and living” complex central sphere, “so rapid that continued accurate observation is very difficult,” let us turn to the Appendix on the Æther of Space.

“Much discussion has taken place, especially between physicists and chemists, over the nature of the substance with which all space must, according to scientific hypothesis, be filled. One side contends

that it is infinitely thinner than the thinnest gas, absolutely frictionless and without weight: the other asserts that it is denser than the densest solid. In this substance the ultimate atoms of ether are thought to float, like motes in a sunbeam, and light, heat and electricity are supposed to be its vibrations.

“Theosophical investigators, using methods not at the disposal of physical science, have found that this hypothesis includes under one head two entirely different and widely separated sets of phenomena. They have been able to deal with states of matter higher than the gaseous, and have observed that it is by means of vibrations of this finer matter that light, heat and electricity manifest themselves to us. Seeing that matter in these higher states thus performs the functions attributed to the ether of science, they have (perhaps unadvisedly) called these states etheric, and have thus left themselves without a convenient name for that substance which fulfils the other part of the scientific requirements.

“Let us for the moment name this substance *koilon*, since it fills what we are in the habit of calling empty space. What *mulaprakrti* or ‘mother-matter’ is to the inconceivable totality of universes, *koilon* is to our particular universe, not to our solar system merely, but to the vast unit which includes all visible suns.

“To any power of sight which we can bring to bear upon it, this *koilon* appears to be homogeneous, though it is probably nothing of the kind, since homogeneity can belong to the mother substance alone.

“It is out of all proportion denser than any other substance known to us, infinitely denser—if we may be pardoned the expression; so much denser that it seems to belong to another type or order of density.

“But now comes the startling part of the investigation; we might expect matter to be a densification of this *koilon*; it is nothing of the kind. Matter is not *koilon*, but the absence of *koilon*, and at first sight, matter and space, appear to have changed places, and emptiness has become solidity, solidity has become emptiness!”

[A recent address on the New Elements in Chemistry by Sir William Crookes adds interest to these extracts. See note on p. 45.]

But time and space will not admit of any further quotations from this engrossing Appendix, save only the following:—

“To us, Theosophists, it is the Breath of the Logos—we know not whether of the Logos of this solar system or of a yet Mightier Being; the latter would seem the more likely.”

Christians might here venture to quote the words of that great initiate the Apostle Paul. “Whom therefore ye ignorantly

worship, Him declare I unto you." "He Himself giveth to all life and breath and all things." And (referring back to the quotation at the head of this paper and its immediate context)—

. . . "And things that 'are not,' that He might bring to nought the things 'that are'—that no flesh should glory before God."

THE LOGOS OF THEOSOPHY.

Let us now see what is the teaching of Theosophy as to the Logos of this world—of this solar system.

In *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. B., 2nd Ed., 1888, vol. ii, p. 215, we read:—

"So little have the first Christians (who despoiled the Jews of their Bible) understood the first four chapters of Genesis in their esoteric meaning, that they never perceived that not only was no sin intended in their disobedience, but that actually the Serpent was the Lord God Himself, who as the Ophis, the Logos, or the bearer of divine creative wisdom, taught mankind to become creators in their turn. They never realised that the Cross was an evolution from the Tree and Serpent, and thus became the salvation of mankind. By this it would become the very first fundamental Symbol of Creative Cause, applying to geometry, to numbers, to astronomy, to measure, and to animal reproduction."

In *A Study in Consciousness*, by Mrs. Besant, pp. 8-9, we read:—

"Every Logos of a universe repeats this universal Self-Consciousness: in His activity, He is the creative Mind, Kriyâ—corresponding to the universal Sat—the Brahma of the Hindu, the Holy Spirit of the Christian, the Chochma of the Kabbalist. In His Wisdom, He is the preserving, ordering, Reason, Jnâna—corresponding to the universal Chit—the Vishnu of the Hindu, the Son of the Christian, the Binah of the Kabbalist. In His Bliss, He is the Dissolver of forms, the Will, Ichchhâ—corresponding to the universal Ananda—the Shiva of the Hindu, the Father of the Christian, the Zepher of the Kabbalist. Thus appear in every universe the three Logoi, the three Beings who create, preserve, and destroy their universe, each showing forth predominantly in His function in the universe, one ruling aspect, to which the other two are subordinate, though of course ever-present. Hence every manifested God is spoken of as a Trinity. The joining of these three Aspects, or phases of manifestation, at their outer points of contact with the circle, gives the basic Triangle of contact with Matter, which, with the three Triangles made with the lines traced by the Point, thus yields the divine Tetractys, sometimes called the Kosmic Quaternary, the three divine Aspects in contact with matter, ready

to create. These, in their totality, are the Oversoul of the kosmos that is to be."

WHO OR WHAT IS THIS "LOGOS" ?

I have given samples and extracts from Theosophical writings which demonstrate that we have to deal with a system of philosophy, science and religion, which is attributed to one who is called the "Logos" of this solar system.

The Lord Jesus Christ calls him the "Archon" of this cosmos, and also by his name "Satan" or "the Adversary"—the Apostle Paul calls him the god of "this age" or dispensation, inasmuch as since the rejection of Christ by the world, the True Logos—at the instigation of Satan himself—he is the spirit that energises in those who are ready to receive his teaching and to carry out his plans.

Our conflict is with principalities and powers, and the world-rulers of this darkness—hence we need the complete armour which God has provided for us in Christ. By His Cross the Lord triumphed over Satan and all his principalities and powers, and we are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power. A study of God's Word shows that theosophy is preparing men for the rebellion foretold in the last Book of Scripture, and pride, self-will and self-deification are beginning to assume the last and final phase which will be headed up by the Lawless One, the Man of Sin.

"THE PERFECT WAY" AND "CLOTHED WITH THE SUN."

The Perfect Way and *Clothed with the Sun* by Dr. Anna Kingsford and Mr. Edward Maitland were both written, confessedly by the inspiration of the so-called *masters* of theosophical wisdom.

On p. 37 of *The Perfect Way* (1882) we read—

"And even though the indubitable fact be recognized that the 'one name given under heaven whereby men can be saved' has been shared by many, that name will still be the name of salvation, and the symbol of its triumph will still be the Cross of Jesus, even though borne before Him by, or in the name of, an Osiris, a Mithras, a Krishna, a Dionysus, or a Buddha, or any others who, overcoming by love the limitations of matter, have been faithful to the death, mystically called the death of the Cross, and attaining thereby the crown of eternal life for themselves, have shown to man the way of salvation."

On p. 240 of *Clothed with the Sun* the following sentences occur:—

“O Father Iacchos, thou art the Lord of the body,
 God manifest in the flesh
 Who wearest the horns of the ram, who ridest upon an ass,
 whose symbol is the vine, and the new wine thy blood.

Whose Father is the Lord God of Hosts
 Give me to drink of the wine of thy cup, that I may live for
 evermore.

Evoi, Father Iacchos, Lord God of Egypt; initiate thy servants
 in the halls of thy temple.

Evoi, Iacchos, Lord of the Sphinx
 Thou turnest man to destruction; then thou sayest,
 Come again ye children of my hand.

Yea, blessed and holy art thou, O Master of Earth,
 Lord of the Cross and the Tree of Salvation

Evoi, Father Iacchos, Jehovah-Nissi, Lord of the Garden and of
 the vineyard

Evoi, Father Iacchos; out of Egypt hast thou called thy Son.”

Is it possible to believe that there are professing Christians
 who have exchanged the “living oracles of God” for such
 profane and ludicrous theosophical teaching as this?

Having given in the above extracts examples of the more
 intellectual as well as of the baser and more repellent writings
 of modern theosophy, I add a brief survey of other books
 bearing on matters of interest.

“ESOTERIC CHRISTIANITY,” BY ANNIE BESANT.

In *Esoteric Christianity*, Mrs. Besant labours to show that
 the Historical Christ, the Mythic Christ and the Mystic Christ
 must be carefully distinguished—she does this by denying the
 truth of the New Testament scriptures. Just as the early
 Gnostics endeavoured to explain away the true teaching of
 the New Testament as to the unique personality of the Christ
 of God, by introducing heresies referring either to the deity
 or holy humanity of the Lord Jesus, so theosophists profess to
 explain away the glory of His Person which is transcendent
 and inscrutable, by similar unsuccessful methods.

EARLY RELIGION AND THE CONSTELLATION FIGURES.

The ancient myths were perversions of early patriarchal
 revelations concerning the coming Seed of the Woman, which
 revelations were embodied in the constellation figures, the
 oldest symbols belonging to the nations of antiquity.

Many learned Christian Theosophists who altogether repudiate the Pantheistic philosophy of Esoteric Buddhism, know well the great value of the true teaching as to the Zodiacal Signs and their intimate connection with the Philosophy, Science, and Religion of the world, *before* the rise of Babylon and Egypt, and before the introduction of idolatrous worship.

The four principal sources of idolatry were :—

1. Sabeanism or the Worship of the Sun, Moon, and Stars.
2. The Worship of Ancestors such as of Nimrod.
3. Misinterpretation of the symbols of the attributes of God as figured in the Cherubim.
4. The deification of the human passions, as in the sensuous worship of Greece and Rome.

Our classical dictionaries are an embodiment of these early perversions of primitive symbols.

THE RELIGION OF EGYPT.

The Religion of Egypt was a corruption of Patriarchal faith and the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation were taught by a corrupt priesthood, who not only “changed the truth of God into a lie,” but went so far as to introduce a change in the ancient signs of the Zodiac. [For “Libra” was not in the earlier Zodiacs, but “Ara” the Altar, and “Libra” would, they thought, support the teaching of Karma, and would obscure the truth of Redemption and Resurrection.]

GNOSTICISM.

Mr. Mead’s *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* have resuscitated the manifold teachings of the early Gnostics, which show the almost unlimited capacity of the subjective mind of man under the influence of suggestion. How endless are the vagaries of the human intellect when not controlled by objective reason and not guided by an inspired revelation from God!

THE TRUE AUTHORS OF MODERN THEOSOPHY.

The real inspirers of Modern Theosophy Books are confessedly the “Lords of Karma” and the “Shining Ones.” The Lost Atlantis was ruined after these superhuman teachers had taught the inhabitants the use of Nature’s finer forces, according to

Theosophical writers themselves, and with the prophecy of Revelations xiii and xvii before us, we know what sin and ruin will be the outcome of this revival of the teaching as to Karma and Reincarnation and the deification of man. Theosophical teaching on these lines will prepare the way for the great apostasy headed up in that monster of multiple personality, the Man of Sin.

INITIATION AND THE MYSTERIES.

“In the Mysteries of Egypt, the Mithraic Mysteries of the Persians, the Orphic and Bacchic Mysteries, the Eleusinian Mysteries of the Greeks, the Mysteries of Samothrace, Scythia, and Chaldea, the initiate was taught things relating to *post mortem* existence. And initiation was also supposed to establish a relationship of the soul with the ‘divine Nature.’

“The culminating point of the Mysteries was reached when the initiate became a god, whether by union with a divine Being outside himself, or by the realisation of the divine Self within him. This was termed ecstasy and was a condition which the Indian Yogî would term high Samâdhi, the gross body being entranced and the freed soul effecting its own union with the Great One.

“Much instruction was given in the Mysteries by the unseen hierarchies and Pythagoras, the great teacher who was initiated in India, and who gave ‘the knowledge of things that are’ to his pledged disciples, is said to have possessed such a knowledge of music that he could use it for the controlling of men’s wildest passions, and the illuminating of their minds.

“Of this, instances are given by Jamblicus in his *Life of Pythagoras*. It seems probable that the title of Theodidaktos, given to Ammonius Saccas, the Master of Plotinus, referred less to the sublimity of his teachings than to this divine instruction received by him in the Mysteries.

“The close identity between the methods and aims pursued in these various Mysteries and those of Yoga in India is patent to the most superficial observer.

“It is not, however, necessary to suppose that the nations of antiquity drew from India; all alike drew from one source, the Grand Lodge of Central Asia, which sent out its Initiates to every land.

“There was much inter-communication between the Initiates of all nations, and there was a common language and a common ‘symbolism.’”

THE CHRISTIAN'S ANSWER TO THEOSOPHY.

In reply to all this the Christian answers that among the initiates of antiquity none was better instructed than Moses the servant of Jehovah, who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and that he entirely repudiated the doctrines of Karma and reincarnation as being contrary to the teachings of an earlier wisdom taught to the patriarchs, which the Egyptians had corrupted both in doctrine and in symbolism.

In his writings, especially in Genesis, are embodied in its divinely inspired structure, all the keys to cosmic numbers and to the geometrical building up of the "elements" of this cosmos, both in its astronomical as well as in its minute atomic relations.

The divine philosophy underlying the structure of the writings of that man of God gives the true key to geometrical symbols and to the esoterism of numbers.

ISAIAH'S PROPHECIES BEFORE THE BIRTH OF BUDDHA.

Again it is helpful in this connection to bear in mind that the writings of another great initiate, the prophet Isaiah, were known in the countries of the East one hundred years before the birth of Gautama Buddha.

Moreover, Daniel, who was wiser than all the astrologers of Chaldea, who in his divine chronology of the "Times of the Gentiles" foretells the end of this Age, could alone interpret the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast.

THE GREATEST OF ALL INITIATES.

Lastly, in the writings of the greatest of all initiates both of east and west, the Apostle Paul, we have a revelation of a *third order* of mysteries which in every way transcends both the Lesser and Greater Mysteries of the Ancients, a philosophy of God, Man and the Universe of which the Risen and Glorified Christ is the only true key, and whose name is above every name, who is "the Firstborn from the dead."

"At His Name every knee shall bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. ii, 10, 11.)

As we know, the true and all-powerful answer to Modern Theosophy is the fuller and deeper teaching of the Epistles of St. Paul to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians.

The "Sophia," "Sunesis," "Epignosis," the "Pleroma," and the "Mysteria," of these inspired Pauline Epistles in

connection with the Cross of Christ, by which He triumphed over and led captive all the hosts of evil principalities and powers in heavenly places, far transcend all the "deep things of Satan" with which Theosophy is so replete.

The exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, to a sphere and throne far above all principalities and powers is the answer of the enlightened Christian, the true "teleios," the real "initiate," who knows that the "seven spheres" of the Theosophist, to the *fifth* of which only ("Nirvana") he hopes by a long process of reincarnations to attain, do not reach to that sphere, "far above all the heavens," where He is, who glorified God by His death and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, who redeemed us by His precious blood, and who is soon coming to transform us and to call us away to be in the same glory in heavenly places on high, in the Father's Home with Himself. (Phil. iii, 19, 20; 1 Tim. iii, 16.)

He whom Theosophy would dishonour by placing Him on a level with Buddha, Krishna and Confucius, is the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God, who from that sphere of Love and Light and Glory encourages each and every one who loves His appearing by the promises: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the Paradise of God. Hold fast that which thou hast that no one take thy Crown. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with Me in My throne, even as I overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne."

THE TRUE "LOGOS."

Holy Scripture teaches that Christ is *the* Logos by Whom this world was created, and that by Him were all things made, that are in heaven, and that are in earth—visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: "All things were created by Him and for Him, and He is before all things and by Him all things consist." Coloss. i, 16-18.

Professor W. R. Inge points out in his *Personal Idealism and Mysticism* in the chapter on the Logos-Christology, p. 52, that St. Paul avoids the use of the actual word "Logos," while he gives us in his doctrine of Christ all that the word contains. Professor Inge has no suggestion as to the reason why the Apostle avoids using "Logos." The true explanation seems to be this.—The Apostle John's writings refer especially to the coming of the true Logos into *this* Cosmos—which is, therefore,

a more or less relative term—whereas in the Pauline Epistles, the Lordship of Christ over the *whole universe* is set forth, especially in Ephesians and Colossians.

The transcendent glory of the Risen Christ as the “Prototokos” of all creation in these epistles goes beyond the scope of the word Logos as used by the Spirit of God in the Johannine writings.

St. Paul does not use the expression “Son of Man”—doubtless for the same reason.

Theosophy is concerned with setting forth from a Pantheistic standpoint the evolution of *this* Cosmos or Solar System. The revelation of the glory of Christ, and of the calling of the Church, as revealed in Ephesians, infinitely surpasses anything that can be found in modern Theosophy.

AN INSPIRED REVELATION AS TO ORIGINS.

The mind of man works by deductive, inductive, analytic and synthetic processes. But unless it starts from an inspired revelation as to the question of origins—the theories which it can formulate or which can be suggested to it by intelligences of a spiritual order of existence, are not only interminable and of a very mixed kind, but must end in leaving nothing certain or sure.

The Theosophist is openly and confessedly receiving suggestions as to the evolution of this Cosmos from those who profess to be highly evolved men of previous incarnations.

The Christian rejects this testimony in many important details, and, therefore, is bound to believe that the real object behind these clairvoyant suggestions is both sinister and ominous.

Holy Scripture states *expressly* (1 Tim. iv, 1) that such communications will be a striking characteristic of the closing days of this age or dispensation.

NOTE ON “NEW ELEMENTS IN CHEMISTRY.”

In a recent address on “New Elements in Chemistry” by Professor Sir William Crookes, he said:—

“If we had disestablished the idea of the fixity of the old-fashioned elements, we would say we still had matter to fall back on. But philosophers had not respected even the sacredness of matter itself. Physicists were now beginning to say that in all probability there was no such thing as matter; that when we had caught and tamed the elusive atom and split it into 700 little bits,

these residual particles would turn out to be nothing more than superposed layers of positive and negative electricity. He refrained from speculating as to what would happen to us if some clever researcher of the future discovered a method of making these alternate layers of plus and minus cancel each other out.

“It must never be forgotten that theories were more than mutable; they were only useful so long as they admitted of the harmonious correlation of facts into a reasonable system. Directly a fact refused to be pigeon-holed, and would not be explained on theoretic grounds, the theory must go, or it must be revised to admit the new fact. The nineteenth century saw the birth of new views of atoms, electricity, and ether. Our twentieth century views of the constitution of matter might appear satisfactory to us, but how would it be at the close of the present century? Were we not incessantly learning the lesson that our researches had only a provisional value? A hundred years hence should we acquiesce in the resolution of the material universe into a swarm of rushing electrons? He could not conclude better than by quoting some words he wrote more than thirty years ago: ‘We have actually touched the borderland where matter and energy seem to merge into one another—the shadowy realm between the known and the unknown. I venture to think that the greatest scientific problems of the future will find their solution in this borderland, and even beyond. Here, it seems to me, lie ultimate realities, subtle, far-reaching, wonderful.’”

In view of this reference to the borderland of Science, and taking it in connection with the extracts given above from *Occult Chemistry*, the Christian student of Science holds fast to the dignified opening words of Scripture: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

That God, who is both transcendent and immanent, was pleased to work by gradual methods as well as by direct creative energy, is, I take it for granted, what most of us here present believe.

For my own part I have long held that Genesis i and ii refer both to indirect and direct creative acts, and that there is no authority for amalgamating these inspired records.

To those who agree with me in this, there is no difficulty in keeping the mind open upon the, as yet undetermined, questions in the modern scientific world.

Professor Alfred Russell Wallace, in a recent reference to the question as to how life originated in this planet, again affirmed:—

“That there was at some stage in the history of the earth, after the cooling process, a definite act of creation. Something came from

the outside. Power was exercised from without. In a word, life was given to the earth. All the errors of those who have distorted the thesis of evolution into something called, inappropriately enough, Darwinism, have arisen from the supposition that life is a consequence of organisation. This is unthinkable. Life, as Huxley admitted, is the cause and not the consequence of organisation. Admit life, and the hypothesis of evolution is sufficient and unanswerable. Postulate organisation first, and make it the origin and cause of life, and you lose yourself in a maze of madness. An honest and unswerving scrutiny of nature forces upon the mind this certain truth, that at some period of the earth's history there was an act of creation, a giving to the earth of something which before it had not possessed ; and from that gift, the gift of life, has come the infinite and wonderful population of living forms."

DISCUSSION.

Mr. MAUNDER of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, said : There is one sentence in the paper which I should like to see amended (p. 45, lines 26 and 27) ; for "in many important details" read "absolutely." I think we are much indebted to Mr. Coles for his paper, which deals with a subject of great importance. It does not seem to me right that such systems, as that which he has described to us to-day, should be spoken of without knowledge : and it is therefore necessary that from time to time able men should investigate them, and ascertain their true character. It is not the duty of every one to take up such an investigation, just as it is not the duty of every one to examine into diseases. But the service which is rendered to the community by the medical men who do study obscure diseases is of the highest order. My own particular line of study is that of astronomy and necessarily it touches very little upon the subject of Mr. Coles' paper ; but he has referred incidentally to a subject to which I have given long attention, namely, the record in the constellation figures of the promise of the Seed of the Woman, and the bruising of the serpent. Now it is abundantly clear that the designers of the constellation figures had a considerable knowledge of a genuine and practical astronomy. But it is also clear from Babylonian tablets and inscriptions, that though the Babylonians retained the constellation figures, they had lost the astronomical

knowledge connected with them. Indeed their knowledge of astronomy was almost *nil* until the Greeks conquered them. It would seem that, in just the same way as they had retained the constellations, but lost the principles of astronomy, so they had also lost the religious significance which they were intended to set forth, and many idolatrous mythologies were invented to explain them. I have for some considerable time been impressed with the probability that some of the most powerful and widespread heathen systems owed their origin to the dispersion of the two Hebrew kingdoms. The literary influence, both of Israel and of Judah, would seem to have been great upon their conquerors, and we find, as a matter of fact, that the conquest of Israel was followed by the remarkable literary development of Assyria under Ashurbanipal, and the conquest of Judah by a similar development in Babylon; just as the conquest of Greece by Rome gave rise to the literary development of the latter nation. I think it probable that the spiritual influence of the Hebrews was more powerful even than their intellectual, and that apostate Hebrews, having the light and knowledge derived from the law and the prophets, but giving themselves up to idolatry, were in effect the creators of the great religious cults. The reality of the truths which they held in perverted form sufficed to give vitality to the idolatries which they embraced, and we may probably see in Mithraism, the outcome of the golden calves of Bethel and of Dan. Here then I think is the root of theosophy, in which there is much subtlety and knowledge, as well as evil; hence its danger and its importance. In my mind the two most important things are Religion and Science, and both are eminently sane and eminently reasonable. I do not think theosophy either the one or the other.

Lieut.-Colonel MACKINLAY said:—I wish to add my thanks for the able paper which we have just heard. On pages 34 and 35 our author tells us Theosophy teaches that in His divine incarnation the Christ is not an antagonistic concept to Krishna and Buddha. But according to the New Testament "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii, 16), and according to Ex. xx, 3-5, there is but one God and He a *jealous* one. Christ Himself said, "All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers," John x, 8. Antagonism is expressed, all through the Scriptures, between the religion of the true God and any other.

“By their fruits ye shall know them.” Theosophy has been practised for ages in the east. What is the situation in India to-day? is it not parallel with that of the inhabitants of Palestine who, on account of their wickedness, were dispossessed of their land by the Hebrews? The theosophy, philosophy and idolatry of India have not enabled its rulers to retain the Government which, falling from their weak and enervated grasp, has been seized by the English. But let the English beware lest they follow the example of the Hebrews, and become entangled with the philosophies of the conquered races and share their woes.

Mr. DAVID HOWARD said: I always feel some disappointment in reading modern theosophists' ideas such as those we have had brought before us this afternoon. There is really nothing new, everything is to be found in what Buddha said, or Confucius, or Plato, only Plato said it better than it is said to-day. It is a reproduction of the Gnostic teaching of the time of Irenaeus; he was extremely clear in his pronouncements on Gnosticism, but did not claim to understand it, it was too indefinite. Lucretius made wonderful guesses, so could all the old alchemists, vying with the sounder guesses of Sir William Crooks to-day. Paracelsus wrote a great deal of mysticism, or humbug: Which? The sound thinkers work on clear, sound, open methods, the theosophist tries by the back door, or hidden ways to ascertain the mysteries of Science. To the old problems of the human heart were offered the old cures. Do Buddha, Confucius or Plato really answer these problems of the human heart? No one really understands their mysticism, though Christians under the guidance of St. Paul saw what Plato was aiming at, and could supply the real answer. Would not Buddha, if he had met our Lord, have seen in him the answer to his longings? We have the fuller revelation, why turn back to ancient unsatisfactory exhausted myths? We know that boiling oil was an antiseptic, wine was aseptic, but do we turn back to these from Pasteur and Lister, dare we go back from the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the Way, that Buddha could not find, the Truth that was always just beyond Plato, and the Life, for it is this life which He can give which is lacking in all these ancient systems.

Mrs. SHARPE said she had listened with great interest to the lecture and speeches that afternoon. She could not avoid feeling

surprised at some of the remarks that had been made in such a Society in this twentieth century about a system which perhaps those who had criticised it did not sufficiently understand. Surely any system of religion and ethics should be judged by the effect it had upon the lives of its adherents, and Theosophy had held the minds and hearts of millions of earnest thinkers throughout the world's history. It had been stated that the Christ was antagonistic to all forms of faith but His own, but she was convinced that it was impossible for Him to be antagonistic towards anything, even though He might not agree. There was never anyone in the world who cared less about doctrine and forms than the Christ. Various of His sayings had been quoted that afternoon: there was another beginning—"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." He recognised as His sheep, not those who followed any special doctrine, but who partially understood and tried to follow His spirit of absolute tolerance and charity. Mrs. Sharpe said she was a theosophist of nearly twenty years standing, and could say from her own experience that hundreds even in this country had found a refuge in Theosophy, not only from the unbelief which is so common to-day, but from the illogical beliefs which are driving so many away from religion. The Theosophical Society contains members of every great religion and of almost every creed, and many Christians as well as members of other faiths have found that Theosophy enabled them to hold to Christianity or their other faith with a devotion, a certainty, a steadfastness that had not been possible before.

The Rev. W. J. STUART WEIR said: In my opinion Theosophy is explicable in the natural reaction between Eastern and Western thought. In the West the intellectual bias has always been material and the over-accentuation of that bias has given rise to materialism. On the other hand the Eastern intellect has been concentrated on the spiritual aspect of human thought. It has been mainly introspective and the over-accentuation of this bias is represented by Theosophy. The solution of the whole problem lies in the true balance between the two extremes.

Colonel ALVES asked Mrs. Sharpe what good effect Theosophy ever had on the degraded specimens of humanity; it had gained acceptance of people of respectable position; but had it ever done anything to relieve the masses? The Gospel of Jesus Christ on the other hand raised men from the lowest condition; and it is evident

that that same Gospel to-day possesses like power. The revivals in Wales and Cornwall in the eighteenth century and those of recent years all emphasize this point.

Mr. WEDGWOOD said he was a theosophist and Christian, and Mrs. Sharpe had asked him to reply to the question of the last speaker. He had been in India and had studied Theosophy at headquarters there. He had seen its effect for good on men of all classes in India. For example: a servant who had been neglecting his work, when rebuked, begged forgiveness for his shortcomings and the prayers of his mistress, explaining that if he neglected his work in this life he would again be born a servant in his next life on earth. The immense hope given by the doctrine of reincarnation had great influence for good, bringing happiness and an understanding of life to quite the lower strata of society, they know that they will have a chance of bettering themselves in future incarnation. The theosophists had schools for the outcast classes in India. It was true that Theosophy has not done much in the lower strata of society in England, that was because the Theosophical Society was of recent origin. Its membership was less than 2,000 in number, but theosophists are doing their best to work for the uplifting of humanity, and although Theosophy had exercised a great influence on contemporary thought, it was early yet to expect much marked result amongst the great mass of the people.

The speaker said he had formed the impression from what had been said that afternoon that Theosophy was looked upon as a species of spirit communication or automatic writing. That was not so.

It was true that theosophical teachings were, in the first instance, gained from those whom theosophists called the adepts, who had climbed up through evolution and reincarnation to a superhuman level, but the details were worked out by superphysical observation on the part of clairvoyant investigators. They had developed in themselves by training the psychic faculties latent in all men, so that they could investigate the higher planes of nature in the same manner as the scientist investigated physical plane phenomena. The important researches on the atoms, for instance, referred to by the lecturer, were in no sense the result of revelation, but were observations as fallible and subject to revision as any other scientific observation. Dr. Anna Kingsford was not a representative

theosophist, but had left the Society at an early stage because she disagreed with it. Theosophists did not encourage passive mediumship. Indeed, there had been quite a feud between spiritualists and theosophists; the theosophists held that instead of drawing down spirits to the earth plane to communicate through mediums, it was better to exalt one's own consciousness into the spiritual sphere, where first-hand knowledge could be gained now as of old. This could be done by training.

The CHAIRMAN, in calling upon Mr. Coles to reply, said: We have before us to-day two rival claims to inspiration; one, Theosophy, which claims to have inspired communications from above through Mahatmas, and Christianity, which claims that the Bible is inspired by the Spirit of God. He would be glad if Mr. Coles would point out the real distinction between the two subjects of theosophical reincarnation and Christian resurrection.

Mr. COLES, in reply, said: At the time of the Exodus God revealed Himself to Moses as the God of his fathers, the Patriarchs, as the God of resurrection.

The Egyptians had changed this truth of resurrection into a doctrine of reincarnation. It was a great calamity to an Egyptian if his body was not preserved by embalming, but allowed to turn to dust. When Moses and Aaron miraculously produced life from the dust of the earth, the magicians failed to do so with their enchantments, and they told Pharaoh that that was "the finger of God"—to bring life out of death was not within their power.

Reincarnation relates to this fallen creation. By resurrection there is a passing into a higher sphere of existence. The Christian who is in his spirit life "risen with Christ" is on a higher plane, and would therefore never accept the doctrine of reincarnation. Christ is the "Resurrection and the Life." He Himself, in His risen human nature, is the "Firstborn from the dead."

Professor LANGHORNE ORCHARD writes:—The imaginative theory known as "Theosophy" originated in the East, probably (as is Mr. Maunder's suggestion) through the corruption of the truth by the Israelites carried into captivity.

Theosophy is a mixture of good and evil. It appears to hold, in some dim way, the fact that man has fallen and needs to be restored, and that he is responsible for his conduct (karma). It affirms his future existence; it recognises that selfishness is wrong,

and bids us love our fellow men and serve them; it enjoins the assertion of will as against desire, to this extent enjoining self-control.

But the aim proposed is not the regulation of desire; it is its destruction, whether the desire be good or bad. It seeks not improvement but extinction. Theosophy is a philosophy of suicide. Theosophy fails to satisfy either mind or heart. Its fundamental postulates—successive incarnation and the necessity to extinguish all desire—are certainly not self-evidently true, neither are they proved to be true. They are conjectures and nothing more. The science and philosophy connected with Theosophy are of a doubtful and limping character.

Nor does Theosophy satisfy the heart. It fails to get rid of sin, and attacks only one kind of sin, namely, selfishness. Other sins—disbelief of God and rebellion against His holy law, falseness and deceit, sloth, etc.—it leaves out of account. In his difficult warfare against sin and supernatural enemies, man is left by Theosophy without divine aid. Theosophy does not teach him that God is Love, nor lead him to love God because God has first loved him. To get rid of pain (even if possible) is, as the supreme end of a joyless life, not a particularly noble aim. As a rushlight pales before the sun, Theosophy pales before Christianity. Not Theosophy, but Christianity, restores man to fellowship with God. Not Theosophy, but Christianity, gives communion with Infinite Love in the presence where is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore and satisfaction.

Additional remarks by Mr. COLES:—

Mrs. Sharpe quotes the words of Christ. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold"; but is it not in the same Gospel of St. John that the Lord says that "He is the Resurrection and the Life," and that all judgment has been committed to Him? And is it not in this same scripture that we are told that He is the "Logos" by whom all things were made? The Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep. How is it possible for any theosophist to accept the teachings of Madame Blavatsky, Anna Kingsford and Annie Besant and then to profess to believe the teaching of Christ as given in the Gospel of St. John?

In a paper on the "Masters" of Theosophy by Annie Besant written less than a year ago, we read: "Those who are named M.

and K.H., in *The Occult World*, by Mr. Sinnett, were the two Masters who founded the Theosophical Society, using Colonel H. S. Olcott and H. P. Blavatsky, both disciples of M, to lay its foundations; and who gave to Mr. Sinnett the materials from which he wrote his famous books—the one named above *Esoteric Buddhism*—which brought the light of Theosophy to thousands in the West. H. P. Blavatsky has told how she met the Master M. on the bank of the Serpentine, when he visited London in 1851.

“ . . . And there is the ‘Venetian’ and the ‘Serapis,’ who taught Colonel Olcott for awhile, and the one visited in his Nilgiri retreat by Sabba Rao and C. W. Leadbeater—some eighty miles from Adyar, where he lives secluded. These are some of the Masters, more or less publicly known and to be known more publicly ere the present century is numbered with the past. . . . They aid in countless ways the progress of humanity. From the highest sphere they shed down light and life on all the world. . . .

“During the present century one of those great crises in the history of humanity will occur, which mark the conception of a new civilisation. He whom in the East men call the Wisdom-Truth, the World-Teacher, and whom in the West men call the Christ, will ere long return incarnate upon earth and move once more among the busy crowds of men. With Him will come several of the Masters, to aid His work and spread abroad His message.”

We see then, on the authority of Mrs. Besant herself, that the Theosophical Society is being inspired and promoted by superior beings, who are said to be the “Lords of Karma” and “The Shining Ones.”

Is it not clear then, as Dr. Schofield said, that it is now a question of the inspiration of the Word of God, or the inspired teaching of Modern Theosophy?

That many educated and thoughtful people among theosophists have been deceived by these inspired communications is indeed a more terrible indication of the dangerous days in which we are living than any other of the startling “Signs of the Times.”

Let us express an earnest hope that some, at least, who have been entangled in the meshes of the “Masters” may escape from the snare when once they realise who is the real “Logos” of Theosophy.