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THEOSOPHY

G. H. Pember



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THEOSOPHY,

BUDDHISM, AND THE SIGNS OF THE END.

BY

G. H. PEMBER, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "THE GREAT PROPHECIES," "THE ANTI-CHRIST," ETC.

Extracted from "EARTH'S EARLIEST AGES."

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P R E F A C E .

IN view of the recent spread of Theosophic Philosophy, it was suggested by a friend that the portion of "Earth's Earliest Ages" which deals with it should be published separately; and the present booklet is the result.

Circumstances, however, have somewhat changed since the chapters were written. Ancient wisdom, whether it be Esoteric Buddhism or Theosophy, or be known by the more vague and very incorrect designation of Modern Thought, is exercising so extensive an influence upon our literature, and has more or less affected so many minds, that a word of caution is necessary.

While, then, we retain the views set forth in the following pages, we must not for a moment be understood to imply that those among us who receive and propagate Theosophic ideas are conscious agents of the Devil. The Bible, it is true, intimates that there are human beings who know the doctrine and understand "the depths of Satan"; and, indeed, the nature of the ancient Mysteries, with which Theosophy is avowedly connected, and the unaccountable influence by which their grand secret has been preserved through the ages,

seem to point to some conscious intermingling of the human and the superhuman. But we have no reason to suspect English Theosophists of malpractices under this heading. For Mrs. Besant, who appears to be their recognised leader, has recently declared that she is no initiate herself, and that the English branch of the Society does not include one. Thus, even if our worst surmises be true, the Theosophists with whom we have to deal have probably received only the philosophy which surrounds and conceals the Satanic propaganda, and know nothing of what may be its ultimate aim, to substitute another deity for the Great Creator.

Certainly such a scheme may be recognised in sufficiently defined form amid the mists of antiquity. Both Greeks and Romans were accustomed to tell of a golden age, which they would fain recall, under the mild rule of Saturn. But they affirmed that this primeval god was deposed by the deity who now reigns, and whose triumph was quickly followed by the flight of Astræa from earth, and the advent of crime, disease, and misery.

Is there not here a reminiscence of the preadamite glory of Satan, of which the Bible seems to contain hints, and which appears to have ended in a rebellion that caused the catastrophe of Gen. i. 2? * And in the malignant character so often attributed to Zeus, or Jupiter, the present deity, may we not discern the carnal mind expressing its enmity against God, and its desire that the rebel should be restored to his full power?

* This interesting subject is discussed in the commencing chapters of "Earth's Earliest Ages."

Again, what are we to think of the Gnostics when we find them teaching that the Demiurge, whom they regarded as the creator of the world and the author of the Bible, is an inferior and by no means perfect deity ; whereas the true father of all things, Bythos, or Depth, is at present in the background ?

Surely these instances point to a disposition in Paganism and Gnosticism to substitute for Jehovah some other being who is antagonistic to Him. Since, then, Theosophy is avowedly connected with both these systems, is it very unlikely that it may by-and-by develop a similar doctrine, though its propagators, or the majority of them, may at present be quite unconscious of the goal to which they are tending ?

Certainly the passage which we have quoted on p. 39 is very suggestive ; and the fact that the true knowledge respecting Satan is said to be reserved for the initiates of the Greater Mysteries shows that it is regarded as a matter of supreme importance, and awakens suspicion that it may prove to be the hinge on which the whole system turns. At least, we who are Christians know that—whatever agents may be used to bring it about—the world will presently be found worshipping the Dragon and the Beast, that is, Satan and the Antichrist.* And the distinctive doctrine of the latter will be the denial of the Father and the Son,† which is also a characteristic of Theosophy. Moreover, Theosophists seem to have some expectation of a new avatar. It

* Rev. xiii. 4.

† 1 John ii. 22.

must, however, be left for time to decide whether there is any close connection between them and the predicted coming of the Lawless One.

Meanwhile, our immediate opposition to Theosophy is grounded upon the fact, which we have just mentioned, that it most certainly denies both the Father and the Son. It is willing, indeed, to accept the Son as a Mahatma, such as any man may become in the course of ages ; but it derides the thought that Jehovah has laid on Him the iniquities of us all. It refuses to know God by the revelation which He has given, and scorns to obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In proof of what we say, we subjoin two extracts from the current number of *Lucifer*—October, 1891—which will furnish our readers with a specimen of the most recent Theosophic teaching on points all-important to Christians :—

“The ‘Father in Heaven’ is a well-known esoteric phrase for the Higher Self, but the exoteric Christian insists on turning it into a personal Deity. ‘Pray to thy Father in Heaven,’ in the Initiate’s mouth, is a direction to meditate on and aspire to the Higher Self. ‘The Son of God’ is a title assumed by all Initiates, implying the assimilation of the Ego and the Higher Self, as does the sentence, ‘I and my Father are one.’ ‘I am the Way,’ again, is a common phrase, the Guru being saluted by the Chela with the words, ‘Thou art the Path’ ; or, again, the disciple is told, ‘Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.’ ‘Christ’ is the title given to all triumphant

Initiates who have passed the symbolical crucifixion, and have become the anointed Masters of all nature. The 'kingdom of heaven' is the peaceful spiritual realm wherein dwell all who have reached the Inner Brotherhood, and it is 'taken by violence,' through the struggles and trials of Chelaship, by those who succeed in passing through the final tests, and so in manifesting the Higher Ego, the Christ within them."

"Ecclesiastical Christianity teaches that men's sins may be gotten rid of, and the penalties due to them remitted, by repentance and faith, the sinner being pardoned for the sake of Jesus, who has borne the punishment due to the guilt of man, and receiving the gifts of the Spirit for his sake. This doctrine is still held by the immense majority of Christian people, and is incorporated in the formularies of all the historical churches, though repudiated by the Broad Church School. But it is in direct and flagrant contradiction to 'the pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy,' which admits no privileges or gifts for man 'save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit.' According to one theory, the saint is made by the grace of God; according to the other, he is slowly built up by his own efforts through many incarnations."

The first of these extracts shows us how it is proposed to efface Christianity from its own sacred books. We may, however, be moved to inquire by what authority we are bidden to understand the Scriptures in a

non-natural and arbitrary sense, which obliterates the Father and the Son, and transfers Their glory to the fallen creatures who are the work of Their hands. Should we be disposed to do so, here is the answer from the same periodical :—

“ By Theosophy I mean the ‘Wisdom Religion,’ or the ‘Secret Doctrine’; and our only knowledge of the Wisdom Religion at the present time comes to us from the Messenger of its Custodians, H. P. Blavatski. . . . None of us has any right to put forward his own views as ‘Theosophy,’ in conflict with hers, for all that we know of Theosophy comes from her. When she says, ‘The Secret Doctrine teaches,’ none can say her nay; we may disagree with the teaching, but it remains ‘the Secret Doctrine,’ or Theosophy; she always encouraged independent thought and criticism, and never resented difference of opinion, but she never wavered in the distinct proclamation, ‘The Secret Doctrine *is* so-and-so.’ ”

So far, then, as the English Theosophists are concerned, it seems that we are to surrender our faith because a Russian lady met some wonder-working Mahatmas, or adepts, in the mountains of Thibet, who showed her a more excellent way. Surely this is to require almost as much credulity as Alcibiades did when he appeared at Rome with the Book containing a new remission of sins, which had been communicated by two angels—a male and a female, and each of them ninety-six miles in height—and had been found at Serac, in

Parthia, by a just man named Elchasai, who gave it to Sobiai, who delivered it to Alcibiades.*

If we be asked what better evidence we have to adduce for our own side, we reply that no such evidence to a Divine origin is to be found in the whole world as that of the Prophetic Scriptures—an evidence which can be verified at any time by any competent person. Some of these Scriptures date from two thousand five hundred years ago, and are found to have accurately sketched the history of the world from that epoch to this. Who, then, save God, could have thus surveyed the long vista of the ages?

That persons ignorant of the original texts, and without comprehensive knowledge of the world's history, should have attempted to interpret these prophecies, and should have abused them for narrow purposes, is no disparagement to the Divine utterances themselves. Let them be diligently examined by students whose minds are free from bias, and whose education is sufficient for the work, and they will yield a testimony which cannot be set aside. From personal experience we believe scepticism to be impossible to him who has fairly comprehended these unique documents. And let it not be forgotten that they form the evidence to which the Author of the sacred writings Himself appeals.

Being an extract, this pamphlet is necessarily incomplete in one or two points: it will, therefore, be well to give a brief synopsis of the thirteen chapters which

* For an account of this strange heresy, see Hippolytus, *Ref. Omn Har.* ix. 13.

precede it in "Earth's Earliest Ages," the volume from which it is taken.

- I. Introduction.
- II. The first verse of Genesis refers to the original creation of the world; the second describes a ruin into which it fell after the lapse of unknown ages, during which the geological strata were formed.
- III. What could have taken place during the great interval between creation and the ruin of Gen. i. 2? Biblical hints. The glory and rebellion of Satan. Angels and demons.
- IV. The six days of restoration.
- V. The creation of man. Spirit, soul, and body.
- VI. The fall.
- VII. The trial and sentence.
- VIII. The cherubim. History of the world until the days of Noah.
- IX. Description of the days of Noah, with particular inquiry into the intercourse with the other world which resulted in intermarriages between the sons of God and the daughters of men.
- X. Modern recurrence of the days of Noah.
- XI. What the Bible teaches in regard to Spiritualism, adepts, mediums, and demoniacs.
- XII. Spiritualism illustrated by secular history.
- XIII. Modern Spiritualism: its origin, manifestations, and doctrines.
As it was the immediate cause of the Deluge, and of the command to destroy the Canaanites, so its prevalence in our days is a grave sign that the end of the age is near.

THEOSOPHY.

DURING the last few years another strange phase of thought has appeared in the wake of Spiritualism, equally destructive of faith and boldly avowing its Pagan origin. We allude to Theosophy, now so common a subject of conversation, and which, in various forms, is ever presenting itself in the periodic and other literature of the day. And since we understand it to be the revival of a philosophy communicated by the Nephilim, and believe that the signs of the last apostasy may be detected in its teachings, we admit a claim upon our consideration which we will now endeavour to discharge.

For many centuries the true nature of the early systems of religion was unsuspected by Christians. It has been usual to regard Paganism as a mere brutal worship of stocks and stones, as a gross superstition, so utterly devoid of intellectuality that, when once expelled, it could never return and again deceive an enlightened and educated world. It was carelessly assumed to have sprung from ignorance and mental incapacity; whereas its wonderful power of adapting itself to the carnal mind should rather have suggested an emanation

The ancient religions were able to satisfy the cravings of intellect.

from those Powers of the Air which effected the ruin of our first parents. And to suppose that anything which comes from such a source need be wanting in intellectual vigour and beauty, would be a folly as great as that which represents the fallen Son of the Morning under the guise of a horned monster. There is little chance of escaping his snares unless we recognise the fact that the resources of intellect are yet at the command of himself and his hosts, that still

“There is some soul of *greatness* in things evil.”

And so we might reasonably expect to find a faint reflection, at least, of this greatness in those who were inspired by fallen angels, and who learnt to own them as lords. Nor would such an expectation be disappointed; for if we investigate early Paganism by the light of recent discoveries, we soon perceive that its chief strength lay in its intellectual attractions, and that many of its priests and initiates were distinguished as philosophers and men of science.

But—still more strange!—if, after our investigation, we glance at the world of to-day, we see the men of this nineteenth century returning to the wisdom of long past ages, and modern thought sustaining its flight upon the wings of ancient lore. Nay, almost every characteristic of antiquity seems to be reappearing. Open intercourse with demons is being renewed on a vast scale in the very heart of Christendom, and even among the hitherto somewhat Sadducean Protestants: numerous circles are carrying on magical practices: attempts are being made to restore the influence of those ancient Mysteries which are said to

Hence the present revival of their doctrines and practices, which were originally communicated by Nephilim.

have been always kept up by a few initiates: the old mesmeric healings are again performed: star-gazers and planet-rulers have greatly increased, while many amateur students are zealously assisting to re-establish the power of astrology over the human race: the use of the divining rod, and countless other practices of primal and mediæval times, are once more becoming common. And, impossible as it would have seemed a few years ago, all these "superstitions" are floating back to us upon the tide of "modern thought." They come no longer veiled in mystery, nor claiming to be miraculous or Divine; but, in accordance with the spirit of the age, present themselves as the fruit of science, as an evidence of the progress of knowledge in regard to the laws of the visible and invisible worlds.

"Unless we mistake the signs," says the writer of "Isis Unveiled," "the day is approaching when the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known. . . . An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun. The cycle has almost run its course; a new one is about to begin, and the future pages of history may contain full evidence, and convey full proof, that

" 'If ancestry can be in aught believed,
Descending spirits have conversed with man,
And told him secrets of the world unknown.' " *

They may indeed: for the Apocalypse foretells a yet future sojourn of fallen angels upon earth, an event which will quickly dispel scepticism in regard to the past. But even now the evidence is ample, and may

* "Isis Unveiled," vol. i., p. 38.

be found, not merely in the Biblical account of the Nephilim, but in the myths of all nations. What significance, for example, are we to attach to the story that Ceres instructed men in agriculture? Why is music attributed to Apollo, eloquence to Mercury? Whence arose the legend of the great Titan, who, in defiance of Zeus, expounded the civilizing arts to men, taught them medicine, astronomy, and divination, and stole fire for them from heaven? Or, again, is there no basis of fact for the catalogue, contained in the mysterious book of Enoch, of arts which the Nephilim are said to have introduced among men;* no reflection of truth in the appeal of Michael and his companions, when they say;—"See, then, what Azâzâl has done; how he has taught all wickedness on earth, and has revealed the secrets of the world which were prepared in the heavens"?†

If, however, the ancient philosopher drew his earliest information from such a source, we cease to wonder at its extent. The hints of an acquaintance with the spherical form of the earth, and with the fact of its motion round the sun, alleged to be found in the Vedas, are no longer incredible. We can listen with equanimity to the astronomical revelations of the Great Pyramid. Nor are we bewildered by the assertion that many of the vaunted results of modern science were included in the instruction given to the initiates of the Hermetic, Orphic, Eleusinian, and Cabbalistic mysteries, and were familiar to Chaldean Magi, Egyptian Priests, Hindu Occultists, Essenes, Therapeutæ, Gnostics, and Theurgic Neo-Platonists.

* Book of Enoch, ii. 8.

† *Ibid.*, ii. 9.

And since we are also told that all occult societies have been affiliated, and, therefore, have in some sort carried on a continuous study, we are fain to admit, upon this assumption, that they may long ago have passed beyond the limits of modern science, seeing that the latter is the accumulated experience of comparatively few generations. Still more ought they to have advanced in metaphysics and psychology, studies which they have ever regarded as the most important.

“There is thus,” in the words of A. P. Sinnett, “something more than a mere archæological interest in the identification of the occult system with the doctrines of the initiated organisations in all ages of the world’s history, and we are presented by this identification with the key to the philosophy of religious development. Occultism is not merely an isolated discovery showing humanity to be possessed of certain powers over Nature, which the narrower study of Nature from the merely materialistic standpoint has failed to develop; it is an illumination cast over all previous spiritual speculation worth anything, of a kind which knits together some apparently divergent systems. It is to spiritual philosophy much what Sanscrit was found to be to comparative philology; it is a common stock of philosophical roots. Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, and the Egyptian theology, are thus brought into one family of ideas.”*

The last sentence is undoubtedly true, provided we remember that “Judaism” here stands for the Cabbala; and that “Christianity” does not mean the pure and

* “The Occult World,” p. 6.

simple faith set forth in the New Testament, but the ecclesiastical compound of Heathenism to which the writers of "The Perfect Way" thus frankly express their obligation ;—

"For, like the Puritans, who coated with plaster and otherwise covered and hid from view the sacred images and decorations which were obnoxious to them, Orthodoxy has at least preserved through the ages the symbols which contain the truth beneath the errors with which it has overlaid them."

When the real meaning of these symbols becomes generally known, the object of the initiates in foisting them upon the Church will be very apparent. A revelation of their true nature will shatter the faith of those who rest upon them in the fond delusion that they are Christian, and make many a rough place smooth for the advance of the great apostacy.

Thus, by means of various secret associations, Occultism appears to have been handed down from the times of the Mysteries to our own days. The only Brotherhood at present mentioned in the outer world is one which extends its branches throughout the East, and of which the headquarters are reported to be in Thibet. It is open to any person who can prove himself fit for membership ; but the Neophyte, or Chela, must undergo a discipline of many years, and pass through terrible ordeals, before he can be completely initiated. These trials, it is affirmed, are neither arranged by caprice, nor designed to support a jealous exclusiveness ; but are necessary to the pupil himself, to prepare him for the tremendous revelation which will at last reward his successful perseverance.

The Asiatic Brotherhood, and its determination to communicate with the world.

But—as we are informed by those who claim authority for their statements—the advances of Modern Science, and especially the spread of evolutionary philosophy, having fitted the world for deeper teaching, the Brothers decided that the time had come to communicate with it, and openly influence its religion and philosophy. They have, however, become so etherealized by their practices that they are unable to endure contact with coarse human nature; it was, therefore, necessary to employ intermediaries.

The first person known to have been chosen for this purpose was a Madame Blavatski,* a Russian gentlewoman, granddaughter of Princess Dolgorouki of the elder branch, and widow of General N. V. Blavatski, Governor, during the Crimean war and for many years, of Erivan in Armenia. This lady, after devoting herself to occult pursuits for some thirty years, repaired to a Himalayan retreat, where she spent seven years under the immediate direction of the Brothers, and was initiated and instructed for her mission. She was then dismissed to the outer world, and, having proceeded to America, and attracted there a number of sympathising minds, she organized the Theosophical Society, at New York, under the presidency of Colonel Olcott. This was in the year 1875. Then, after crossing to England and establishing the Society in this country, she returned to India, where

* Lately two Indian natives, Ramaswamy, a Government official at Tinnevely, and Damodar, have been mentioned, and Colonel Olcott has become a *chela*. The latter is said to have seen the Brothers both in the flesh and in the astral form. “By a long series of the most astounding thaumaturgic displays, when he was first introduced to the subject in America, he was made acquainted with their powers” (*Light*, December 22nd, 1883).

her flattery of the natives and dislike to their British rulers, together with her nationality, caused her, and not without reason, to be regarded as a spy. At last, however, perceiving her mistake, she changed her mode of action, and, having obtained introductions to British officials at Simla, began to make some progress. The objects of the Society were then set forth as follows.

I. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity.

II. To study Aryan literature, religion, and science.

III. To vindicate the importance of this inquiry.

IV. To explore the hidden mysteries of Nature, and the latent powers of man.

Subsequently a fifth object of the Society, the destruction of Christianity, was revealed. "Later it has determined to spread among the 'poor benighted Heathen' such evidences as to the practical results of Christianity as will at least give both sides of the story to the communities among which missionaries are at work. With this view it has established relations with associations and individuals throughout the East, to whom it furnishes authenticated reports of the ecclesiastical crimes and misdemeanours, schisms and heresies, controversies and litigations, doctrinal differences and Biblical criticisms and revisions, with which the press of Christian Europe and America constantly teems. Christendom has been long and minutely informed of the degradation and brutishness into which Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Confucianism have plunged their deluded votaries, and many millions have been lavished upon foreign missions under such false representations. The Theosophical Society, seeing daily exemplifications of this very state of things as the sequence of Christian teaching and

example—the latter especially—thought it simple justice to make the facts known in Palestine, India, Ceylon, Cashmere, Tartary, Thibet, China, and Japan, in all of which countries it has influential correspondents. It may also in time have much to say about the conduct of the missionaries to those who contribute to their support.*

It will, therefore, be seen that this foe has made a formal declaration of war. By the autumn of 1883 there were already seventy branches of the Society in India, and “many thousands of Mahomedans, Buddhists, Hindus, Parsees, Christians, officials and non-officials, governors and governed, have been brought together by its instrumentality.”† As proofs of its levelling power, the following incidents will not be without significance to those who know the peoples of India.

“In the year 1880 a mixed delegation of *Hindus and Parsees* were deputed by the Bombay Branch to assist the founders in organizing *Buddhist* Branches in Ceylon. In 1881 the *Buddhists* reciprocated by sending over delegates to Tinnevely to assist in organizing a *Hindu* Branch, and these *Buddhists* were, together with Colonel Olcott, received with rapturous welcome *inside* a most sacred *Hindu* Temple, in the enclosure of which they planted a cocoa-nut tree in commemoration of their visit.”‡

Satisfied with these results, and with their success in other countries, the Brotherhood authorised A. P. Sinnett to reveal some portions of their philosophy to the Western world, which he did in the spring of 1883, in

Dissemination of
Theosophy in England
and France.

* “Isis Unveiled,” vol. i., pp. xli., xlii.

† “Hints on Esoteric Theosophy,” No. I., p. 18.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 19.

a volume entitled "Esoteric Buddhism." But a more remarkable book had been published in the previous year, "the inner inspirations" of which Mr. Sinnett supposes to be identical with those of his own work.* It is called "The Perfect Way, or the Finding of Christ," and its anonymous writers—for they claim inspiration, and decline to be styled authors—certainly display considerable ability; though in the case of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures they exhibit a knowledge far less accurate than that which they claim in regard to the doctrines of the Mysteries. Sometimes also, to suit their purpose, they give strange meanings to words, without condescending to hint at the process by which they reached their conclusion.

Yet again, two or three years before the appearance of this work, "Les Quatres Evangiles expliqués en Esprit et en Verité" had been published in Paris by M. Roustaing. This gentleman affirms that he wrote from the dictation of the four evangelists and the other apostles, who were sent to make the communication to him. He is not without admirers and exponents in England, among the foremost of whom are the Countess of Caithness and Miss Anna Blackwell. His work is a further development of the philosophy of Allan Kardec, whose volumes have obtained an immense circulation throughout France.†

Now the fundamental theory of all these books, however much they may differ in comparatively unimportant details, is the doctrine of the evolution of the soul by means of repeated incarnations, or, as the

* It would seem, however, to be a production of Western rather than Eastern Occultism.

† One of these, "The Spirit's Book," was some time ago translated by Miss Anna Blackwell from the 120th thousand.

writers of "The Perfect Way" put it, "the Pre-existence and Perfectibility of the Soul." To expound this doctrine, we will take the last mentioned treatise as our text book.

Its writers, in explaining their position, declare the identity of their teaching with that which was given to the initiates in "the sacred Mysteries of antiquity." But, they continue, "now, as of old, those Mysteries comprise two classes of doctrine, of which one class only—that which, being historical and interpretative, belongs to the Lesser Mysteries—may be freely communicated. The other, known as the Greater Mysteries, is reserved for those who, in virtue of the interior unfoldment of their consciousness, contain within them the necessary witness."* "For reasons arising out of this necessary reserve" the writers can give no precise account of the origin of the inspired fragments which they frequently quote as authoritative.

What they mean by the unfoldment of the consciousness, or "the faculty of intuition," is soon made apparent. During the ages which we pass in countless embodiments, "that in us which perceives and permanently remembers is the Soul." And although, owing to the grossness of our present nature, we are beclouded and have lost the use of her treasures of memory, nevertheless "all that she has once learnt is at the service of those who duly cultivate relations with her."†

* "The Perfect Way," p. xiii.

† *Ibid.*, p. 4. Indeed, the man who successfully cultivates these relations seems to gain unbounded power. For "it is not his own memory alone that, thus endowed, he reads. The very planet of which he is the offspring, is, like himself, a Person, and is possessed of a medium of memory. And he to whom the soul lends

“The Intuition, then, is that operation of the mind whereby we are enabled to gain access to the interior and permanent region of our nature, and there to possess ourselves of the knowledge which in the long ages of her past existence the soul has made her own.”* And Intuition Memory must be “developed and otherwise assisted by the only mode of life compatible with sound philosophic aspirations,” “the mode, therefore, invariably from the first followed by all candidates for initiation into the sacred mysteries of existence. It is only by living the life that man can know of the doctrine.”† But if we inquire what are the rules of this life, the whole system is instantly condemned by the reply, that marriage is prohibited to the neophyte, and that he must abstain from flesh and alcohol. We at once recognise the “falling away” of which Paul wrote, and perceive that the so-called Intuition Memory is no recovery of a knowledge which lies hidden in man, but an inspiration from demons who speak lies in hypocrisy.

Affirming, then, that their information was obtained by Fourfold nature of man. means of Intuition Memory, the writers proceed to teach that man is possessed of a fourfold nature, and that “the four elements which constitute him are, counting from without inwards, the material body, the fluidic perisoul or astral body,‡

her ears and eyes may have knowledge not only of his own past history, but of the past history of the planet, as beheld in the pictures imprinted in the magnetic light whereof the planet’s memory consists. For there are actually ghosts of events, manes of past circumstances, shadows on the protoplasmic mirror, which can be evoked” (“The Perfect Way,” pp. 8, 9).

* *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.

† *Ibid.*, p. 4.

‡ This is the so-called *doppelgänger*, which can be projected from the material body and made to appear at any distance.

the soul or individual, and the spirit or Divine Father and life of his system."* They then give their evolutionary theory, of which the following is a rapid sketch.

The interplanetary ether, known in the terminology of Occultism as the Astral Fluid, is the first manifestation of Substance, that which sub-stands all phenomena; and its ultimate expression is what we call Matter. There is but one Substance: and, therefore, Spirit and Matter are not two things, but are two states of the same thing; just as solid, palpable, incompressible ice is, under another condition, the same thing as fluid, invisible, compressible vapour.

Since, then, there is but one Substance, therefore the substance of the Soul, and therein of all things, and the substance of Deity, are one and the same. "And of this Substance the Life also is called God, Who, as Living Substance, is at once Life and Substance, one and yet twain, or two in one. And that which proceeds from these two, and is, theologically, called the Son and the Word, is necessarily the expression of both, and is, potentially, the Universe; for He creates it after His own Divine image by means of the Spirit He has received. Now the Divine Substance is, in its original condition, homogeneous. Every monad of it, therefore, possesses the potentialities of the whole. Of such a monad, in its original condition, every individual soul consists. And of the same Substance, projected into lower conditions, the material universe consists. It undergoes, however, no radical change of nature through such projection; but its manifestation — on

* "The Perfect Way," p. 5.

whatever plane occurring—is always as a Trinity in Unity ; since that whereby substance becomes manifest is the evolution of its Trinity. Thus—to reckon from without inwards, and below upwards—on the plane physical, it is Force, universal Ether, and their offspring the Material World. On the plane intellectual, it is Life, Substance, and Phenomenon. On the plane spiritual—its original point of radiation—it is Will, Wisdom, and the Word. And on all planes whatever, it is, in some mode, Father, Mother, and Child.”*

The last few sentences we have cited without abbreviation because of their importance. They contain a clear exposition of the false Trinity as, fundamentally, it is taught in all Pagan systems. Its irreconcilable and blasphemous opposition to Biblical revelation we will presently explain, but must now proceed with our sketch.

The monads of the Divine substance are at first

The process of evolution, whereby the Soul, imprisoned at first in inorganic matter, progresses until it ultimately becomes a Deity. incarcerated without individualisation in something material. And “there is no mode of Matter in which the potentiality of personality, and therein of man, does not subsist. For every molecule is a mode of the universal consciousness. Without consciousness is no being: For consciousness *is* being. The earliest manifestation of consciousness appears in the obedience paid to the laws of gravitation and chemical affinity, which constitute the basis of the later evolved organic laws of nutritive assimilation. And the perception, memory, and experience represented in man are the accumulations of long ages of toil and thought, gradually advancing, through the development of the

* “The Perfect Way,” pp. 17-18.

consciousness, from organic combinations upward to God. Such is the secret meaning of the old mystery-story which relates how Deucalion and Pyrrha, under the direction of Themis (Wisdom), produced men and women from stones, and so peopled the renewed earth.*

Passing, then, at length from the mineral kingdom, the monad is manifested in the lowest modes of organic life, and at this point is individualised by self-generation, and becomes a soul or nucleus to the cell in which it has manifested itself. "And once formed, it is capable, on the breaking up of its cell, of passing into and informing another cell."† And so it progresses, in a series of lives, from the vegetable to the animal, and from the animal to the human. After experiencing many existences in the last mentioned state of being, the conditions of each rebirth being determined by the results, or *karma*, of the preceding life, it rises to the supernatural. And so at length it relinquishes its *existence* for the *being* from which it was originally projected; but returns with conscious individuality, and the full advantage of all its experiences. And returning it becomes reunited to the Deity; so that we must "conceive of God as a vast spiritual body constituted of many individual elements, all having but one will, and, therefore, being one. This condition of oneness with the Divine Will and Being constitutes what in Hindu mysticism is called the celestial Nirvāna. But though becoming pure spirit, or God, the individual retains his individuality. So that, instead of all being finally merged in the One, the One becomes many. Thus does God become millions. God is multitudes, and

* "The Perfect Way," p. 19.

† *Ibid.*, p. 18.

nations, and kingdoms, and tongues ; and the voice of God is as the sound of many waters.”*

Such is an outline of this daring attempt to deny both the Father and the Son, and to set before men, in a manner peculiarly seductive, the old temptation, “Ye shall be as God.” It was one of the secrets taught to the initiates of antiquity, and several of the great sages are said to have remembered previous incarnations, especially Crishna, Pythagoras, Plato, Apollonius, and the Buddha Gautama. “This last—the Messenger, who fulfilled for the mystics of the East the part which six hundred years later was, for the mystics of the West, fulfilled by Jesus—is stated to have recovered the recollection of five hundred and fifty of his own incarnations. And the chief end of his doctrine is to induce men so to live as to shorten the number and duration of their earth-lives. ‘He,’ say the Hindu Scriptures, ‘who in his lifetime recovers the memory of all that his soul has learnt, is already a god.’”†

Now, since the Prince of this World apparently Biblical texts quoted in support of the doctrine of Transmigration. deems that the time has come to procure the same unanimity in his human as in his spiritual kingdom, and would, therefore, propagate this evolutionary philosophy in lands which have been long influenced by the revelation of God, testimony in its favour must needs be produced from the Christian Scriptures. We adduce a few specimens which will enable the reader to estimate the value of such a support.

In the Baptist’s impassioned address to the bigoted Jews, he points to the pebbles on the shores of the Jordan, and exclaims ;—“Think you that God cannot

* “The Perfect Way,” p. 46. † *Ibid.*, pp. 22-3.

do without you because you are sons of Abraham ! Had he need of such, His power could in a moment change every one of these innumerable stones into a child of Abraham.* And again, when our Lord would show the Pharisees that God's purposes are irresistible, He says ;—" I tell you that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." These two passages are supposed to furnish clear evidence that both John and our Lord were aware of the presence in the stones of Divine monads which would be educated, by means of various embodiments, until they were able to assume the human form !

Again ; Daniel receives the promise that he shall rest, and stand in his lot at the end of the days, when the resurrection which has just been revealed to him takes place. This is supposed to indicate reincarnation. The Lord says of John ;—" If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?" The comment is ;—" It was intimated by Jesus that he should tarry within reach of the earth-life, either for reincarnation or metempsychosis, when the appointed time should come." The Lord is described by Paul as the Captain of our salvation made perfect through suffering : such an expression " obviously implies a course of experience far in excess of anything that is predicable of a single brief career." And so the Gnostic Carpocrates was right when " he taught that the Founder of Christianity also was simply a person who, having a soul of great age and high degree of purity, had been enabled through his mode of life to recover the memory of its past." It is true that our Lord in speaking of the blind man positively denied that he was born so on account of his

* " The Perfect Way," p. 20.

sin in a former existence ; but that proves nothing, since "His refusal to satisfy the curiosity of His disciples is readily intelligible on the supposition that He was unwilling to disclose the affairs of other souls."

Finally ; the Countess of Caithness boldly affirms that our Lord taught the doctrine of reincarnation when He said ;—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."* Yet Nicodemus is rebuked for understanding the words in such a sense, and numerous other passages show that the rebirth takes place upon conversion, and that the initial rite of baptism expresses the man's death and burial to the old life and resurrection to the new, in which he is exhorted thenceforth to walk. Besides which, we have Paul's emphatic assertion that "it is appointed unto men once to die." †

Such, then, are some of the best arguments which

Theosophical account of the Fall and Redemption of man. Theosophists are able to produce from the Bible in support of their fundamental theory. To state them is a sufficient refutation ; and we are not surprised to find that other views advanced by these philosophers are directly opposed to Divine revelation. "The Fall of man," we are told, "does not mean, as commonly supposed, the lapse, through a specific act, of particular individuals from a state of original perfection. . . . It means such an inversion of the due relations between the soul and the body of a personality already both spiritual and material, as involves a transference of the central will of the system concerned, from the soul—

* "Serious Letters to Serious Friends," p. 129.

† Heb. ix. 27. The Greek *ἀπαξ* is also a strong word meaning "once for all."

which is its proper seat—to the body, and the consequent subjection of the soul to the body, and liability of the individual to sin, disease, and all other evils which result from the limitations of matter.”* And connected with this exposition is the following strange doctrine, leading up, as all Paganism does, to the worship of the great Goddess, the Mother and Child, and also to a reversal of God’s order in Creation.

“Whatever the sex of the person, physically, each individual is a dualism consisting of exterior and interior, manifested personality and essential individuality, body and soul, which are to each other masculine and feminine, man and woman ; he the without and she the within.” † And, to summarize the remainder of the paragraph, just as the woman is to the man on the planes intellectual and spiritual, so is she on the planes physical and social. She is the proper head of creation : the subjection of the feminine to the masculine in the individual was the Fall ; the subjection of the woman to the man in the world is the outward and visible sign of the Fall. And it is only by “the complete restoration crowning and exaltation of the woman, in all the planes, that redemption can be effected.”

Now we have already seen that Theosophists describe man as consisting of four elements, two of which are the body and astral body, constituting the masculine principle, while the third is the Soul, which is feminine. The remaining part is spirit, and this, as being an emanation from God, is, therefore, God ; so that every man carries God within himself!! The Soul, then, is placed between the Divine element and the Body : and

* “The Perfect Way,” p. 215.

† *Ibid.*, p. 186.

“in order properly to fulfil her function in regard to the man, and attract his regards upwards to her, she must herself aspire continually to the Divine Spirit within her, the central sun of herself, as she is that of the man.” * But if she fails in this, she falls, becomes wedded to the Body, and the whole man is as the first Adam, of the earth earthy. “The result, on the other hand, of the soul’s steadfast aspiration towards God—the Spirit, that is, within her—and of her consequent action upon the Body, is that this also becomes so permeated and suffused by the Spirit as at last to have no will of its own, but to be in all things one with its Soul and Spirit, and to constitute with these one perfectly harmonious system, of which every element is under full control of the central Will. It is this unification occurring within the individual which constitutes the At-one-ment. And in him in whom it occurs in its fullest extent, Nature realizes the ideal to attain which she first came forth from God.” † The marriage of the Spirit and Bride has taken place, and the result is the new birth, the man is born of Water and the Spirit—water being the symbol of the woman. This “man who is reborn in us of water—our own regenerate self, the Christ Jesus and Son of man, who in saving us is called the Captain of our salvation—is said to be made perfect through suffering. This suffering must be borne by each man for himself. To deprive any one of it by putting the consequences of his acts upon another, so far from aiding that one, would be to deprive him of his means of redemption.” ‡

* “The Perfect Way,” p. 188.

† *Ibid.*, p. 217.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 217-8.

“Although redemption, as a whole, is one, the process

According to Theosophists the Acts of the Mysteries typified the Redemption of man, whereby he becomes “a Christ,” and attains to the Nirvāna of the Buddhists.

is manifold, and consists in a series of acts, spiritual and mental.”* Space will not permit us to enter into a particular description of these ; we can only mention that they are affirmed to have been typified by the six acts of the Lesser and Greater Mysteries. The first three of these—the Betrothal, or initiatory purification by Baptism, the Temptation or Trial, and the Passion or Renunciation—“belong to the Mysteries of the Rational Humanity as distinguished from those of the Spiritual Humanity.” The particular act whereby the Passion “is consummated and demonstrated is called the Crucifixion. This Crucifixion means a complete unreserving surrender—to the death, if need be—without opposition, even in desire, on the part of the natural man.” † It “is the last stage of the Lesser Mysteries,” which belong to the Queen’s Chamber of the Great Pyramid, ‡ “and closes initiation into them. Immediately upon giving up the ghost—or renouncing altogether the lower life—the Christ enters into His kingdom, and the veil of the Temple is rent from the top to the bottom. For this veil is that which divides the covered place from the Holy of Holies ; and by its rending is denoted the passage of the individual within the kingdom of God, or of the Soul—typified by the King’s Chamber.”

* “The Perfect Way,” p. 220.

† *Ibid.*, p. 220.

‡ Occultists affirm that “the Pyramid is designed to illustrate, both in character and duration, the various stages of the soul’s history, from her first emergence in Matter to her final triumphant release and return to Spirit.” The building was, they say, used for the celebration of the mysteries.

“The last three acts—the Burial,” for which the coffer found in the Great Pyramid was wont to be used, “the Resurrection, and the Ascension—belong to the Greater Mysteries of the Soul and Spirit, the Spirit being the central Lord, King, and Adonai, of the system, and the Spouse of the Bride or Soul.”* “The seventh and concluding act of the whole process follows the accomplishment of the three stages of the Greater Mysteries of the King or Spirit, and is called the “Consummation of the Marriage of the Son of God.” In this act, the King and Queen, Spirit and Bride, *πνεῦμα* and *νύμφη*, are indissolubly united; the Man becomes pure Spirit; and the Human is finally taken up into the Divine.” † “This is ‘the Sabbath’ of the Hebrews, the ‘Nirvāna’ of the Buddhists, and the Transmutation of the Alchemists.” ‡

The man who attains to the consummation of the Greater Mysteries is, then, not merely an adept, but “a Christ.” Such a dignity, however—“though open potentially to all—is actually in the present open, if to any, but to few. And these are necessarily they only who, having passed through many transmigrations, and advanced far on their way to maturity, have sedulously turned their lives to the best account by means of the steadfast development of all the higher faculties and qualities of man; and who, while not declining the experiences of the body, have made the Spirit, and not the body, their object and aim.”§ And to accomplish their end, they have submitted “to a discipline and training the most severe, at once physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual.” Such were Osiris, Mithras,

* “The Perfect Way,” p. 249. † *Ibid.*, p. 250.
 ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 251. § *Ibid.*, pp. 226-7.

Crishna, Zoroaster, Dionysus, Buddha, and Jesus : for although there is none other name given under heaven whereby men can be saved except that of Christ, yet that name has been shared by many.*

Such a statement prepares us for the assertion that
Theosophists desire the union of corrupted Christianity with Buddhism and Mahometanism. Christianity is no rival to Buddhism, but was the direct and necessary sequel to that system, the two being parts of one continuous and harmonious whole.

“ Buddha completed the regeneration of the mind : and by his doctrine and practice men are prepared for the grace which comes by Jesus. Wherefore no man can be properly Christian, who is not also, and first, Buddhist.”†

Hence, of course, the union of the two religions is to be desired, and Moslems also are exhorted to join the league.

“ They who seek to wed Buddha to Jesus are of the celestial and upper ; and they who interpose to forbid the banns are of the astral and nether. Between the two hemispheres stand the domain and faith of Islam, not to divide, but, as umbilical cord, to unite them. And nought is there in Islamism to hinder its fulfilment of this high function, and keep it from being a partaker of the blessings to result therefrom. For not only is it the one really monotheistic and non-idolatrous religion now existing ; but its symbolic Star and Crescent are essentially one with the Cross of Christ, in that they also typify the elements masculine and feminine of the Divine existence, and the relation of the Soul to God. So that Islamism has but to accomplish that other stage of its natural evolution, which

* “ The Perfect Way,” p. 37.

† *Ibid.*, p. 257.

will enable it to claim an equal place in the Brotherhood of the Elect. This is the practical recognition in 'Allah' of Mother as well as Father, by the exaltation of the woman to her rightful station on all planes of man's manifold nature. This accomplished, Esau and Ishmael will be joined together with Abraham Isaac and Jacob* in Christ. In this recognition of the Divine idea of humanity, and its ultimate results, will consist what are called the Second Advent and Millennial reign of Christ."†

Such, then, is the Theosophic system as put forth by the ablest of its exponents. So is the history of human souls traced from their alleged incarceration in stones until, having worked their way to man's estate, and afterwards progressed so as to know "the

Theosophy is thus leading to a second league of Babel, which will cause the return of the Lord Jesus.

* "The Perfect Way," pp. 262-3. Let not the reader suppose that these names are used in any ordinary sense: the Theosophic idea of them, which we subjoin, is peculiar, and a good example of the way in which the Bible is wrested to suit any theory.

"Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were types of Truth, ancestors of the spiritual Israel, and representatives of the several sacred Mysteries of whose 'kingdom' the Man Regenerate is always, the world regenerate will be ultimately, by adoption and grace, the inheritor" ("Perfect Way," p. 259). The writers then give an exposition which we can only summarise.

Abraham—Brahma—represents the Mysteries of India, which are those of the Spirit, sacred to the Supreme Being.

Isaac—a name identical at once with Isis and Jesus (!)—the Mysteries of Egypt, which are those of the soul, sacred to Isis, the goddess of the Intuition, and Mother of the Christ.

Jacob, the Mysteries of Greece, which are those of the body, sacred to Bacchus, whose mystic name, Iacchos, is identical with Jacob.

So that, according to these teachers, to be initiated into the Mysteries is to become a Member of the Spiritual Israel.

† In the closing words of this paragraph, the reader will notice a furtive attempt to make void the promise of the Lord's return. Sometimes, however, the onslaughts of Theosophical writers upon

truth," they will become able—whether Jews, Christians, Buddhists, or Mahommedans—to unite in a universal belief of the doctrine that sin is expiated by transmigrations, and in the worship of "the Great Goddess." The conception of a second league of Babel has been formed in the minds of Theosophists. And as surely as it progresses towards its realization, so surely may Christian believers know that ere long the Lord will again say;—"This they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Come! Let us go down!"

At present the rapid spread of the Theosophic philosophy and—which is, perhaps, even more significant—of various ideas, which, harmless or even good as they may be in themselves, belong to, and tend to unite with, its system, is undeniable. Christians who take the trouble to reconnoitre in the darkening twilight are

this doctrine are much more direct. For instance, Madame Blavatski suggests that the early Christian Church must have been well versed in Asiatic philosophy; "otherwise it would have neither erected into an article of faith the Second Advent, nor cunningly invented the fable of Antichrist as a *precaution against future incarnations*" ("Isis Unveiled," vol. ii., p. 535). It is, however, difficult to understand how the early Christians could have "invented" Antichrist, seeing that they were acquainted with very circumstantial prophecies respecting that terrible being, which were uttered six or seven centuries before the Christian era. And the same remark may be applied with still greater force to the Second Advent.

But both Spiritualists and Theosophists have a special aversion to these doctrines, and are eager to explain away any Scripture which refers to them. They have no desire to realize the brevity of the triumph which will crown their rebellion: it is not their wish that the true character of the leader, whom they will rejoice to deify, should be exposed: nor have they any pleasure in anticipating that sudden interposition of the Omnipotent whereby the stately image of their power will be in a moment ground to dust, and the fallen Son of the Morning, who sustained it, hurled into the depths of the Abyss.

well aware that hostile forces are converging from various quarters, but with unmistakable concert, upon their camp; while that camp itself is, alas! becoming thinned by the almost daily desertions of those who cease to believe in the Bible as the *only* revelation from God, and in the Lord Jesus as the *One* Christ and Saviour, Who bare our sins in His own body on the tree, and gave His life a ransom for many. As to the particular teaching which we have been endeavouring to explain, it is so obviously opposed to the Christian Scriptures that—since we are at present addressing ourselves solely to those who believe in the latter—comment is almost superfluous. It seems merely necessary to *know* of the doctrines, and of the proposed alliance between the great religious systems of the world; that we may understand what are likely to be the tactics of the foe, and may pray for grace to hold fast that which we have until our Lord come. We shall, therefore, offer but a few brief remarks upon some important points.

In the first place, then, we are told that Occultism is the wisdom of primal ages, a revival of the only true philosophy, held by all the great Teachers of the world, and communicated to the initiates of the Mysteries. And we are admonished that Christianity, although it did contrive to displace the old religion in the West, has proved a failure; and that we must, therefore, return to that which is better, and confess to the superiority of ancient sages.

Now, so far as the origin of Theosophy is concerned, we are quite willing to admit the account given by our opponents. Of course none but initiates can speak

The philosophy of the Mysteries is commended neither by their apparent origin, nor by their results.

positively on such a subject : but all that can be noticed by one outside would certainly incline him to acquiesce in this statement.

But, by comparing the Bible with old Mythologies and the opinions of modern Theosophists, we have shown that the whole system of the Mysteries was probably communicated by those fallen angels who transgressed just before and immediately after the Flood. And such a source, though undoubtedly ancient, can scarcely be expected to inspire confidence.

Moreover, the past results of this philosophy afford but little ground for boasting. Neither time nor opportunity had been lacking to it when the crisis came, and its leaders were trembling at the rapid progress of Christianity : but what was the state of the world after so long a subjection to the power and guidance of the initiates ? It was a state of moral ruin ; and there would be no great difficulty in selecting passages from contemporaneous writers which would furnish material for a sketch of the universal depravity of the times of the Cæsars such as would make many a modern indifferentist stand aghast. Meanwhile, Christianity has never yet had the world under her power, as the initiates had for so many centuries. Her beginnings were small and contemptible : she was not assisted by organized Lodges, whose members included almost all the educated and respectable men in nearly every town of the Empire. On the contrary, she was at first environed with cruel persecutions ; and then, as soon as it became evident that neither fire, nor wild beasts, nor the tortures of the executioner, could drive her out of the world, she was stealthily seized from behind by those very initiates who are now held up to our admiration, and

who, when they had made good their hold, distorted her form, disfigured her heavenly beauty with the brand of Satan, and compelled her thenceforth to walk the earth loaded with the heavy fetters of political Heathenism. Yet, after all this maltreatment, she retained sufficient force to ameliorate somewhat the condition of the whole world, and to become the power of God and the wisdom of God to those who received her in sincerity.

Before leaving this subject we will give a specimen of the feelings with which contemporary Christians regarded the Mysteries. A curious fragment describing the tenets of certain philosophers and logicians had descended to us from antiquity: it was entitled "The Philosophumena," and was inserted in the Benedictine copy of Origen's works. However, the style was not at all that of Origen, nor did the personal allusions suit his circumstances; so that the Benedictine editor suggested that Epiphanius might have been the writer. But nothing further was known until the year 1842, when a manuscript was discovered, in a convent on Mount Athos, including seven books of the "Philosophumena, or a Refutation of all Heresies." These proved to be the greater portion of the work—originally consisting of ten books—to which the fragment mentioned above also belonged; and scholars soon found reason to conclude that the author of the whole treatise was Hippolytus, who had been Bishop of Portus in the first half of the third century.

Now, from the knowledge to which this Hippolytus lays claim, it is clear that he must have been an initiate of the Greater Mysteries: but upon his conversion he

appears to have conceived the greatest horror of them, both as regards associations and teachings. In the preface to his treatise, he affirms that the secret finally imparted was "the consummation of wickednesses"; that it was only through silence and the concealment of their Mysteries that the initiated had avoided the charge of atheism; and, further, that if any person had once submitted to the purgation necessary before the secret could be communicated, there was little need to secure his silence by oath; since the shame and monstrosity of the act itself would be sufficient to close his mouth for ever.

Such, then, are some of the reasons which forbid us to rejoice at the prospect of a restoration of the Mysteries. Moreover, we cannot but observe a sinister omen. Just as the initiates were the avowed enemies and persecutors of the early Church, so a great number of Theosophical utterances are already breathing a terrible spirit of hatred against pure Christianity, which they sometimes term "Paulism," and delight to charge with all the sins of Pagan and infidel Christendom.*

Turning now to the doctrines presented to us, we find that we are required to accept a system subversive of all our hopes, a cold inexorable fatalism, which knows no God of Mercy, no Son of His love; but demands that every sin and stain be burnt out of us by ages of pain and trouble, by a succession of hundreds of earth-

* See extract from "Isis Unveiled" on p. 402. Kenealy, in his "Commentary on the Apocalypse," pp. 655-6, makes the Beast of Rev. xiii. represent the British Empire, and remarks;—"The Dragon is said to have given it dominion, because the Dragon represents Atheism, or the denial of God, which Paulism is, and England has done more to extend the dominion of this baneful heresy than any other land. The Bible Society distributes

lives ; many of them spent in the most extreme misery, in the worst of circumstances ; some of them in one sex, some in the other. But how can we be assured of the truth of this astounding theory ? That, Theosophists say, is just our strong point. Christianity is the offspring of blind faith, whereas Theosophy is founded upon personal experience, and, therefore, upon true knowledge. We fail to see this. Their own theories teach that none but adepts can gain an insight into realities—Plato's *τὰ ὄντα*—and how many Theosophists profess to have acquired the faculty of Intuition ? According to all the authorities we have consulted, *not a single person who is accessible !* Even the writers of "The Perfect Way" must have obtained their information through the intuitional memory of some other beings, since they do not profess to be the authors of their book. Indeed, so far as we are aware, the only adepts specifically mentioned are the members of the invisible Asiatic Brotherhood, to which reference has already been made. And yet, as regards evidence, all other Theosophists must simply believe the adept ; so that the faith required of them is as absolute as that of the Christian. But it is faith in those who come in their own name, and project their influence out of mystery and darkness, in place of faith in Him Who came in His Father's name, Who openly went about doing good and healing the people, and of Whose deeds and sufferings His apostle was not afraid to say boldly

millions of our corrupted Scriptures yearly." In his "Book of Enoch," the same writer remarks of Paul ;—"I do not wonder that Swedenborg, who had studied his works for over forty years, thought he saw him in Hell 'connected with one of the worst of devils' ; I do not feel surprised that he speaks of him as 'a nefarious character' " (p. vii.).

in the presence of both Roman and Jewish rulers of the land ;—“ This thing was not done in a corner.”

Theosophy, again, teaches the existence of a feminine element in the Deity. So did the ancient Pagan religions : but it is one of the great distinctions between these and the Bible that the latter rigidly excludes such an idea. Its Trinity is fully unfolded in the New Testament, as Father Son and Spirit ; so that the only Person Who could represent the Mother would be the Holy Spirit. And, true to its Pagan origin, the Roman Church seizes upon this apparent opening, and elevates to the Godhead her who was never more than blessed *among* women.

(The conception of a feminine person of the Trinity is altogether Pagan, and is directly contradicted by Scripture.

But, on turning to the New Testament, we find that, whereas the Greek expression for the Spirit, τὸ πνεῦμα, is neuter, yet whenever, to emphasize His personality, the gender of a connected pronoun is changed, the pronoun becomes masculine.*

Again ; the adjective παράκλητος is sometimes used substantively, and applied to the Holy Spirit as the Comforter : in such a case it is invariably found in the masculine gender, although, grammatically, it might just as well have been made feminine.†

The significance of these facts is unmistakable ; but the Divine revelation seems to go still further. In the third Gospel we find the following momentous passage ; —“ The children of this age marry, and are given in marriage : but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that age, and the resurrection out of the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage : *for neither can they*

* John xvi. 13, 14.

† John xiv. 16, 26 ; xv. 26 ; xvi. 7.

die any more: for they are equal to the angels; and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.* It is somewhat strange that the English Authorised Version leaves out the "for," or "because," of the clause in italics, thereby destroying the sense. Yet this word is found in all the best MSS., the only one of any importance—so far as we are aware—which omits it being the Codex Wolffii B.† Restoring, then, the rejected conjunction—which our Revisers also have been careful to do—we educe the meaning, that those who are raised to an equality with the angels do not marry, because, being no longer subject to death, they have no further need of that succession and renewal which marriage is appointed to supply.

And adding this testimony to that which is revealed to us respecting the Trinity, we may fairly infer that sex exists only in those orders of beings whose numbers are liable to diminution by death. But the Pagan conception of a Deity always subjects him more or less to human conditions, and frequently, as we may learn from the disgraceful lives of the Classic gods, to human failings also.

The doctrine that woman is the true head of creation, and that her present subordination to man is abnormal, a sign of the Fall and the cause of all misery, is a complete reversal of Biblical revelation, and helps to form a group of such reversals on which we shall presently

The doctrine that the woman is the head of the man.

* Luke xx. 34-36.

† Usually known as Codex H., and dating from the ninth century, or later.

‡ From this we may see how emphatically the New Testament discountenances the prevalent and monstrous doctrine that the angels of God are Hermaphrodites. Into what sanctuary will

Male & female = 1 - 2012

have something to remark. Of the difficulty in the second chapter of Genesis the writers of "The Perfect Way" make short work: they simply change "a help meet for him" into "a ruler for him," without condescending to offer reason or precedent for their arbitrary translation. Nor—if they be allowed to give whatever meaning pleases them to that word—do they explain how it comes to pass that the subjection of the woman is consistently taught throughout the Bible; that she is exhorted to obey, and not to rule, her husband; and is admonished that the woman was made for the man, and not the man for the woman.

The so-called atonement is, of course, effected without the help of the Lord Jesus, Who becomes lost amid a crowd of "Christs," and is no longer needed as a Saviour by those who believe that they can both overcome sin, and exalt themselves to be as God, by their own unaided strength. Nor is this atonement described as a reconciliation to His Father, but as "the unification" of soul and spirit within the man. Indeed, the Personal God, if He be in any sense recognised by Theosophists, is merely mentioned to satisfy the scruples of the prejudiced, and has no real part in the great drama of transmigrations. We are reminded of Stuart Mill's assurance to his disciples that he was far from objecting to the idea of a Supreme Being, and only (!) required them to admit that, if there were a God, He never interfered with the ordinary course of things. It is presumptuous mortals not dare to intrude? The Countess of Caithness pushes the idea so far that she explains the "Immaculate Conception" by it, affirming that our Lord's mother came into the world in angelic nature. This knowledge she declares to have been given to her by inspiration!

The doctrine of atonement, or the unification of soul and spirit.

clear, therefore, that Theosophy will offer no opposition to Antichrist's predicted denial of the Father and the Son.

Indeed, all its teachings are but too manifestly directed to the same point. As we have already seen, it would have us believe that our Lord's life in the Gospels,* though there may be some foundation for it in history, is mainly intended to represent the upward struggles of a typical man, until he at length attains to Nirvâna. And it adds that the principal events of that life are mere transcriptions into a history, or story, of the acts of the Mysteries, the object of which was "to symbolize the several acts in the Drama of Regeneration as occurring in the interior and secret recesses of man's being."†

As we before remarked, nothing can, of course, be known in regard to the Mysteries save that which the initiated may think proper to disclose: but if these acts really did correspond to the principal events in our Lord's life, we see little reason for surprise. Believing, as we do, that much of primal wisdom was communicated by fallen angels, and that those angels—even if we assume that they had no other sources of information—would, with their penetrating vision and collateral knowledge, easily decipher the plans of God from His prophecies, we cannot wonder if they used what they so discovered for their own purposes. And what more subtle scheme could they have devised than that of

* "Their object is, not to give an historical account of the physical life of any man whatever, but to exhibit the spiritual possibilities of humanity at large, as illustrated in a particular and typical example" ("The Perfect Way," p. 230).

† *Ibid.*, p. 238.

making the very utterances of the Almighty the basis of their teaching, in order that, by confusing the minds of men, they might induce them to reject the Son of God?

Accordingly, just as the Roman king caused eleven shields to be made exactly similar to that which fell from heaven, in order that no one might be able to discover upon which of the twelve the fate of the Imperial City depended; so the upholders of the Mysteries speak of eleven other Messiahs besides the Lord Jesus, and affirm that they were from the first appointed to appear at intervals, one in each cyclic period termed a *Naros*, which includes six hundred years. Into the lives of many of these false Christs they have contrived to interweave stories similar to the facts of the Lord's life, especially in regard to the virgin mother, mentioned, as we have already seen, in the first of prophecies. Eleven of these "Messengers" have already appeared, and, according to Kenealy, their names are—Adam, Enoch, Fohi, Brigu, Zoroaster, Thoth, Moses, Lao-Tseu, Jesus, Mohammed, and Chenzig-Khan.

These "Messengers" for the most part affected particular nations only, and, owing to corruption and the ignorance of those who followed them, their teachings often seem contradictory. But it "would appear" "that the Twelfth Messenger's proper mission is to harmonize into one the perverted teachings of the Mighty Ones who have preceded him."* And in this way he will succeed in establishing "an Universal Religion which shall recognise the Messiahs of all nations."†

* Kenealy's "Comm. on the Apoc.," p. 685.

† *Ibid.*, p. 684.

Again ; of the "Messengers" which have already appeared, Moses Mohammed and Chenzig-Khan were Cabiri, that is, Avengers, or Destroyers ; while the remaining eight were properly Messiahs, or Peace-bringers. But the Twelfth is to unite the two offices in himself. We do not doubt it : he will, as Daniel predicts, first destroy "the mighty and the holy people,"* and "cast down the truth to the ground" ; † and then all the world will wonder after him, and worship him, and say, "Who is like unto the Beast ? Who is able to make war with him ?" ‡ For in this expected Twelfth Messenger we recognise the Antichrist, the Lawless One, and the Beast, of the Bible, the Parasu-Rama of the Hindus, and the Mahdi of the Mahometans, to whom power shall be given over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, and who will succeed in uniting East and West in a blasphemous worship of himself, until heaven cleaves asunder, with lightning flash, and reveals the awful majesty of the Everlasting God.

But Theosophists give one other particular applying to the expected Twelfth Messenger which has a special interest for those who study the prophetic warnings of the Lord Jesus. It is contained in the following extract from "The Perfect Way."

* The man who seeks to be a Hierarch must not dwell in cities. He may begin his initiation in a city, but he cannot complete it there. For he must not breathe dead and burnt air—air, that is, the vitality of which is quenched. He must be a wanderer, a dweller in the plain, and the garden, and the mountains. He must commune with the starry heavens, and maintain direct

* Dan. viii. 24.

† Dan. viii. 12.

‡ Rev. xiii. 3-4.

contact with the great electric currents of living air, and with the unpaved grass and earth of the planet, going bare-foot, and oft bathing his feet. It is *in unfrequented places*, in lands such as are mystically called the "East," where the abominations of "Babylon" are unknown, and where the magnetic chain between earth and heaven is strong, that the man who seeks Power, and who would achieve the "Great Work," must accomplish his initiation.*

Even so. Those were, then, no vague and speculative words to which He, for Whose return we are looking, gave utterance, when He said ;—"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert ; go not forth : Behold, He is in the secret chambers ; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the East and shineth even unto the West ; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."†

There remains one doctrine of Theosophy, for which we have not hitherto found place, but Theosophical doctrines concerning the Devil and Satan. doc- the which must be mentioned before we close this chapter. We have considered the subtleties whereby, Christ being done away, the hopes of the world are turned toward the coming Antichrist : it will be well to know what Theosophists have to say respecting the Prince of Darkness himself.

"There is," we are told, "no personal Devil. That which, mystically, is called the Devil, is the negation

* "The Perfect Way," pp. 229-30.

† Matt. xxiv. 24-27.

and opposite of God. And whereas God is I AM, or positive Being, the Devil is NOT.* But "the Devil is not to be confounded with 'Satan,' though they are sometimes spoken of in Scripture as if they were identical. In such cases, however, Scripture represents but the popular belief. The truth concerning Satan belongs to those greater mysteries which have always been reserved from general cognition. The ancient rule in this respect is still in force."†

Yes: but it is not likely always to remain so: the education of the world is rapidly progressing, and men will soon be ready to receive the great secret, which will probably be found to have some connection with the subject of the note on the fortieth page of this book.

There is little doubt that the culmination of the Mysteries was the worship of Satan himself: many facts point to this, and among them we may mention the system of the Gnostics, with whom the Demiurge, said to be the Creator of the present world and the inspirer of the Bible, is an inferior deity, subject to another in the far distant background. It would appear, then, that from remote ages, probably from the time when the Nephilim were upon earth, there has existed a league with the Prince of Darkness, a Society of men consciously on the side of Satan, and against the Most High. And when the feelings of reverence and godliness still retained by the human race have been sufficiently submerged by the flood of demon-influence which is now being poured upon us from the Air, the world will be invited to join the league, to

* "The Perfect Way," p. 69.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 70-1.

reject God and His Anointed, and to worship Anti-christ and that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, who will give him his power.

One of the great secrets of lawlessness has already been offered to and accepted by mankind : the spells by which spirits may be summoned from the unseen are now known to all ; and those unearthly forms, which in past times were projected from the void only in the labyrinths caverns and subterranean chambers of the initiated, are now manifesting themselves in many a private drawing-room and parlour. Men have become enamoured of demons, and ere long will receive the Prince of the Demons as their God.

But then the red dawning of the Day of Wrath will begin to appear, and the Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth.

BUDDHISM.

WE have seen that the rise of Spiritualism, which is a return to the demon-intercourse and wonder-working of ancient times, soon resulted in a revival of Occultism, or the Pagan philosophy. These systems, therefore, though they may be at issue upon one or two unimportant points, have no real antagonism. They are but different aspects of the same faith, and will doubtless continue to exist side by side, just as they did in the old Heathen world—Theosophy becoming the creed of the educated and intellectual, while Spiritualism influences the masses of mankind.

But Theosophy identifies its teachings with those of the Mysteries, and declares that it is the system "which all the great religions of the world have, under various guises and with varying degrees of success, striven to express." Surely, then, the motive which impels the Prince of the Air to revive such a system in countries which have for three hundred years professed the name of the Lord Jesus, is sufficiently obvious. The hour of his brief triumph is at hand: he is beginning to draw men into confederation by those teachings of Nephilim which were successful in Antediluvian

times and at Babel : he is organizing his forces with the intention of raising again the standard of universal rebellion against God and against His Christ. He will, therefore, commence in the very heart of Christendom that process which shall knit together the great religious bodies ; so as, by their combined efforts, to overwhelm and destroy the one irreconcilable community, the Church of the Lord Jesus. Accordingly, we see both Spiritualists and Theosophists, and even Agnostics, stretching out the right hand to Buddhism,* and procuring for it so much favour in our own country that we must not conclude without a few remarks upon its origin and doctrine.

But, in the first place, the close connection subsisting between England and the East suggests that Buddhism may have had something to do with the propagation of its Western form, Theosophy.† For many years Anglo-Indians, not strongly attached to the Christian faith, have been wont, upon their return home, to express great admiration for the purity and self-denial of

* And if they offer the right hand to Buddhism, the left is at the same time extended towards Islam, as we may see in the extract on p. 417. The following words, from the preface to E. Arnold's " Pearls of the Faith," will also illustrate a widely-spread feeling on this point.

" Thereby that marvellous and gifted Teacher—Mahomet—created a vast empire of new belief and new civilization, and prepared a sixth part of humanity for the developments and reconciliations which later times will bring. For Islam must be conciliated ; it cannot be thrust scornfully aside or rooted out. It shares the task of the education of the world with its sister religions, and it will contribute its eventual portion to

' that far-off divine event,

Towards which the whole creation moves.' "

† Had Theosophy appeared only in England, we might have been inclined to regard its origin as exclusively Eastern. But its prevalence on the Continent seems to countenance Madame

Buddhism. And of late a considerable impulse has been given to the study of its sacred literature, and some surprise has been excited by the discovery that its grosser forms are confined to the more uneducated classes, while its esoteric teachings are, at least, equal to the philosophies of the West. Its plan of salvation, again, does not, like Christianity, strike at the root of mortal pride; and its gradual deification of the human race is gratifying to those who will own no higher power than man.

In 1879 the interest already awakened in it was widely extended by the appearance of Arnold's "Light of Asia." Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia." This exquisitely beautiful poem relates the story of Sakya Muni, and describes his "gentle and far reaching doctrines," in so attractive a manner that it passed rapidly through edition after edition, and has done more than any other work to popularise Buddhism in England and America. But its levelling tendency, as regards the Christian religion, may be seen in the following extract from an American review.

"Surely it is by such messages as this poem bears that the Christians who believe too narrowly, and the sceptics who believe not at all, learn the truth of what our own Lowell sang;—

God sends His teachers into every age and clime
With revelations suited to their growth."

But alas! the great religion of Buddha is but a Blavatski's hints of Secret Brotherhoods in various parts of Europe, and of adepts, who, preserving a strict incognito as to what they really were, have attracted attention as *nobles étrangers* in Paris and elsewhere, and to whose presence in the past she attributes the great French Revolution ("Isis Unveiled," vol. ii., pp. 402-3).

slightly altered form of that rebellious creed which men probably adopted before they were scattered from Babel. It is directly opposed to Divine revelation, because it teaches that sin is done away by personal suffering, and not by the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God ; and, beneath all its pretended humility, it fosters human pride by the Satanic promise, "Ye shall be as God."

In 1881 a significant event occurred. Mr. Rhys Davids, while delivering the Hibbert Lectures, announced that a society had been formed for the purpose of publishing trustworthy texts of the early Buddhist literature. This society, according to its report issued in 1823, has met with a success far surpassing the expectations of its promoters. The interest excited was so great that it has been joined by many scholars and representatives of public institutions in England, on the Continent, and in the United States. Besides which, more than seventy leading members of the Buddhist Order in Ceylon have enrolled themselves in its ranks, and the subscription list includes £200 from the King of Siam, and £20 from H.R.H. Krom Mun Devavansa Varoprakar.

But a great flood of Eastern literature and philosophy, in a more popular form, is pouring into England from other quarters : nor are the humbler modes of propagation neglected ; for we have before us now the second edition of an elegantly printed booklet, sold for three-pence, which undertakes to prove the superiority of Buddha to Christ. Its prefatory remarks are summed up in the words ;—"Buddhism is to Christianity as is a palace of light to a fetid dungeon." The result of these efforts is already beginning to appear in our

literature, and their influence is effecting a great change in public sentiment. "It is no very uncommon thing," says Mr. Massey, "to meet in society men who declare themselves, 'if anything,' Buddhists."

Meanwhile, many ideas and theories in accord with the spirit of Buddhism, and, therefore, Contemporaneous movements and opinions favourable to Buddhism. its influence, are just now prevalent; some of them, perhaps, owe their origin to it. "The learned," says a Buddhist, "have puzzled themselves stupidly over Buddhism; while the most ignorant in Sweden, at the Don, and in America, construct their happiness with it, and, in fact, its thoughts are stealing unseen through the whole West. We see its effects in the great leading lines of Western thought; in Broad-churchism, Universalism, Comtism, Secularism, and Quietism."*

Certainly the revival of Mysticism, of which we get many proofs through the press and a few from the pulpit, is opportune for its progress: and the same may be said of the popular evolutionary philosophy. Were the latter kept within its proper limits, and applied only to the changes which have really taken place, through variations in climate circumstances food and other causes, and which have doubtless multiplied species during the last six thousand years, the study would be interesting and harmless. But when, in defiance of Scripture and Geology, attempts are made to carry it further, and to prove that the six earth-tribes, which God created to form the present world,† were not at first distinct types, but were evolved from each other;

* "Christ and Buddha Contrasted," pp. 92-3.

† See p. 174.

such teaching is not merely false in itself, but also prepares the way for the Buddhist dogma of transmigration, and leads very decidedly in the direction of virtual Atheism.

Again ; the temperance-crusade, which is now being carried on with such ardour, is doubtless a necessity in consequence of the abuse of stimulants. But, while very many of those who take part in it are earnest Christians, there are others whose enthusiasm unconsciously exalts abstinence to the place of religion. These may presently notice that Christ has never prohibited the use of wine, but left it among the things that are lawful, though, of course, circumstances may render them inexpedient, or even dangerous ; whereas Buddha, on the other hand, has forbidden it altogether.*

Lastly ; most praiseworthy efforts have been for some years made to mitigate the sufferings of animals. But the writer has lately seen letters from one or two Christians engaged in the anti-vivisection movement, complaining that their society is being swamped, and their periodicals occupied, by Theosophists who have taken up the work on Buddhist principles, because they believe in transmigration. Other instances might be cited : but from these it will be evident that many causes are just now conducing to a favourable reception of Buddhism, and to the removal of prejudices which might have stood in the way of its recognition as one of the great and beneficial religions of the world.

* The following verse is taken from the "Buddhist Beatitudes," as given by Mr. Rhys Davids in his "Buddhism."

"To abhor, and cease from sin,
Abstinence from strong drink,
Not to be weary in well doing,
These are the greatest blessing."

Since, then, it appears to be rising into such unexpected prominence, it may be well to give a slight sketch of its origin.

When the rebellious confederacy of the sons of Noah was broken up by the confusion of ^{Migration of Aryan tribes to Hindustan.} tongues, it would seem that the ancestors of the Aryan nations left the plains of Shinar in a body, and moved towards the East. They appear to have spoken a common language, and doubtless carried with them the religion and philosophy which had, perhaps, been handed down from antediluvian times by Ham, or revealed by the Nephilim themselves subsequently to the flood.* Probably they journeyed on through Asia until they reached Bactria, and at the time of their sojourn in that country seem—so far as we can discover from an examination of the roots which are common to all Aryan languages—to have made considerable advance in civilization. Then, whether from increasing numbers or other causes, they appear to have separated into several tribes, some of which wandered Westward from place to place, until they settled in Europe, and eventually became known as Greeks, Romans, Teutons, and Slavs: others moved to the table-land of Iran: a third multitude swarmed into the valley of the Indus, and made their home amid the Seven Rivers.† Upon these last, however, fresh tribes kept pressing from behind; so that at length they began to pass the boundaries of the Panjab, and to advance, driving the Dravidians and Kolarians before them, into the Land

* In Gen. vi. 4—see pp. 209-10—they are said to have dwelt upon earth after the flood as well as before it.

† The date of this immigration is uncertain: probably it took place about 2000 B.C.

of the Ganges, where they founded the great kingdom of Magadha.

Then followed a season of comparative peace, during which the new inhabitants settled, and Formation of the castes, and ultimate supremacy of the Brahmans. began to apply themselves to quiet pursuits. By force of circumstances, they soon fell apart into three distinct classes, or castes. The military nobility, or Kshatriyas, were, at the close of the long war, naturally regarded as first in rank: the Brahmans, or minstrels and priests, came next. And, lastly, there were the farmers and peasants, who tilled the soil, and did not go out to war except in times of emergency: these were called Vaisyas,* and formed the third caste. But in addition to the Aryan immigrants themselves, there was also a population of Turanians, suffered to live among their conquerors as inferiors and slaves: these, under the name of Sudras, made up a fourth caste.†

For some centuries the Kshatriyas retained their supremacy: but at length, by craft and compromise, the Brahmans succeeded in procuring the recognition of themselves as the first order, and from that time took every possible precaution to strengthen and perpetuate the institution of caste. Hence the rigid laws which forbade intermarriage, and inexorably confined every man to the caste in which he was born: while, as a check upon the discontent which naturally resulted, the

* The word Vaisya originally meant a tribesman, or comrade, and was applied to all Aryans to distinguish them, as the ruling people, from the subject aborigines. In course of time, however, it became the special name of the third caste.

† This fourth caste was, however, absolutely excluded in all matters of religion, and was recognised neither in the Avesta, or law of East Iran, nor in that of the Ganges.

Brahmans found a powerful aid in the doctrine of transmigration.* They affirmed that it was necessary for every being, in working his way to perfection, to pass successively through all the castes; so that in subsequent lives an exemplary Sudra would become a Vaisya, a Vaisya a Kshatriya, and so on.

The sacred books of these people were the four Vedas
The Vedas. —the Rig-veda, the Yajur-veda, the Sama-veda, and the Atharva-veda, the contents of which prove the Brahman religion to be the most comprehensive ever instituted. Each of them consists of three parts, the Mantras, the Brahmanas, and the Upanishads, of which the Mantras are the oldest. These are hymns of prayer and praise, some of the more ancient, without doubt, the common property of the whole Aryan family, chanted, it may be, in remote ages by our own ancestors;

* Spiritualists apprehend that the forces which they are helping to set in motion will render a similar check again necessary, if the world is to be preserved from anarchy. And that the minds of some of them are, consequently, turning towards Buddhism the following remarkable passage will show.

“The spectacle of our sickly faiths drooping and perishing in a hostile intellectual environment is the most dismal that a mind of any sincerity can contemplate. We seem to be approaching a time when the ‘organized hypocrisy’ of our churches will be as crying a scandal to human intelligence as monasticism had become to human morality three-and-a-half centuries ago. And when it comes, it will be a period of upheaval in more than one direction. The positive unbelief, which is visibly extending from the intellectual aristocracy to the multitude, will almost certainly react with destructive force upon political and social arrangements. It cannot but suggest the redress of inequalities in this world to those who have lost the shadowy hope of compensation in the next. Many a thoughtful mind must have dwelt with anxiety on this prospect, without seeing from what quarter the reconstruction of religious faith upon a permanent basis could be expected. Can it be that to ‘the bloodless and innocent record of Buddhism’ will be added this claim upon human gratitude and love?” (C. C. Massey, in *Light*, June 16th, 1883.)

while others were subsequently added. If recited, or sung, in due form, they were supposed to exercise a magic power which not even the gods could resist, and to this day they are used as spells, either for imprecation, or for the purpose of averting the influence of evil spirits. In verse, which sometimes rises to a lofty strain, they inculcate a worship of the powers of nature, and testify to a fear of malignant demons exactly similar to that which is expressed in the Chaldean magical spells. Their subjects are various. "The Vedas," says Lillie, "contain the root-idea of most of the dogmas and religious rites of the world." They reveal a Trinity in unity, and from the initials of one set of its names—Aditi, Varuna, Mitra—it is probable that the mystic word *Aum*, or, as it is sometimes written, *Om*, was formed.

Most of the Mantras seem to have been in use while the Aryans still tarried in the valley of the Indus ; but the Brahmanas are of a later date. They mark very decidedly the change from the religion of the prophet, or Rishi, to that of the priest, and expound the sacrificial system and ritualism of the Brahmins, developed after the immigration into the Land of the Ganges.

Lastly ; the Upanishads—called the *Jnâna Kânda*, or Department of Knowledge—contain the philosophy of Brahmanism, and begin to date, apparently, only from the sixth century before Christ. These writings work out the doctrine ;—"There is but one Being, no second." "That is," in the words of Monier Williams, "nothing really exists but the one Universal Spirit, and whatever appears to exist independently is identical with that Spirit." The result of the controversies arising from these Pantheistic treatises was Buddhism :

unless we should rather say that both the Upanishads and Buddhism were results of that wave of thought which was at the time passing over the civilized world. For Buddha in Hindustan was not the only great teacher of his age. In the same epoch Zoroaster would seem to have been communicating his philosophy to the Persians; while Pythagoras was instructing men in Greece, and Confucius in China.

In the beginning of the sixth century, then, the Brahmanism superseded by Buddhism. men were at the height of their power, and men were writhing beneath the tyranny of caste, and were harassed by the necessity of endless expiatory sacrifices and purifications, a neglect of which would bring danger to liberty and present life, besides involving terrific punishments in the many hells of which their priests taught, and in future incarnations. But thoughtful minds began to reflect as they looked around on the misery of the world, and to inquire whether the doctrines which produced such bitter fruits could possibly be true: a leader was needed to inaugurate a new order of things: he appeared in the person of Buddha: caste, sacrifice, ritual, and priestcraft, were rapidly undermined and swept away: and Buddhism rose to the supremacy in Hindustan, and maintained its position for many long centuries, until at length, having become corrupted, it gradually yielded to that compound of itself with Brahmanism which may be termed Hinduism.

But its triumphs were by no means confined to Hindustan: its power was acknowledged from the Volga to the Japanese islands. It entered Africa and penetrated to Alexandria: the secret societies of the Therapeutæ and

Propagation of Buddhism beyond the limits of Hindustan.

the Essenes drew their inspiration from it: the Gnostics were its children.* Nay, recent investigations have made it probable that Buddha was once the god of Northern Europe, and that his name is philologically identical with that of Woden, from which we take our appellation of the fourth day of the week. And, finally, it appears to be demonstrated that, in the fifth century, some Chinese Buddhists succeeded in reaching America, and established their faith in that remote land, more than nine hundred years before a thought of its existence entered the mind of Columbus. Even at the present time Buddhism dominates some five hundred millions of souls, or about forty per cent. of the whole human race, and stands, without a rival, the most widely extended, and, in point of numbers, most successful religion of the world.

Those who worship majorities are already beginning to adduce the facts just stated as a proof of Buddha's superiority to Christ. But students of Scripture are not troubled by such an argument. They are well aware that the characteristic of this age, as foretold by their Lord, is;—"Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it"; and they remember His charge;—"I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." They know that His "little flock" must patiently wait until He returns to take the Kingdom: then everything will be reversed, and He

* The idea that Gnosticism was a kind of Christianity is one of the strangest figments of ecclesiastical history. It was rather, as Chiffet defines it, "the spirit of Asiatic antiquity endeavouring to usurp the empire over the human soul by insinuating itself into the Christian Church."

must needs at length have the supremacy in numbers as in all things.

We cannot, of course, find space to discuss the story of Buddha: it is probable, however, that there is very little history in it. The similarity of the legends of Buddha to the history of Christ is only superficial. As regards its alleged parallelism with

the life of Christ, we have already remarked that Satan must have known the prophecies of God respecting the latter. He must also have been aware that he was himself to play no inconsiderable part in its stupendous drama, and would, within certain limits, be permitted to arrange its temptations, whether in the wilderness, in the garden, or on the cross, according to his own plans. We have, then, no cause for surprise if, with a purpose which is now becoming too evident, he rehearsed some of the scenes beforehand.

But with all their similarity there is an inexpressible difference between the legends of Buddha and the history of Christ, and of this we will give one or two instances. In the Gospels, the circumstances of the conception are narrated with the dignity and reserve which become so transcendent a mystery. But Buddha comes down from heaven, and enters the womb of his mother in the shape of a white elephant, with a head the colour of cochineal, and with tusks of gold. Nor are these the only particulars given.

Again; the history of our Lord's birth, and of His cradle in the manger, because there was no room for Him in the inn, bears upon it the stamp of truth. Buddha's mother, on the other hand, was in the garden of Lumbini when he was born. Surrounded by sixty thousand beautiful cloud-nymphs, she proceeded towards a stately tree, which immediately bent down its branches

to salute and overshadow her. According to the Thibetan version, as soon as the infant Buddha touched the ground a large white lotus sprang up: he seated himself upon it, and cried, "I am the chief of the world: this is my last birth," in words which rolled forth with mighty sound through all the worlds. Then two serpent-kings, Nanda and Upananda, appeared in the sky, and rained down water upon the child.

We need not pursue the subject further: it will be sufficiently evident that these Eastern stories are altogether different from the Gospels. It may, however, be replied;—But they are merely legends: why not deal with the history of Buddha? Unfortunately the historical data are of the very vaguest description, and, if we leave the legends, we must give up the miraculous conception, and all the main points of the alleged parallelism with the life of Christ. It is scarcely necessary to add that no detailed prophecies of the advent of Buddha were promulgated centuries before his appearance, as in the case of Christ.

The system of Buddha may be briefly summed up as

The teaching of
Buddha. follows:—

I. There is no God, save what man can himself become.*

* Mr. Lillie has attempted to dispute this statement against the weight of authority. But one consideration seems fatal to his argument: the evolutionary system of Buddha, and "the inflexible justice of *Karma*," leave no room for the action of a Supreme Being. "The wondrously endowed representatives of occult science," says Mr. Sinnett, "never occupy themselves at all with any conception remotely resembling the God of Churches and Creeds." Buddhists are, however, able to gratify that irresistible disposition of the human mind to worship something: they can venerate their saints, those deified men,

II. The state of Nirvâna, or perfection, is reached by means of transmigrations, or a succession of earth-lives.

III. So long as a man retains any desire for earthly things he must continue to be reborn upon earth.

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IV. Therefore, the shortest way to Nirvâna is by a severe asceticism, suppression of all action, abstract meditation, and a concentration of all desire upon the extinction of earth-life.

V. Animal sacrifices, and every kind of vicarious suffering, are useless, and must be done away.

VI. All men are equal: therefore, caste must be abolished.

Such are the main points of Sakya Muni's teachings: for the present our brief commentary must be no more than this. The circumstances which led to the rise of Buddhism, as described above, and its consequent doctrines, could not but bring it into favour with the iconoclastic and levelling spirit which is now abroad. Its severe asceticism is no bar to this: since in our self-indulgent age nothing is more common than to hear men warmly supporting a theory in the abstract, without any intention of submitting to it in practice. Its, at least, virtual Atheism renders it attractive to Secularists: its mysticism and introspection allure minds disposed to

like the gods of Homer, who have attained to Nirvâna; but who, powerless to interfere in the troubles of their votaries, may only take their part in turning the slow, dreary, monotonous, inexorable, and endless Wheel of Life. "Within the limits of the solar system"—we are again quoting Mr. Sinnett—"the mortal adept knows, of his own knowledge, that all things are accounted for by law, working on matter in its diverse forms, plus the guiding and modifying influence of the highest intelligences associated with the solar system, the Dhyân Chohans—or Planetary Spirits—the perfected humanity of the last preceding *manvantara*" ("Esoteric Buddhism," pp. 176-7).

Quietism. In all essentials its doctrine is esoterically identical with that of Theosophy, upon which we have already remarked. In both systems we are undoubtedly confronted with Satan's plan of salvation, communicated from the earliest times—probably by the Nephilim—to those who could bear it, and preserved in the esoteric teachings of the Rishis, the Brahmans, and the Buddhists of the East, and in the Mysteries of the West. And the plan is, that, without God or Saviour, men must wear away their own sins, and as soon as they have done so will become gods.

But if the esoteric teaching of Buddhism coincides with Theosophy, its general practice is in entire sympathy with Spiritualism.

Connection of Buddhism and Spiritualism. Tomb-worship, relics, and images. For worship—if we may so term it—among the Buddhists is largely connected with the cultus of the dead, who are believed to have the power of conferring aid and blessings upon those who seek to them. But an addition was made to this doctrine, which has been adopted by Romanists, and is beginning to show itself in the churchyard-mediums and some other features of Spiritualism. While the spirit of a deceased person was not supposed to remain in his corpse, "there was evidently a belief that a certain animal magnetism, or some occult force, made it more easy for the disembodied spirit to return and communicate with living mortals when they were in the actual presence of his corpse. This explains much in the rites of both the Brahmans and the Buddhists, the tomb-worship, relic-worship, and image-worship."*

For the doctrine was extended to any portion of

* Lillie's "Buddha and Early Buddhism," pp. 36-7.

human remains. Hence, "in the Cingalese history of the famous tooth of Buddha, the tooth is constantly represented as acting as if the remainder of Buddha's person, though invisible, joined the tooth when great miracles were necessary."* As the natural result of such an idea, "Bengal was by-and-by covered with stately topes and columns, each supposed to contain a minute fragment of Buddha's relics." And, probably, the skulls and bones worn by the Brahman Rishis who frequented the cemeteries are to be explained in the same way.

The introduction of images, again, seems to have been an advance upon corpse and relic-worship. A likeness of the departed was supposed in some way to attract his spirit to it, and hence, "the solemn marble Buddhas, each seated on his throne, the four great Dhyâni Buddhas, the eighteen great disciples that figure in every temple in China, and the crowd of minor saints. Directly the crystal eyes are put into an image in China, the spirit of the departed is supposed to animate it." †

Mr. Lillie sums up his chapter on Buddhist demonology, from which the above extracts are taken, in the following words. "Buddhism was plainly an elaborate apparatus to nullify the action of evil spirits by the aid of good spirits operating at their highest potentiality through the instrumentality of the corpse, or a portion of the corpse, of the chief aiding spirit. The Buddhist temple, the Buddhist rites, the Buddhist liturgy, all seem based on this one idea that a whole, or portions of a dead body was necessary."

* Lillie's "Buddha and Early Buddhism," p. 38.

† *Ibid.*, p. 39.

There can be little doubt that the Buddhist tope is Affinity of Buddhism and Romanism. the original of the Roman Church, the great feature of which is its high altar containing beneath it some relic of the patron saint.* But the two religions have very many other things in common, among which we may mention the crozier, mitre, dalmatic, cope, and censer swinging on five chains; sacerdotal celibacy, worship of saints, fasts, processions, litanies, holy water, the tonsure, confession, relic-worship, the use of flowers lights and images on the altar, the sign of the cross, the worship of the Queen of Heaven, the aureole, the mystic fans of peacocks' feathers carried on either side of the Popes and Llamas on grand festivals, the orders of the ministry, and the architectural details of the churches.

But if both religions are daughters of Babylon—and who can study the slabs and cylinders in the British Museum without feeling sure that they are?—the strong family likeness is no matter for wonder. And by helping to make this obvious, and bringing Buddhism into the favourable notice of Christendom, Spiritualists have removed a great obstacle to the coming religious union of the world.

With one more remark we close this necessarily brief Buddha or Christ? and imperfect chapter. According to the statement of the Himalayan adepts, an ordinary being must pass through some eight hundred incarnations before he can complete his purification from sin, and attain to the rest of Nirvâna. During the weary ages of these existences he must struggle with blind

* Thus, if we look back to their origin, neither tope nor church is a place of worship used as a cemetery, but a cemetery utilized as a place of worship.

fate and with his own corruptions ; there is no God of love and of all comfort to Whom he can look and pray : he must either, by his own painful and unaided exertions, raise himself to the gods, or retrograde, in ever increasing misery and vileness, until he drops unpitied into the bottomless abyss of annihilation.

“ Higher than Indra’s ye may lift your lot,
 And sink it lower than the worm or gnat ;
 The end of many myriad lives is this,
 The end of myriads that.

“ Only, while turns that wheel invisible,
 No pause, no peace, no staying place can be ;
 Who mounts will fall, who falls may mount ; the spokes
 Go round unceasingly.”

It is said that the incarnations of one soul, together with the intervening periods spent in Devachan or Avitchi—Paradise or Purgatory—would occupy some seventy millions of years ! There is a certain wisdom in this calculation leading us to suspect that it comes from a source wiser, at least, than any which is merely human. It exhibits some appreciation of the frightful nature of sin, and of the gigantic task set before the man who would fain be his own Saviour.

With what thankfulness should we turn to the gracious Lord Whose blood speaks better things to us ; Who, looking on the sin-stricken and penitent face of the paralytic, said, “ Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins are forgiven,” and in a moment effected that work for which Buddha demands ages ; Who beholding with pitying gaze the fast-falling tears of the contrite woman at His feet, took the burden of her guilt upon Himself, and bade her depart in peace.

No melancholy, unbefriended, and almost endless

way lies before His disciples. Nay, He Himself is with them alway, even unto the end: He guides His sheep through the wilderness of life, gently leading those that are with young, and carrying the lambs in His bosom. He has not only borne the sins of His people, but will also sanctify them wholly, spirit soul and body, and present them faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy, by that mighty working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!

SIGNS OF THE END.

WE have finished our brief survey of the strange phases of thought now affecting the Theory of Transmigration. theology and philosophy of Christendom: it only remains to group together those features of the movement which, as we compare them with the ancient predictions of Scripture, almost seem to take bodily shape before our eyes, and, like heralds, to announce the near approach of Antichrist and the close of the age.

And first the reader will have observed that Salvation without a Saviour is the characteristic doctrine of the three systems at which we have been glancing; and that this doctrine rests, solely in Theosophy and Buddhism, and to an increasing extent in Spiritualism, upon the theory of reincarnations. One would have thought such a prospect sufficiently dismal; nevertheless, it appears to find favour with many, chiefly, no doubt, because it brings with it a delusive hope of that independence which unregenerate man is ever craving. And it falls in with a common fancy, that, on rare occasions, some dim memory of a former acquaintance with persons or places has been known to flash across

the mind — an idea which D. G. Rossetti thus expresses ;—

“ I have been here before,
 But when, or how, I cannot tell :
 I know the grass beyond the door,
 The sweet keen smell,
 The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

“ You have been mine before—
 How long I may not know :
 But just when at that swallow’s soar
 Your neck turned so,
 Some veil did fall—I knew it all of yore.

“ Then, now—perchance again !
 O round mine eyes your tresses shake !
 Shall we not lie as we have lain
 Thus for love’s sake,
 And sleep and wake, yet never break the chain ? ”

These verses may have been suggested by the teaching of Buddha respecting himself and his wife Yasôdara ; at least they are an exact transcript of it. In Wordsworth’s *Intimations of Immortality*, again, we find the following lines ;—

“ Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
 The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar.”

And even Mrs. Hemans, in dealing with “ the spirit’s mysteries,” says ;—

“ The power that dwelleth in sweet sounds to waken
 Vague yearnings, like the sailor’s for the shore,
 And dim remembrances, whose hue seems taken
 From some bright former state, our own no more ;
 Is not all this a mystery ? Who shall say
 Whence are those thoughts, and whither tends their way ? ”

Undoubtedly such imaginings strike a responsive chord in human hearts, and discourse sweetly and soothingly of a thought congenial—as its universality

shows—to human minds. But we may not mould the articles of our faith from poetic musings, which have ever been the mightiest agencies for the spread of delusion. To receive ideas as truths because they come in ravishing form, and we are moved by every impulse of our fallen nature to love them, is indeed to surrender ourselves to the power of Maya. It is nothing less than, like the ostrich, to hide our head in the sand, content to revel in fond dreams for a moment, while the Rider on the pale horse scours the plain towards us, brandishing his glittering dart, and bringing Hades and Eternity in his train. For of things beyond our natural ken we can understand only what is revealed : and if we must cross the fixed boundary into forbidden lands, our expedition will simply procure for us teachings of demons, having no connection with truth, but only representing the views which the Powers of Evil are anxious to disseminate at the time.

But, to return to our immediate subject, the growing popularity of the doctrine of transmigration in so-called Christian countries is an unmistakable preparation for the end. For this theory not only denies the Son, in that it does not include His atoning sacrifice, but also virtually ignores the Father, Who is by no means indispensable to its cheerless scheme.*

The Transmigration theory is essentially Antichristian.

* We have noticed the Atheism of Buddhism : it might seem as though Hinduism were setting in the opposite direction to this doctrine of Antichrist. But the contrary is really the case : both religions appear to be much the same esoterically. “The bloodthirsty idols and gluttonous gods” of Hinduism are for the masses : the initiated assign them all to the domain of Maya, or Illusion. The formal creeds are but gross and temporary bodies, through which those who have the eye of knowledge see the real spirit ; and he who has learned to do this is not troubled with

Thus the great threefold movement which is spreading among us is beginning to develop the spirit which, according to the plain statement of the Apostle John,* will culminate in Antichrist.

Yet again ; while in the case of professing Christians it is destroying the foundations of the faith, it is also raising the world in insurrection against God, as will appear from the subjoined considerations.

The systems described above are provoking judgment by defying the primal laws given to the World before the election of Israel and the Church.

In the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse there is a grand description of the Almighty seated upon His throne of judgment. The crisis, as discovered by the context and other prophecies, is important : for the Church has just been removed from earth, because the time to restore the kingdom to Israel has come.† But, since that kingdom was formerly transferred to the nations in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, its surrender cannot be demanded without just cause : for which reason the Lord would seem to have come down in awful majesty, that He may hold His great controversy with the Gentiles, and, after judging their failure, close the times of their dominion.

The accessories of the throne are significant, and point to the Noachian covenant : for the rainbow encircles it, and at its base sit the Cherubim, the repre-

reference to his belief in the popular gods. On the other hand, to satisfy the cravings of the ignorant, Buddhists have been forced to invent deities, especially the Queen of Heaven, the Lily Lady, the Mother of Buddha, Marichi, or our Lady, by each of which titles this goddess is known in China. All false religions alike seem to have two sides—for the multitude, superstition ; for the intellectual, Pantheism. Hence it will, perhaps, be no very difficult task for a master-mind to fuse them into one.

* 1 John ii. 22.

† See "The Great Prophecies."

sentatives of those earth-tribes to which the promises were made. But this covenant was God's final call to the world to arrange its government in accordance with Divine principles—a call which, as the rebellion of Babel and the history of the Cities of the Plain too evidently testify, was utterly disregarded. Then the plans of the Almighty were changed, and, restricting His more direct dealings, for a time, within narrower limits, He made two successive elections from the great masses of mankind. First His choice fell upon the children of Abraham, whom He placed under a special covenant: subsequently the Church was separated off, from Jew as well as Gentile, by peculiar laws, and by privileges and promises available only to such as should pass within her pale.

But the remainder of men, who are neither Israelites by natural nor members of Christ by spiritual birth, cannot, at least, avoid their responsibility to obey laws which were imposed without distinction upon the whole race of Adam, which have never been repealed, and the violation of which will, consequently, be visited with punishment at the hand of the Creator, the Lord God Almighty. Indeed, it is manifestly to judge the world for its disobedience to these laws that God sits upon the rainbow-encircled throne.

Now it is a grave fact that the advocates of modern thought array themselves against every principle of these early revelations of the Divine will. In proof of this the readers of our previous chapters will need little more than a bare enumeration of what we may call the cosmic or universal laws, which are as follows:—

I. The law of the Sabbath.* It was to the world

* Gen. ii. 3

that God declared the Seventh Day sanctified, not to the Israelites : therefore, the world is responsible. To the Israelites God merely said, "*Remember* the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,"* thus admonishing them not on their part to neglect the long established and universal ordinance.

II. The headship of the man over the woman.† This is not simply denied ; attempts are actually being made to reverse it.

III. The institution of marriage, and its indissolubility during life on the ground that the man and woman become one flesh.‡ The varied antagonism to this law, resulting in part from the false teaching that the really married are one spirit rather than one flesh, has been sufficiently discussed.

IV. The law of substitution, that life must atone for life, and that without shedding of blood there is no remission, as taught in type by animal sacrifices.§ Latter-day philosophers affect the utmost horror of such a salvation, and will have none of Christ.

V. The command to use the flesh of animals as food. || This is rejected by many Spiritualists, and by all Theosophists and Buddhists.

VI. The decree that "whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed."¶ This is opposed on the ground of its inhumanity (!), and because by the execution of a murderer "you cut him off debased, degraded, sensual, ignorant, mad with rage and hate, thirsting for vengeance on his fellows : you remove

* Exod. xx. 8.

† Gen. ii. 18-23 ; iii. 16 ; 1 Tim. ii. 11-14.

‡ Gen. ii. 24 : Matt. xix. 4-9 ; Rom. vii. 2, 3.

§ Gen. iv. 3-5.

|| Gen. ix. 3.

¶ Gen. ix. 6.

from him the great bar on his passions, and send him into spirit-life to work out without hindrance the devilish suggestions of his inflamed passions."* In such terms are the spirits of evil daring to withstand the counsels of the living God.

VII. The direction to multiply and replenish the earth †—a mandate which implied dispersion and the forming of those nations for which, as Moses tells us, God divided out the earth, ‡ and which are to remain until the close of the Millennium. At Babel the world resisted this ordinance, and now men are renewing their efforts to the same end by maintaining that we should be humanitarians, cosmopolitans, anything but lovers of our own country. This is, perhaps, a preparation for the reign of Antichrist "over every tribe and people and tongue and nation." Cosmopolitanism will, apparently, be as necessary to his development as it was to the primal insurrection of Nimrod.

The new phases of thought are, then, obliterating all the first principles which God laid down for the human race as the basis of its mode of life, society, and government—a fact ominous of coming judgment. And from this point of view the movement may be regarded as a revolt of the world against God.

But it is also, as the reader will have observed, fulfilling to the letter the important prophecy in the First Epistle to Timothy. Men are confessedly receiving instruction from demons ; and if we glance at the published specimens of spirit-teachings, we have no difficulty in detecting the lies spoken in hypocrisy.

* "Spirit Teachings," p. 19.
 † Gen. ix. 1. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 8.

Many are teaching abstinence from flesh : the abolition of marriage, either avowed or virtual, is being unscrupulously preached. And these signs are appearing, as Paul predicted that they would, coincidentally with an apostacy, or falling away, from the great truths respecting the Godhead and incarnation of the Lord Jesus.

Again, the monstrous theory of a plurality of "Christs" has been invented, and is being taught, not, we may be sure, without a plan for its application to coming events. Already signs and wonders are being shown by prophets who will, perhaps, ere long proclaim their Messiahs; already the cry has been raised, Behold, He is in the secret chambers; and, as we have seen reasons for supposing, we may probably ere long hear rumours that He is in the wilderness.

Lastly; the characteristic features of the days of Noah are reappearing, and, above all, a free communication has been established between the spirits of the air and the human race with a view, apparently, to a sojourn once more of Nephilim upon earth. Unlawful secrets, known in past times only to those few who seem to have acted as Satan's agents in directing the course of this world, are now recklessly offered to all men. The remembrance of that appalling scene, when their brethren were hurled by omnipotent lightnings into pits of darkness, would seem to be fading from the minds of the fallen angels; and the usual course of sin, most frightful of insanities, is urging them on to the brink of the precipice from the abysmal depths of which the groans of their blasted

False Christs and false prophets.

Recurrence of the characteristics of the days of Noah. Union of the two worlds and preparation for the descent of the Nephilim.

companions ascend. Meanwhile, numbers of the puny inhabitants of earth are ready, at their bidding, to essay any deeds of madness. For not a few even of the learned and wise, unable by reason of vanity to maintain the bare conception of a God, unless His awful majesty be displayed before their eyes, have resolved, either avowedly or virtually, that there is none greater than themselves, or, at least, than their possibility.

All things seem to be prepared for the fulfilment of the solemn prediction in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, when Michael, leading the van of the host which will come with Christ to take the kingdom, shall drive the rebel High Ones down to earth. And in the following chapter we see the consequences of that marvellous event: the peoples of Satan's last refuge, of the only remaining portion of his once vast dominions, must be organised for the final struggle. And so, out of the troubled sea of anarchy and perplexity of nations, there arises, in greater majesty and power than it ever before possessed, the resuscitated empire of Rome under the immediate direction and government of the Wicked One.

But of far more intense interest to those who love the Lord Jesus, and long for His appearing, is that which is signified as taking place just previously to the expulsion of the Devil and his angels from heaven.*

For without going into details, which we have considered elsewhere,† we may mention our conclusion that the birth and rapture of the man child refer to

* Rev. xii. 1-5.

† In "The Great Prophecies" (Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton).

the completion of the mystic Christ—of which the personal Christ is the Head and His Church the body—as manifested by the sudden translation of all waiting saints, whether dead or alive, to meet their Lord in the air.

It thus appears that this long expected event will precede Satan's banishment from heaven, and, therefore, also its results, the revival of the Roman empire, and the revelation of the Man of Sin. Like Enoch, the Church of Christ will be called away before earth is for a time abandoned to the Nephilim, before the fearful woes of the end.

If, then, the fallen angels appear to be already preparing for their descent ; if the great apostacy, which will at last evolve the Lawless One, be even now spreading ; who can be sure of a day or an hour ? Who of Christ's watching people can tell, when he rises in the morning, whether he will not have left the scenes of earth before close of day ? Who, when he retires to rest, knows whether he will be awakened by the returning light, or by the summons of the Master, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God ? Are we not living in solemn times : is not the air full of warnings : does it not behove every believer to arise, gird up his loins, and trim his lamp ? Is it not the sound of the King's chariot which we hear : should not every sleeping servant rouse himself and prepare to meet the Lord with joy ?

It may be that His voice will be heard in the morning, when the sun is high and men are hurrying to their various occupations : it may be that He will call at even, when the west is crimson with the setting sun,

and the weary are seeking their homes after the toil and excitement of the day : it may be that His summons will startle the midnight air, and bring forth His own from the darkness of their chambers or their graves into the dazzling glory of His presence : it may be that at early dawn He will speak the word, and in an instant be surrounded by the myriads of His elect, countless as the dewdrops that spring from the womb of the morning and glisten in the reddening beams of the sun. " Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh." *

" Surely I come quickly " † was His last message to His widowed Church : let no man think that he has the Spirit of Christ till he can fervently respond, " Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

* Matt. xxv. 13.

† Rev. xxii. 20.

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