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Sept. 99

KARMA.

A STUDY OF THE LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

IN RELATION TO

REBIRTH OR REINCARNATION, POST-
MORTEM STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS, CYCLES,
VICARIOUS ATONEMENT, FATE, PREDESTINATION,
FREE WILL, FORGIVENESS, ANIMALS, SUICIDES, ETC.

BY

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of the Existence of the Soul," Etc.

*"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for that which a man soweth,
that shall he also reap."*—GALATIANS 6:7.

THE LOTUS PUBLISHING COMPANY,
1170 Market Street, San Francisco, Cal.

Theosophical Publishing Company, 144 Madison Ave., N. Y.

DECEMBER 25, 1896.



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Dedicated to

H.

V.

B.

BY A GRATEFUL STUDENT.



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INTRODUCTION.

IN attempting to write a short essay under the title of "Karma," the writer wishes it understood, once for all, that he is dealing solely with that truth in nature, partially grasped by modern science and philosophy, known as the law of Cause and Effect. No attempt will be made to deal with the translations, various definitions, old or new meanings, of the Sanscrit word. Just what each particular native or European Sanscritist connotes by the term, the writer does not pretend to know, nor does he care. Although acknowledging fully our original indebtedness to the Sanscrit for this admirable term, by which we were enabled to express a meaning for which no English substitute was at hand, the claim is advanced that Karma has now, by formal adoption, become an English word, and that the task of English writers is to make perfectly clear that which they understand by it, without befogging their readers with a pedantic attempt to explain its varied meanings in alien tongues.

Karma, then, throughout this treatise connotes the relation and mutual interdependence of the ideas expressed by the words "cause" and "effect." Any phenomenon in nature, or the manifested universe, into which cause and effect enter (and who can point to any phenomenon in which they do not?) is an exemplification of Karma. Attempts to limit its meaning, or application, to a single department of nature by such definitions as "the law of ethical causation," and so on, only grow out of a failure to recognize the infinite sweep of its action. In the past they have been excusable, for they were attempts to convey the superficially metaphysical distinctions of Sanscrit writers, who themselves often seem to mistake a mere aspect of Karma for its inexpressible verities. It is for English writers to restore to the term all its pristine grandeur, and this can best be

done by giving up all colloquial Sanscrit distinctions, and connoting by it only its olden, magnificent, and universal idea.

Modern science, it is true, recognizes the action of the law of cause and effect; but modern science is distinctly materialistic in the worst sense of this term, and therefore applies this recognition only to the domain of material physics. Modern philosophy, being almost wholly based upon modern science and Western (so called) religions, finds itself in a "no thoroughfare" the moment it passes beyond physics into metaphysics, because it refuses to recognize the action of this law upon mental, to say nothing of spiritual, planes. Therefore, it rushes from the Scylla of unphilosophic materialism only to fall into the Charybdis of an equally absurd Idealism. The moment that the action of the law of cause and effect, so plainly apparent upon the physical plane, is admitted also to govern those of intellect and metaphysics, the whole system of modern materialistic (Idealism is only materialism under another name), philosophy will tumble into ruins, like a child's castle of cards. He who would truly serve his race, then, must scatter this idea far and wide—the universality of the action of the law of cause and effect; must fling his glove in the very face of materialism, and demand of philosophy proof of that non-action of it which they so confidently declare exists under metaphysical conditions.

Karma, then, means that divine, omnipotent, omniscient Power which adjusts each effect to its originating cause. It does this consciously, wisely and unerringly; therefore it is more than the mere operation of even an immutable law, if we regard this as acting mechanically or automatically, for Karma is the agent of Absolute Consciousness, and not one phenomenon occurs in all this manifested universe of which it does not take conscious note. "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice," declared the Nazarene. As will be shown in the following pages, Karma is the Will of the Most High, acting by and through the law of cause and effect.

KARMA.

A STUDY OF THE LAW

—OF—

CAUSE AND EFFECT.

CHAPTER I.

KARMA—THE REVEALER OF GOD.

“O, where is the sea?” the fishes cried,
As they swam its crystal clearness through;
‘We have heard of old of its infinite tide,
And we long to bathe in its waters blue!’”

SOMETHING of the feeling expressed by the poet is experienced by every soul when it first realizes the depth and grandeur involved in the idea of Karma, or the law of Cause and Effect; for this is all that Karma is—the law, or the truth (law and truth are synonyms in nature) that each cause is inevitably followed by its appropriate effect. Our very familiarity with this law has blinded us to its majesty; we lightly assign it as an explanation for the most inscrutable mysteries, because it is such an absolutely necessary corollary to all we conceive of life or nature, without recognizing that it itself is beyond all comprehension. Yet it contains the beginning and the end of all philosophical speculation; it demonstrates a causal relation between the Infinite and the finite, for Karma is that Infinite Power which adjusts each effect to its originating cause.

More than this: Karma directly demonstrates God, for it can but be the eternal expression of Infinite Will; and through this—a revealed aspect of the divine—divinity becomes comprehensible, and therefore accessible, to finite man. It mirrors forth the sublimities of infinite justice, of eternal compassion. Born through and by means of the law of cause and effect, supported by it, acting under its divine guidance, are all the finite attributes of manifested being, among idealizations of which men are wont to grope in their search for God.

“Love is God,” declare some would-be philosophers. “Evil is God,” answer back the devil-worshippers, with quite as much reason. For both evil and good depend upon Karma; but it does not depend upon them. Its awe-inspiring impersonality far transcends either of these—the princes of the Pairs of Manifested Opposites! Acting through and made possible by this divine Law, both love and hate utterly fail to express its inconceivable heights and depths. The God it dimly outlines, whose pavilion is the Darkness of Non-Being, whose holy name may not be uttered, whose majesty may not be conceived, is indeed GOD, and there is none other than He! Unfettered by attributes, unlimited by personality, the inconceivable nature of the Divine is shadowed forth each time that effect follows cause. In that sublime impersonality with which Karma acts, is revealed something of the nature of THAT which is without personality or attributes.

Let those who cannot rise higher than this conception assert that God is Love. But can love be conceived of except through knowledge of its opposite, hate? Love belongs to manifested life, and manifestation implies and necessitates duality and finiteness. The unmanifested alone is Unity; unapproachable, incomprehensible. If God were love, or “good,” as another class of shallow metaphysicians are so fond of asserting, then hate, or evil, would be the devil. Neither evil nor good are conceivable except as states of feeling experienced in the consciousness of a hating or of a loving entity; and so our very first step in the analysis of love as a final cause lands us in the

absurdity of a personal God opposed by an equally absurd personal devil. Our attempted philosophizing has proven but a blind anthropomorphizing; and in what respect are we the superiors of that confident of Jehovah, the praying parson, who tranquilly advises with God, and explains to Him the things to which He ought to direct His immediate attention? Love, however high or holy, must be colored by personality; can only be comprehended by virtue of a knowledge of its opposite, hate.

So will all our finite attributes fail us when we attempt to magnify them into deity. Love, justice, pity—everything that we dream of, or cling to, as god-like—disappear in that awful majesty which knows not one of them! For Karma, there is neither good nor evil. It builds up the wicked character out of evil thoughts and acts just as surely as it likewise builds up the compassionate, god-like character from compassionate, merciful deeds. "God sendeth His rain upon the just and upon the unjust," said one of old, to whom a vision of the dark majesty of the Nameless One had come. So, Karma, the will of God, makes possible the creation and existence of devils of hate, bears their evil actions to their appropriate fruitage, with an unconcern which, at first sight, seems appalling in its impersonal justice.

Yet in this awe-inspiring impersonality of Karma, God stands revealed as no prophet or seer could possibly portray Him in the illusionary coloring of finite attributes. From the mightiest sun to the tiniest infusorium, from the pulsing thought of a creative god to the faint yet sure attraction of the humblest mineral molecule, the law of cause and effect holds sway; guides and adjusts each relation, whether Cosmic or Microcosmic, with equal and omniscient certainty. Therefore, God is immanent in all nature; and the universal, philosophic Pantheism of our older civilizations is triumphantly justified and verified. Anthropomorphic deities, from Jehovah to Brahma, fail; become of no more account than the stone of the fetich worshiper, when we are thus led, by following the paths marked out by the Divine Will, into the outer courts of the really Divine.

Is not this divine Impersonality, which can not be cajoled by prayer nor moved by ignorant entreaty, an infinitely stable support for human effort? an anchorage at which mortals may ride out the storms of their passionate material existence with the assurance of perfect safety? Love may be blinded, or thwarted by hate; it will impart its own finite imperfectness to its decisions; its judgments must be colored by its own feeling, for it only shadows forth one aspect of that manifestation which, as said, must be dual that it may become manifested. Neither the Infinite nor the expression of infinite Will, Karma, can know anything of love or hate in their finite and illusionary aspects, for these are a limiting of THAT which is limitless.

Olden scriptures are full of this recognition of the dark majesty of the Eternal One. It has been left to modern theologians, wise only in their own conceit, to degrade divinity into a swearing, fickle, tempting, deceiving Jehovah; they of old knew better. With them it was, "The Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning."* "God is not man, that He should lie, neither the son of man, that He should repent; hath He said and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good?"† "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God,"‡ chants the Psalmist; and, again, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne,"|| thus plainly recognizing and referring to the law of Karma. "He judgeth among the gods," again declares the warrior singer of Israel, in which he but echoes the still more ancient Egyptian hymn, "The gods adore thee, they greet thee, O thou One Dark truth!"§

For where shall mortals find a measure for the Infinite? In space? Within it is indeed born all that we can conceive of either finite or Infinite; but when we attempt to measure its inconceivable abysses by the wildest flights of our imagination the mind only returns upon itself, palsied and tottering upon its throne from the majesty of the

*James i: 19.

†Numbers xxiii: 19.

‡Psalm xc: 2.

||Psalm, lxxxix: 14

§Egyptian papyrus.

mystery which confronts it. Like the dove, in the olden myth, it finds no place of rest, and so must return to the ark of safety within its own breast. Is the Infinite, then, to be measured by Time? Strain its vision as it may, the soul at last comes to another abyss, at the verge of which the scroll, "Time shall be no more," confounds and benumbs it. Yet in every thought, word, or action of man or nature the Dark Mystery of Being has been appealed to, and has responded, with a certainty only possible to infinite power and wisdom. No thought nor act, no phenomenon of manifested existence, however trifling, but appeals to and is responded to by Karma, the immutable law of CAUSE and EFFECT.

The finite and conceivable thus rest entirely and wholly upon the Infinite and Inconceivable; are supported by it; act under and because of it; yet the Inconceivable remains ever untouched and unaffected because of its response; knows not—at least, as mortals know things—that appeal has been taken, or action had. All finite change thus passes the Infinite by, without arousing any responding voice in its Dark Silence; without adding to or taking from this its immutable Source. "All things exist in me, but I do not exist in them,"* declares Krishna, when dealing with this impenetrable mystery. We are thus, at all times, facing this, the truly Unknowable; at all times in the presence of the Divine, for we embosom that divinity; rest upon it; ARE it, our very selves. We can only recognize and adore; we can not hope to comprehend.

It seems strange that Western philosophy has not recognized the true meaning, as applied to human existence, of this law. In the domain of the purely materialistic sciences, it is outlined, but not ethically grasped, in the law of the conservation of force, or the persistence of energy, and the indestructibility of matter. But its divine and certain action has been boldly declared inapplicable to and inoperative upon mental planes by our foremost American philosophers.† Both materialistic science and agnostic philosophy (so-called)

*Bhagavad Gita, Chap. IX, p. 60, Judge's translation.

†The Conception of God, Joseph Royce, Ph. D., Philosophical Union Reports, University of California, p. 38.

may disown and decry modern Christianity, but the trail of the serpent of Eden is over them all. Had not dogmatic Christianity imposed its personal god, endowed with all manner of finite attributes, upon both science and philosophy, such conceptions as these among men of brains and learning would be utterly impossible. The negations of modern science, the wild speculations of Western philosophy, are the legitimate karmic effects of high and holy teachings having been perverted into dogmas and creeds, for the purpose of aggrandizement and power, by an ignorant, unphilosophical priesthood. Those men of learning who might then have preserved the truth untainted, and did not because of indifference or treachery, are now reaping, in their soul-destroying materialism, the just effects of the causes set up in former lives by themselves. Humanity reaps only that which it sows; each "seed bringing forth after its own kind."

We place a hand in flame; it burns; yet why? Why should it not freeze, sometimes, instead of burning? Why should there be law, order, and cosmos, instead of chance, disorder, and chaos? Because, and only because, the finite and conditioned rest so entirely and completely upon the Infinite and Unconditioned. We can not realize too fully how intimate is the relation, how ever-present in the simplest phenomenon, is the divinity, which in our fancy we dream of as separated from us by unthinkable and utterly impassable abysses. Infinite power lies behind the feeblest finite manifestation; upon eternal foundations are laid the most ethereal evanescent environments of our fleeting, temporal life. The immutable is eternally present in the midst of our mutability; behind the evanescent man stands the stable God, in whom, truly, he "lives, moves, and has his being." Did even the most simple phenomenon depend upon any finite power, chaos must inevitably ensue. From the infinitely great to the infinitely small, there is absolutely no exception; all alike rest upon the immutable, divine Will, expressed so simply, yet so incomprehensibly, in the law of cause and effect. Manifested existence

proceeds under it ; the power to display inherent qualities or to perceive exterior differences rests upon it. All the god-like potentialities of the human soul depend for their existence in potentiality, and for their fruitage as potency upon this divine Law ; worlds wing their way through space in obedience to it ; the ephemera are born, live their span of a few hours, and die, guided by its immutable action.

Is there not, then, in the awe-inspiring, infinite, ever-present action of this divine Law a revelation of deity? God is shown to be within us, and to be equally present in all nature. It is "the still, small voice," which, in its impersonality, its certainty, its omniscient and perfect justice, reveals something of the inconceivable perfections of the Divine ! Love may relax, weaken, or even change to hate (have we not all seen it do this?), but Karma is a court of appeal which neither loves nor hates, but both of which disappear in its exact justice. It far transcends both love and hate, yet we foolishly magnify one of these "pairs of opposites"* into deity, because it seems more pleasant, and therefore (to the unphilosophic mind), superior to the other. Both love and hate are finite and imperfect, and both will have to be abandoned for that perfect peace which knows naught of either, before the time-harassed soul can rest in eternity.

The mode of action by means of which Karma carries out its decrees we can never hope to fathom ; it is the secret of the Infinite. To the shallow thinker, fire burns because carbon and oxygen are brought together under certain conditions ; worlds circle about their suns because of the "pull" of gravitation ; and so on, until for him there remain no mysteries, and, like Alexander, he sighs for new worlds to conquer. But to him who seeks to know why fire burns, and why gravitation "pulls," nature has no reply except Darkness and inscrutable Silence. Such questionings trench upon holy ground ; we can only recognize that we are in the presence of the Divine, and remain mute.

*Hindu philosophy maintains that every quality in nature exists by virtue of its "opposite," and in their conceptions of deity they strive to rise above these. For this reason, perhaps, they are far superior to the Western philosophers in metaphysical reasoning.

No finite limitations bind this great Law. Time, for it, does not exist; space disappears. Within it, in some incomprehensible manner, are bound up both cause and effect; for it these two are but one. Ages, judged by the illusion of time, may elapse between the enactment of the cause and the emerging of its appropriate effect; yet the two have never been really separated, for, when the environing conditions permit, the effect takes place as surely as though no interval at all had elapsed. Its modes of motion entirely escape our finite analysis; they belong to that Infinite which we may, indeed, with awe and reverence, approach, but whose inner purposes we can not fathom. Shall we, then, pray, as so many people do, that for our personal benefit the action of this immutable Law shall be set aside—a Law upon whose continuance the existence and safety of the entire Universe depend? No! The mind, once awakened to a realization of this ever-present Will of the Infinite, will recoil with horror from the thought. Its action represents infinite justice. Dare we ask less or more than this? How foolish, how sacrilegious, those who demand that this divine law shall be nullified for their profit, or to enable them to escape the just penalty of their acts!

The most truly devout Christian, for example, will pray to his supposedly infinite God to have mercy upon him, while at the same time believing, and declaring Him to be Infinitely just. How absurd, how unphilosophical! The very act of prayer is a tacit admission that one is addressing a finite power and not praying to the changeless Infinite, and, besides this, is asking that he does not deserve; else would the prayer be a most foolish waste of energy, for that which he has earned will under the action of the law certainly come to him. Prayer is but the finite and imperfect appealing to the finite and imperfect, because of the inability of him who prays to rise to the sublime justice and impersonality of the really Divine. But Karma, the Will of the One True God, is impersonal and attributeless. No appeal can sway its perfect justice; no power can set aside its immutable decrees. How infinitely more safe this court of

first and last appeal than to depend upon a god whom persuasion, entreaty, or flattery might turn from his decisions! Its impersonality, which apparently placed it below man, in reality removes it to planes infinitely above him, and its unconsciousness becomes our highest surety, our conscious Saviour; the revealed Will of the Divine; its perception, an apprehension of GOD.

Does Karma, then, deprive of appeal to the Divine? By no means; but this appeal is not in vain words, and ignorant pleadings; it is in every thought and act, in every word or deed, of our daily lives. What a solemn thought! Would men so lightly commit sins or crimes, if they realized in so doing they were demanding judgment for their acts of THAT which cannot err? Christianity has long taught that God sees every action; that "not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice," but its teachings have not reached the hearts of men, nor modified their actions, because it fails to clearly explain HOW the Divine does this. An action of which we are unconscious affects us not; but if we are shown that in the ignored law of cause and effect is working the will of God, the divine Presence at once becomes a living reality to us. Karma, then, so far from depriving us of appeal to Divine compassion, love and mercy, on the contrary becomes the surety of the fruition of all that we have ever dreamed of in relation to these; the certainty of there existing in the Infinite, in their complete and perfected state, all these finite qualities and attributes the conceptions of which, dwarfed by our own limitations, we have tried to erect into an image of the Most High. Nothing can arise in the finite which is not a reflection, however feeble or distorted, of its source, the Infinite.

No sophistry can overthrow this great truth. Nothing can come out of nothing; the stream can not rise higher than its source. "As above, so below," wrote the Adept Rosicrucians; and we may be sure that these god-like, though imperfect and conditioned attributes, originate, have their source in, the Perfect and Unconditioned. We may be unable to conceive them; may distort or pervert them;

may change love into hate, or justice into partiality; but these are but our finite imperfections; they touch not the Absolute Perfectness from which they proceed, to which they must return. It were idle waste of time for us to lose ourselves in unanswerable and, indeed, unwarrantable speculations as to why the Perfect becomes the apparently imperfect; why "immortality puts on mortality." Such secrets belong to the Infinite; they concern us not. Finding within ourselves the germs of divinity, we can safely predicate divinity as our origin, and our destiny. Guided by the unalterable and immutable Will of the Divine, expressed in the divine law of cause and effect, we can turn our faces towards our Source, with the absolute certainty of realizing our latent godhood, if we but set in action the right causes.

Karma, then, becomes the surety of our one day knowing and experiencing the bliss of love, compassion, and peace, in their perfected states. Meanwhile, it is the most perfect exponent of the necessity for and the fact of universal brotherhood. For while it is a living, ever-present demonstration of the sublimity, the grandeur, of the impersonal, it also forces us to recognize that everything finite and conditioned must fall far short of that immutable perfectness. In the presence of its unutterable majesty, men and gods must alike bow in adoration and reverence. The highest and holiest, no more than the weakest or most wicked, dare defy its inflexible decrees. It is the Will of the All-Father; every manifested entity is Its child; all, therefore, are equal in its holy vision. For all these are Itself; are but finite and conditioned aspects of THAT which is Unconditioned and Inconceivable. In Its presence there can be no castes nor classes; all are alike imperfect, and in this universal imperfection lies our brotherhood, no less truly than in our one dark Source. Nay, the imperfect can understand, and have compassion for, imperfection. The awful mysteries of the Perfect none can penetrate; in the presence of its impenetrable secrets all are alike helpless; therefore, like children who cling to each other for comfort when lost in the night, mortals ought to be drawn together by their sense of isolation; by the sacred

plea of their equal helplessness. And the weaker the entity, the more completely it is lost in the wilderness of the world, the more mistakenly it contends against the immutable law by sin, crime, or passion, the greater ought to be—must be—our pity and compassion, the more active our help. For this is the highest expression of that perfect compassion above—the law of altruism; the sacred obligation to help all beneath us. None have become gods or men without help from those above them; none can rise in the process of divine evolution without the assistance of others stronger than they. We extend one hand to those above, but before the divine Law permits them to help us we must have reached down with equal concern to aid those below. "Give, that ye may receive," said the holy Nazarene, and no more divinely inspired recognition of the law of compassion ever passed the lips of any Messenger of the Great Lodge.

For higher than love stands Compassion, and compassion is but another name for Karma. Its perfect, impersonal justice is also perfect compassion; the two are but aspects of the One. What awakened soul desires to escape the just penalty for wrongs, even though committed in ignorance? The stain of injustice so left would be the brand of an eternal humiliation. So, Karma stands as our compassionate helper, our justifier in our own sight and in the sight of the divine; giving us ever the choice between good and evil, but punishing the one and rewarding the other with a certainty that assures us that the compassionate heart of nature desires the welfare of all its creatures.

So, Karma stands revealed as the Will of the Most High. Anything less than its perfect impersonality would make men puppets, and evolution a mockery; anything more, and men would be slaves, and the universe the wicked conception of some omnipotent monster.

Let us, then, no longer make to ourselves gods of gold or silver, nor clothe them with the distorted magnifying of our own personal attributes and limitations; but let us, rather, set about studying reverently this divine Law of Karma, the Will of the Infinite thus mani-

fest among us. So may the roar of the senses be one day silenced; the darkness of illusion be dispelled by the light of spiritual knowledge. Then, over the chaos of our material existence will thrill the divine command, "Let there be Light," and, lo, the darkness will have been forever dispelled!

CHAPTER II.

KARMA AND CONSCIOUSNESS.

THEOSOPHISTS grade consciousness, within our solar system, into seven great planes, three of which are plainly apparent to the most casual observation; viz., instinct, emotion, and intellectuation. A fourth plane, or that of intuition, is also very generally recognized, but its nature almost wholly misunderstood. And, although science may shy at the classification, a fifth plane of consciousness below instinct, or that of atomic and molecular "affinities," through the action of which the building and maintenance of form is accomplished, is equally obvious. Accepting the fact of the existence of these plainly recognizable grand divisions, so to say, of consciousness, it is evident that the action of Karma, or the law of cause and effect, will differ upon each in its methods of adjustment. For running through this manifestation of the Supreme Will may always be recognized the action of infinite intelligence, expressed in the supremely just arrangements of cause to effect from the standpoint of moral, or self-conscious, responsibility. That is to say, while effect invariably follows cause, yet that effect is quite different where a recognition of self is felt by the actor than where no such consciousness is present. The recognition of moral responsibility is thus plainly apparent in the action of Karma, at once and forever removing it from the domain of "blind force," to which limbo science would fain relegate it.

A never-failing guide to the action of Karma upon any plane of consciousness is that the effect is always finally adjusted upon the plane where it originated. In those cases of physical suffering which are plainly the result of wrong mental acts it would seem that this law was violated; but such is not the case. They only show the infinite wisdom back of karmic action, for anything less than infinite wisdom could not adjust the exact balance of responsibility so that

that portion for which the entity was really responsible returns to the mental plane for its effect, while that portion (which is a very large one at man's present stage of mental development) for which his ignorance renders him irresponsible is carefully sifted out, and its effects relegated to the physical plane. The broad rule holds that mental causes produce mental effects; and emotional, passionate, instinctive, and physical causes, are each followed by their appropriate effects upon their own planes of consciousness.

Non-recognition of this fact is, perhaps, the cause of that strange mental confusion, or blindness among so-called philosophers and scientists who aver that the law of cause and effect does not obtain upon mental or metaphysical planes.* They have insisted that all causes must be tangible; must be capable of microscopic, or other physical, demonstration. When modern science and philosophy shall have learned to look for mental effects in mental changes, and not in physical perturbation, they will have made but one more so-called "backward advance" toward the wisdom of the ancients.

Recognizing, then, this guide to its action, let us follow for a time the workings of Karma upon the physical plane, or in the domain of molecular and molar physics. Here its reign is admitted by science to be universal; and, far from denying an antecedent cause to any observed effect, science has set for itself the almost infinite task of discovering in each instance the hidden factor. Medicine, in particular, has, by its germ theory of recent years, stormed castle after castle defended by tradition, superstition, "providence," and so on. The unknown and seemingly inscrutable cause of cholera, for example, which many had thought to be a direct agent of Jehovah for the punishment of sin, has been traced to the presence of a particular bacillus, shorn of all its former uncanny terrors, and rendered comparatively innocuous by this knowledge. Disease after disease has thus had its secret cause laid bare, until the old theories of imponderable agents have become largely and justly discredited.

*See note, page 13.

All this is well enough did not the fury to trace every conceivable effect to a physically demonstrable cause lead to the confusing of things mental and those purely physical, with the result of uprearing, in the very blaze of this century's civilization, a scientific and philosophic teaching of the most crass materialism. That which can not be demonstrated by crucible or microscope has been denied existence, with the result we all know.

Yet these scientific studies and labors have established the presence of Karma, or cause and effect, acting upon the plane of physics by two most magnificent and far-reaching generalizations—the law of the conservation of energy, and that of the indestructibility of matter. For, if force is eternally conserved, and matter indestructible, then there can be no creation, *de novo*, and the universe must consist of units of matter (atoms) eternally rearranging themselves under the guidance of units of consciousness, or souls. Any such constant change as is evident in material nature must likewise result in chaos without an equally constant and intelligent readjustment of the old to the new conditions. The “blindest” of the so-called material “laws” originates in, and is controlled by, intelligence, or chaos must inevitably result from its continuous action—an axiom of which modern science has strangely enough entirely lost sight. For in the play of physical forces can be continually seen instances of force going wrong, and one such, were it not corrected by superior intelligence, would in time wreck the entire universe. But the law whose action has become temporarily destructive will always be found to be embraced within the operation of a still wider law, which thus puts a check upon its continuous action.

For example: The terribly destructive force of a tornado, if unchecked, would in a brief time, make this earth an uninhabitable waste. It arises in disturbed conditions of atmospheric temperature. Yet its destructive circles are only due to a hasty action of hot and cold currents, seeking to equilibrate their own conditions, and which, by their very violence, call into activity the still more subtle and

powerful forces of electricity, under whose supervision the whirling, death-dealing column of air is soon quieted and subdued.

Thus even the most blindly acting physical law may be easily shown to be under the ultimate control of intelligence; and the more remote the source the more perfect, when this is traced, will be apparent its infinite wisdom. So that we must not make the fatal mistake of reserving our study of the conscious adjustment of cause to effect to the mental or spiritual planes of life, but must seek for the source of the intelligence which governs physical laws in the hidden realms of consciousness. And in thus studying the problems of intelligent, conscious supervision, shown in the adjustment of effect to cause in the physical kingdoms of nature, it must not be forgotten that the lower the plane, from the human view-point, the more nearly does it, in many respects, approach the divine. A recognition of this fact is the reason for the old symbol of the serpent biting its own tail. The more particular the law, the more limited its scope, the greater the point of its differentiation from Unity, and the farther it is from its one divine Source. This statement is again axiomatic.

Therefore, the intelligence governing the play of cause and effect in the mineral kingdom, for example, must be sought for in the very outer courts of the great underlying and basic Unity, out of which all things manifested proceed.

It is apparent, then, that a brief examination must be had of the theosophic theory of life; a study made of its processes of becoming—a portion of which is recognized by science in its incomplete theory of evolution. Put in a few words, this is: The universe of manifested life is the result of a differentiation within (not out of or away from) Absolute Unity of two great aspects of that Unity, or consciousness (spirit) and matter. Although differentiated into infinite hierarchies of consciousness and grades of matter, these two aspects are never found absolutely dissociated; are incapable of dissociation because they are but aspects of THAT whose very essence must be absolute Unity. The conscious pole (from our point of view) appears

the more important; whether or not this is really the case is idle speculation; nothing but absolute wisdom could solve the problem.

It is evident that differentiation and subsequent reconstruction of form implies units, both of consciousness and matter. As any construction requires intelligent antecedent design and subsequent equally intelligent supervision, as consciousness and matter can not be dissociated, and as consciousness is the evident source of all intelligence, the conscious aspect of this which must be a compound unit, or one containing both consciousness and matter, is taken as a basis for all subsequent reasoning, and made technically superior to the material, or matter, aspect of the same unit. This position is exactly the opposite to that of modern materialistic science, which takes the material aspect (its atom), ignores or denies the consciousness associated therewith, or designates it as a mere "property" of matter, and thus reduces all the magnificent plan and design seen throughout nature to a play of blind force through senseless matter. This primal unit of consciousness is recognized in theosophic philosophy as an "atom-soul"; but is not to be confused with the materialistic atom, by any means. Now, as neither beginning nor end can be predicated of evolutionary processes, we have to assume an arbitrary point in time (itself an illusion) at which to begin our examination. Fixing this at the beginning of a manvantara,* or great cycle of manifestation, these atom-souls, senseless and almost devoid of consciousness as we conceive it, are aggregated together in great nebular masses, out of which suns and systems are subsequently produced by evolutionary processes. This aggregating is done by the will of high, creative intelligences acting in harmony, or with concerted or hierarchical intelligence. Such high, creative Beings clothe themselves with this matter; assimilate the consciousness of its atom-souls to their own divine wisdom, and thus impress upon each that primal intelligence which is seen in the so-called "blind" laws of matter.

*Manvantara—Man-completing cycle. The time required to evolve an atom-soul into a human one through reincarnation, which is the process of evolution.

They take upon themselves the almost infinite task of guiding and assisting the evolutionary progress of these atom-souls throughout eons of time until they shall have arrived at the stage of self-consciousness, and thus be enabled to take conscious control of their own future progress. But this almost infinite association of these creative Beings with the nascent atom-souls is as definitely and certainly under the action of the great law of Karma as is that of the humblest mortal with his body, and they thus become responsible for, and the surety of, these atom-souls until they pass out of their jurisdiction by the awakening within each of that divinity from whence it sprung—a point far distant from man himself, at least when viewed from the standpoint of his personality.

The action, then, of cause and effect, as seen in the workings of physical forces among even mineral atom-souls, is as surely under the supervision of consciousness as the thoughts of him who is clothed in a body of flesh and blood derived from these same atom-souls a little farther progressed. That unerring action of the acid which enables it when poured into a solution of an hundred alkaline bases to select that particular one, and that one only, for which it has the greatest "affinity" (so-called), is not the result of "blind" law, but the evidence of the supervision of the very highest intelligence. The absolute certainty of chemical action is the evidence of the absolute wisdom and knowledge of the Beings who have impressed their own divine knowledge upon and within its lowly substance, and ought to lead us to suspect divinity to be hidden within nature if we had no other evidence. Therefore, unless we fall into the materialistic madness of supposing an effect which has no antecedent cause (the postulating of intelligence, love, pity, compassion, as arising out of inert, senseless matter, is just this,) we must assign, as the source of the intelligence which guides both molecular, or chemical, and molar action, a consciousness inhering in the matter itself; and as nothing can arise out of nothing, this intelligence which causes the apparently blind obedience to law on the part of the atoms has been bestowed upon matter by, or from, a conscious, intelligent source.

There is no escape from this position. Either science must accept, with Christianity, the teaching of "creation out of nothing," or it must supply a logical solution for the operation of these its "blind" laws.

Blind though they are, the action of molecular physics, for example, is so certain, so unerring, as to declare the very highest intelligence to be working through it; while, on the other hand, the inability to recognize insuperable difficulties (as in the germination and attempted growth of a seed under impossible environments) shows that only a measure of their divine intelligence has been bestowed, by the creative Logoi, yet all-sufficient for the purposes of evolutionary progress on the part of the atom-soul.

Being a separation within the Absolute, and necessarily a part of it, each atom-soul has all the potentialities of its divine source. Yet these would remain forever but potentialities did not these creative Beings (who were themselves at one period of their becoming also atom-souls) clothe themselves with their substance, impress upon them the laws which untold eons they must blindly obey, marshal them into worlds and planets, and so pilot them through the almost-interminable process of evolution from the humble atom-soul up to man, at which point each must then take conscious control of those additional steps which lead up to the stairways of the gods.

It is thus seen that the theosophic philosophy accepts moral responsibility upon the part of some entity or other for every action of law, or exhibition of energy, throughout the universe. For it, "blind" force and "senseless" matter do not exist. Yet it must not be supposed that the atom-souls themselves can do wrong in acting out the will so impressed upon them. Nor is it to be supposed that it is possible for these high creative Beings to err, or to defy the law of cause and effect, in the manner that blind mortals do. Their divine wisdom enables them to act in conformity with the plan in the Universal Mind, of which they are the manifestation. Yet, in carrying out the details, and especially in the case of hierarchies as low as those

engaged in the construction and supervision of the evolution of this our petty earth, errors of judgment are quite conceivable, and thus a karmic responsibility for untoward results would follow, and even these high Beings would have to suffer the consequences.

Something of the nature of this karmic action is illustrated by the well-known relation which in Eastern countries a "guru" is said to hold to his "chela." Having accepted his teacher, and the teacher having consented to take charge of the training of his pupil, thereafter the pupil is held blameless for the evil result accruing out of any wrong teaching, for which the teacher is solely responsible. As this erroneous teaching only occurs through errors of judgment on the part of the teacher, the parallel is almost exact.

The action of the so-called elements,—the tornado, the water-spout, the earthquake, the famine, the epidemic,—every manifestation of that which we generally and vaguely term "nature," involves Karma; is the making of a new, or the settling of an old, score upon the part of some responsible being, or collection of beings. But as this subject of the relation between man and the disturbances of his environment will be especially dealt with elsewhere, no more need be said now. It is enough to point out that the theosophic philosophy looks upon all matter as ensouling some entity of either high or low degree, and upon every manifestation of force as the result of the will of some manifested being or beings. The atom-soul is, as we have seen, pushed up under the will of creative Beings, through the various sub-human stages of evolution; associating itself in great "kingdoms" of matter and hierarchies of consciousness. As it progresses in its evolutionary becoming, this hierarchial association becomes more limited, and the part played by any particular atom-soul more defined, until at length the atom-soul, now become, perhaps, an "elemental" soul in the vegetable or animal kingdoms, heads and synthesizes a small hierarchy, or microcosm, of its own, which aggregation of lower soul-units constitutes its body, and its changing these from time to time under cyclic law (another phase of Karma) causing those appear-

ances and disappearances which we, who see but one-half of the process, term life and death.

Under this view, chaos and chance disappear from the universe, which thus becomes the arena of law, order, design, reason, justice, and compassion to its innermost recesses. From the blossoming of a daisy to the upheaval of a continent everything is law-governed, and the effects seen are either harmonic, or are but the effort of nature to restore disturbed harmonic conditions. The winds whisper of this purpose of the Divine; the clouds thunder it forth; the seas repeat it in their ceaseless monotones; the blossoms testify to it; the earth herself, as she wings her way obediently around her orbit, but proclaims aloud the same awe-inspiring truth—that there is divinity in even the grossest “matter,” and that the Will of the Divine, under the guise of Karma, is working harmoniously towards some goal of (to us) inconceivable perfection.

CHAPTER III.

KARMA AND THOUGHT.

IF KARMA be the Will of the impersonal, infinite Source of all life and consciousness, then thought is its personal and finite mode of being or manifestation. Or if Karma represent the great Ocean of Being, then thought is the compass by means of which the soul may steer its course over its illimitable expanses. Or, again, if Karma express the infinite Will, then thought becomes the finite regent of this unknowable Infinite, for Karma is but the servitor of thought. Its impersonal, colorless action is colored by thought, and by thought alone.

The manifested Universe is the result of thought; is actually thought into being. Every detail, every differentiation, every single form of all the infinitude of forms, is the direct result of the thought of some entity, or hierarchy of entities. And the same care is taken, the same patient attention to detail is shown, in the infinitely small as in the infinitely great. The Greater Phta of Egyptian symbology is but the equal of the lesser Phta; there is no lesser nor greater in the eyes of That which knows not qualities nor attributes.

Within the Absolute, manifested being begins because of primordial thought, say the philosophers, and from this is born both will and desire. Thought upon some plane precedes all desire, although the desire of a lower may be—and often is—the result of thought upon a higher plane. Upon the human plane a mental image, however faint or fleeting, must precede the arousing of desire. Even chemical affinity, that lowly but pure and perfect form of desire, is directed by the thought of the creative entities, the Regents of the planets, who take on the matter of this globe as vestments, exactly as man clothes himself with the matter of his body.

For this is a universe of life; and life is directed in some myste-

rious manner by thought. Once thought is born in the infinite abysses of consciousness, then differentiation begins. Thought is the Son of Life and Space; thought precedes manifestation, causes manifestation, and is alone capable of cognizing manifestation—a trinity of mysteries, indeed!

The purpose of this chapter is not, however, to analyze that which must ever escape all finite methods, but rather to point out the true relation thought sustains to other modes of consciousness, and, still more important, to man's daily life. For much of Western philosophical and metaphysical speculation makes thought the essence of all being; with them "to think" is the equivalent of "to be."

This is not true. Beneath thought lies pure consciousness, infinite, stable, sure. Thought is but one mode of this Infinite consciousness; one hypostasis of that which is capable of infinite hypostases. It is the agent which produces all change in manifested conditions; it is the Regent and carries with it the divine authority of consciousness, during manifestation; but when manifestation ceases it fades back into its One Dark Source.

For thought is finite, and all thinking beings are finite, so far as their life depends upon thought for its mode of manifestation. The soul must learn to join its thinking principle to this divine and changeless consciousness before it can win true immortality; or, as the wisdom of the East expresses it, Manas, the Thinker, must be conjoined to Buddhi, the eternal Knower, before the former can be truly eternal.

From the outer senses to the inner life, man touches all planes of consciousness which are at present manifested, and holds within his being all potentialities of future hypostases. Few of these manifested planes has he as yet made potencies upon the molecular plane; they lie in the pathway of his future evolution. When he has once sensed, however dimly, this ocean of pure, undifferentiated consciousness, in which his own being roots, thought will then become his tool, and an almost mechanical agent. Then, when he wills to think, his

whole energy will be turned consciously into this channel; when the necessity for this form of conscious activity has ceased, he will retire into the realms of pure feeling, or of that consciousness which is not fettered by thought.

Thought is the active, creative, or changing, agent of consciousness, and can not be used without causing change. Every thought is a cause which must inevitably produce its effect. The idlest thought falls, alike with the most intense, under this law. The effect of the latter may be more lasting, but both are certainly followed by their appropriate effects.

This creative power of thought, or, rather, this changing power of thought, may be used, so to say, to create peculiarly obstructive conditions in the atmosphere of the soul. It can befog the soul so that it can no longer see clearly, and cause it to form the most erroneous conclusions. Almost all our views of life are colored and distorted by wrong thought in which we have, consciously or unconsciously, indulged. Let us take the most glaring example—one always at hand in the West.

A man determines to become a minister of the gospel of Jesus, and enters upon a preparatory course of study. He is perfectly honest, and sincerely believes that his particular church has the whole truth concerning the relations of man to God. But as he pursues his studies, a fact or dogma strikes him as illogical, or unjust, or mysterious. Now, this first impression is the clear vision of his soul, which not all his earlier conceptions or his past teachings has wholly dimmed. But he thinks, after more or less inner perturbation, that if he permits doubts to arise in his mind he will lose his soul, so, in his cowardly and selfish fear, he compels himself to think that his doubt was a "temptation of the devil," and deliberately accepts that against which his soul warned him. The doubt soon fades away, and he ever afterwards not only accepts that which he had doubted as true, but strenuously endeavors to lead others to his way of thinking. He now apparently sincerely believes that which he once doubted.

How has he wrought this change? By the power of thought. His weak or selfish attitude towards his own conscience (the voice of the true soul) and the thoughts arising out of this attitude, have brought about changes which make it impossible for him any longer to see the truth about this particular dogma clearly, and have done this, from one aspect, just as mechanically as if he had deliberately taken earth and buried a jewel out of his sight physically. He has beclouded the lens by which he perceives truth; he has moved the particles of his brain-mind so that they no longer image pictures clearly. How else can we account for those otherwise good men, men who seem to long for the truth alone, preaching and believing the most horribly unjust things about God?

What a dangerous thing it is to thus blaspheme against the Holy Ghost!—to deliberately refuse, from cowardice, selfish fear, worldly considerations, or other base motive, to listen to the voice of the inner Self when it warns against a mental course upon which one is tempted to enter! Even in the commonest things, this fact of mental beclouding has been recognized, and is embalmed in the proverb that he who tells a lie often enough at last comes to believe it true.

And these lies which we, recognizing them at first to be lies, at last believe to be true, befog every mind. We even carry over their effects, life after life, and come into the world unable to reason out its phenomena clearly because of these mental aberrations of our past. The materialist who can not see any proof of a soul in nature has not deliberately lied to his own soul for the first time in this life, we may be sure. And the divine who believes and teaches some foolish creed, in which he blasphemes the holy name of God by the revenges, lies, or other wickednesses which he attributes to him, has not in this life for the first time crushed out his higher intuitions. The millionaire has mocked at the still, small voice of conscience through many lives ere he has acquired that hardness of heart which enables him to tranquilly justify his actions, and even to believe in his own piety and goodness. "My spirit shall not always strive with

man," is the solemn warning of the Nazarene, and he who deliberately chooses the path of present expediency, as against his higher convictions, is working woe to his own soul of which he does not dream. Thought is one with Karma in this its fatal capacity to take on whatever coloring we choose to give it, and we may soon so color it that we look at the entire universe through untruthful lenses, distorted by our own untrue thoughts.

In this capacity to color thought until we can no longer see clearly lies much of the danger which besets the various schools of so-called "Christian," "Divine," or "Mental" scientists. Without knowing what "spirit" is, or what "matter" is, either, they deliberately affirm that they are "spirit," and not "matter," and that therefore when their head aches it does not really ache, because it is "matter," while they are "spirit." With clear concepts of spirit and matter, such assertions would be logical, for then one would know whether or not in his inmost essence he was material or spiritual. But with only the vague and general idea that spirit is in some way identical with "good"—which in itself is but an attribute of some one or some thing which displays the goodness—such declarations only dig deep ruts, so to say, in wrong directions, and out of which it is almost impossible for the soul to lift itself. That the soul is not the body is true, and it is wise both to assert and to believe it; but to attempt to evade or do away with a pain in the head by declaring that the "I" is spirit, and can not "ache," is to assert something of which the "treater" is profoundly ignorant. Whether or not spirit can ache is a very minor consideration; it can certainly suffer, and it is related to the body in the mysterious intimacy of incarnation for the very purpose of gathering the experience and of thereby evolving those qualities for which suffering affords it the opportunity.

Aside from all this, the law seems to be that effects must run out on the planes where they originated; and, while many diseases are the result of wrong thought as these "scientists" justly claim, nearly the whole of this wrong thinking is due to ignorance, which removes

it from the plane of mental to that of physical causes, and it very properly runs out as physical disease. Now, if this process be violently interfered with by interjecting the element of deliberate thought, and particularly if this thought is illogical, absurd and untrue, the physical disease is indeed often cured because of the fact that the effect, which would have run out safely on the physical plane, is transferred to the mental instead, and will reappear in due time, either in this or some succeeding incarnation, as mental disease. Just so far, then, as these systems teach the good effect of pure, altruistic thought, they are helpful; each time they "deny" facts patent to the senses as well as to the reason they are unphilosophical and dangerous.

Besides, these so-called "scientific" systems deify, so to speak, the body; being apparently a recrudescence of the old Greek deification of form, which undermined and gradually destroyed the original Greek philosophy and religious beliefs. The Latin proverb, "*Mens sana in corpora sana*," is the direct reflex of Greek thought, and is true only in so far as it refers to the lower brain mind. That it is untrue as to higher faculties, is proven by the almost innumerable instances where spiritual faculties of the very highest order have accompanied the most wretched physical conditions. To clothe, shelter and nourish the body, to cure its thousand and one ailments, and to administer to its ever-growing wants, have become the objects of our short-sighted civilization, and the deification which the acceptance of these "scientific" views would bring about can only end, as it did in the older, Grecian times, in bringing to an inglorious close the new Aryan civilization of the West.

CHAPTER IV.

KARMA AND CYCLES.

TO him who observes nature's methods in the manifested universe about him a most significant fact soon becomes apparent. This is that existence is cyclic; or that life in all its infinite variety emerges from apparent nothingness, follows an arc which in many instances—and probably in all had man a larger view-point—seems to return upon itself, and to disappear, after a greater or lesser interval, in that apparent nothingness from which it proceeded. Motion outward, or into manifestation, is followed by retreat inward; activity is succeeded by rest; life is extinguished by death—all but words expressing the great law that objective life is followed not by death, but by subjective existence.

As it would seem that infinite wisdom and power could only manifest itself finitely by infinite variation, so the arcs of these cycles vary infinitely. While to an entity higher in the scale of evolution, many of the life cycles of lower entities are apparently wholly in view, nevertheless to all manifested entities the passing from the objective to the subjective arc of their own existence is accompanied by an apparent interregnum of consciousness, so completely do these modes of life differ. Thus, in the insect world, the passage from the larva through the pupa stage into that of the perfect insect may be easily traced by man, and the identity of the entity unquestionably verified. But to the insect itself, between its sensuous existence as a caterpillar and its sensuous existence as a butterfly there must appear as great a gulf as yawns between any life of man upon earth and a subsequent reincarnation. From the standpoint of the insect, there is absolutely no evidence to connect the caterpillar with the butterfly. Why infinite Wisdom should have provided, or even permitted, this lapse of consciousness which not only accompanies the passing from

the one state into that of the other, but, up and into the human kingdom at least, separates the arc of one objective cycle entirely from any memory of preceding objective cycles, may not be questioned; we only know that it is so, and that these interregnums have been recognized by occultism for ages, and well named "critical" states of consciousness. Nor is this the time or place to attempt to prove the absolute prevalence of cycles in all manifested existence, nor how unanswerable an argument this fact becomes when applied to the proof not only of the existence of the soul but of its repeated incarnations in passing through successive objective arcs of its life cycle. It is sufficient to point to but a few examples—to day and night; to sleeping and waking; inspiration and expiration; flower and fruit; nebula and sun; and so on. There is no exception to this universal law. Let each student think the problem out for himself; knowledge acquired at second hand is only knowledge, not wisdom.

There is, however, one unanswerable argument in proof of the universal prevalence of cycles which may, perhaps, be mentioned with profit. It is the fact that Infinite force must be, and is, the source of all finite forces; and since no finite force can equal this infinite one, then no finite force can maintain itself infinitely. It must, sooner or later, cease—return to its source. And these emergings from, or differentiations within, infinite force, constitute cycles. Whether the differentiation is a minute portion of a second, as in the manifested or objective existence of a brain molecule, or occupies a time requiring fifteen places of figures to express it numerically, as in the case of this universe, the law of cycles governs that manifestation equally absolutely. It is not possible for finite manifestation to take place in any other manner.

With two such universal aspects of the divine Will in nature as Karma and cycles, it is evident that these must be but facets of the same unifying truth; and that the action of Karma, or the law of cause and effect, proceeds under the cyclic law, or else Karma itself is the cause of cycles. As both express the divine will, it makes

little difference which, if either, of the two hypotheses is correct. We can perceive in cycles the ebb and flow of karmic law, and thus mark the stages of the illusive panorama of time as they are successively cast upon the background of the One Reality.

A cycle, then, is the time required for any given cause to be followed by its effect. This universe is the effect of causes set up during preceding ones, and it will endure just as long as is required for those effects to take place, and not a moment longer. But these primal causes are, in the humble opinion of the writer, set up on the infinite side of nature, and not upon the finite. Herbert Spencer's speculation as to whether the motion which forms worlds and universes, may not reach a limit, after which it reverses its direction dissipates all form into chaos again when the limit in this direction and has been reached, and so on, eternally building only to tear down, is a very materialistic and mechanical conception of a most profound truth. These immense cycles of objective and subjective forms of existence, the alternations of Form and the Formless, are undoubtedly the modes of Being of divine Space; the innumerable hierarchies of finite entities must conform their evolution thereto—or remain unevolved! The mighty heart of the Infinite pulsates on, untouched by those time-limitations which confront the finite.

This necessity to accomplish a given task during a definite period is the real Cycle of Necessity; were it not so, man might better drift with the tide of Being, sure of entering harbor at last, than to interfere in his ignorance with the course laid down on the eternal charts. But just as the grain must grow and ripen during the summer season, so man must have made the necessary amount of progress while the earth is in a condition to permit life in molecularly constructed bodies, or fail and be cast out of the line of evolution for unthinkable periods, if not for all eternity. As a finite being man must conform to the ways of the Infinite if he would secure infinite existence.

But, upon the finite or manifested side of life, the causes are set up by finite entities, and the cycles run until these have had their effects.

Thought is the great creator of manifestation, and the thought of one age sets up those causes whose effects are experienced in the next. The duration of the subjective arc of human life is stated to be about an average of fifteen hundred years; and so we find the old vices, and virtues also, of the Roman civilization of fifteen hundred years since reappearing in Western nations, and more particularly in the Americas. The contrasts of wealth and poverty, the love of ostentation, the servile fawning and worship of class or rank—all mark the reappearing upon the scene of objective life of the same souls that wrecked Rome in her day of false glory and power.* The collective causes, or Karma, set up by a nation are but too often reaped as effects by its successor when even the memory of the first is lost from the earth.

For collective causes must be followed by collective effects; thus giving rise to racial, national, community and family cycles, brought about by the associate action of separate units. The Karma of races and nations is written in the history of the earth—too often but a record of wars and wrong-doing. The individual reaps his own Karma, but still it must conform to and be included in the larger Karma of his nation or race. Indeed, the individual Karma of any one, although always sufficient to ensure his individual happiness or punishment, is but as a drop in the ocean compared to those causes which he sets up in common with his family, his community, his nation and his race. Humanity is one great hierarchal whole, and he who fancies that he can separate his destiny completely from that of the rest of his race makes a most grievous mistake. One can only rise to a comparatively small degree above his fellow-men; after this point is reached he must work to elevate his brothers, if he would advance further. The law of altruism thus becomes the law of prog-

*A few years since the old influence was so marked that a great Roman carnival was held in San Francisco, in which the old games, ways of life, amid all the accessories possible to obtain of Roman civilization, were re-enacted, with all the pride and foolishness with which children play at being soldiers. It was undoubtedly an unrecognized memory of, and a longing for, the past in which these children of a larger growth indulged.

ress when the human kingdom is reached in the evolutionary ascent of the soul.

From certain aspects both Karma and cycles are independent of time. That is to say, the cause being set up the effect may be experienced instantly, or the same effect be indefinitely postponed, awaiting opportunity to pass into action. Thus, a buried bomb may explode with equally deadly effect after ages have elapsed; the coal, which is now being utilized for heating purposes, has awaited the application of the match for untold ages. This potentiality which permits a cause to rest undisturbed in the eternal until environment enables it to be followed by its effect is but another link in the chain of evidence which proves man to be possessed of free will and master of his own destiny, for it assures the certainty of his experiencing the personal effects of his own actions, even though lives and ages may intervene. No uncertainty nor injustice, no grace nor favor, can attend him; all that he has done in the past he must atone for; but before him lie the possibilities of eternally creating new causes by which he may guide and control his future destiny.

This possibility of the instantaneous, or indefinitely delayed, action of the law of cause and effect has given rise, also, to certain arbitrary distinctions of Karma into that of the past, or effects coming over from former lives; that of the present, or effects which follow immediately upon the heels of their causes; and that of the future, or those effects not experienced now, but which will follow the soul into future lives. To the beginner these are necessary and profitable distinctions; but to him who recognizes the grandeur and universality of the law they become lost in the wider view which stretches away before his vision. Rather than speculate as to where and when those causes whose effects now harass and limit his endeavors have had origin, he will seek to provide opportunity for old and hidden evil tendencies to come to the surface and be conquered, well knowing that the enemies he slays in this life will not return to fight him in the next.

For causes rest in the eternal. If opportunity be not afforded for them to pass into effects upon the lowest plane of materiality, they remain in the next plane higher; if opportunity be not afforded there, or if this plane of matter also pass away, they retreat to the next higher (or inner), until they pass into the very latency of Being itself, to be projected as causes in the next issuance of manifestation. Herein is the danger of many of the so-called Christian (or Mental) Science practices; they interfere with causes running out upon the physical plane as illnesses, and force them back upon the plane of mentality, where their effects must be mental, and thus the physical illness becomes transmuted into the mental disturbance; insanity is perhaps, substituted for the headache which is "denied" away. The lower a cause runs out the less disastrous its effect, and, for this reason alone, alleviation for purely physical ailments ought to be sought in purely physical remedies. However, this is a flagrant digression.

Although all existence proceeds in cycles, it must not be inferred that each new cycle but repeats the pathway of the old. The cycle is, as has been so often pointed out, a spiral, and not a complete ring or circle. Even the planets in their pathways around the sun never pass through the same portions of space; nature avoiding mechanical repetitions even. The sun himself is darting through space at an incredible speed, taking his whole universe of worlds with him in his flight, so that the earth, when it apparently returns to its old position at the end of a year, in reality does not do so, but is in space which it never occupied before and which it will never occupy again. In the abysses of infinite space there is no necessity for nor possibility of repetition.

The unstable cycles of the finite, then, rest upon the stable cycles of the Infinite; and, as has been stated, it only requires that the soul should learn to conform its cycles of existence to these of the Infinite to win eternal life. For the force which causes a temporary divergence from the rhythm of the Infinite must return thereto; cause and effect are one in the realms of the unmanifested; for this reason the cause can

not be separated from its effect, however much the illusions of time may seem to accomplish this. Though eons of time may intervene; though worlds may be born of the nebulous fire-mist and pass all through their sun and planetary stages before the effect of a cause may follow—yet in the darkness of Non-Being no interval at all has elapsed; the cause and effect are forever one.

The finite cycle, set up by finite thought, may be likened to the vibrations of a stringed instrument, infinite cycles to the string itself. Whether or not the chords produced by these lateral, finite vibrations shall be harmonious, depends upon whether or not the thinker thinks harmoniously and wholesomely. The AUM of Being thrills out of eternity to disappear in its abysses again; the finite music of the spheres, recorded in the infinitely varying cycles of manifestation, can be, and must be, made equally harmonious. Only that which is discordant must cease; those harmonies which are truly divine disappear in the eternal Breath—they are not, and can not be, lost.

There is one further fact connected with the study of cycles which, although already alluded to, needs a more careful consideration. It is the possibility of so-called "critical states," or interregnums of consciousness. They appear to accompany the transferring of the consciousness from one plane to another on all the planes to which the human mind is capable of penetrating. While their duration may be almost infinitely brief, there is also the undoubted possibility of the interregnum being infinitely prolonged. If the entity have progressed sufficiently to either retain, or to quickly regain, his consciousness during these transitions, he is safe; not otherwise. A soul which almost wholly fails to make the necessary progress upon a given plane, can not expect to be in a position to grapple successfully with the new and unfamiliar conditions governing a higher, when the changing cycles and material conditions force this upon him. He will experience an "interregnum" of consciousness; and while such a state is not annihilation, it approaches this so closely that it practically amounts to the same thing.

For what pleasure attends upon an existence of which the soul is not conscious? All through the Secret Doctrine runs the warning that even Paranirvana (the highest state of existence conceivable) without Paramartha (the consciousness of consciousness, or self-consciousness) is simply "extinction for seven eternities," or, in other words, for the unthinkably immense period involved in a Great Pralaya, or the subjective rest of the entire Kosmos. In the inward sweep of the Great Breath of life, or that towards subjective conditions of existence, upon the dissolution of any plane of materiality all the entities incapable of maintaining their self-consciousness under the new conditions must experience one of these immense interregnums, and await a new opportunity during another great manifestation of the material aspect of existence. The vast majority of all entities in any universe must be so overtaken by these lapses, but they are safe; they have not arrived at the self-conscious stage of their evolution; they are a part of the great stream, and may safely trust their fate to its infinite currents. But how about that entity who has become self-conscious, and has taken the helm for himself?—who personally guides his future course, and is personally responsible for his success or failure? Into what dark pathways of semi- and then un-conscious states may he not direct his feeble craft? If he dares to steer out of the common course, can he hope to profit by the common stream? If he loiters upon pleasant banks, picking sensuous flowers, until the summer suddenly dries up the stream, can he appeal to the great receding ocean to flow backward because of his foolish needs? Already is the warning sounded in the Secret Doctrine that as a humanity we are five thousand years behind where we ought to be in the normal course of our evolution upon this earth, under its present condition of materiality.

Let us look these possibilities seriously in the face. He who drifts along, dreaming of some foolish, illogical heaven which shall endure for all the eternities which are to come, is but preparing himself for one of these terrible lapses of consciousness. He who accepts the

materialistic hypothesis of life, who thinks that death will end the existence of that within his own bosom, which speculates, hopes or fears, is equally weaving about himself the conditions which will overpower him when the supreme struggle to win a foothold in the land of the gods confronts him. Each false philosophy or foolish theology, each erroneous view of life, is paving the way for its votaries to plunge into these abysses of unconsciousness!

How important, then, that we grasp the full significance of cycles! Not an idle injunction is that of the Gentile adept to make "our peace, our calling, and our election sure." The choice is ours to profit or not by the opportunities now afforded us. If we do not, shall we arraign the justice of nature because we have let the spring pass without sowing grain? Each day, each hour, has its opportunities, its duties, and its responsibilities; and while nature is almost infinitely patient, yet even her patience ceases when the great Cycle strikes the time for Universal Rest, and she forgets that foolish virgins were ever entrusted with the lamps of divine Wisdom to guide their footsteps among the pitfalls of sentient life.

CHAPTER V.

KARMA AND REINCARNATION.

THAT the human soul is a stable center of consciousness performing a pilgrimage through an evolutionary cycle of Necessity by means of alternating periods of objective and subjective existence, is a fact supported by the most incontrovertible evidence.* The objective portion of this cycle is that which we know as a human life; the subjective is ushered in by the change we miscall death, and upon whose alleged conditions of existence Western theology has put forward such curiously unphilosophical speculations. Passing all the crude and childish eschatology of Western religious systems by, and also declining to consider the equally illogical position of those Western materialists who deny the existence of the soul, we will proceed directly to the task of studying the action of the law of cause and effect upon the phenomenon of the return of the soul from subjective to objective existence, commonly referred to as its Reincarnation.

A soul may be defined as a center of consciousness arising within the Absolute. It is the conscious aspect of the Absolute limited and defined by the matter-aspect of the same Absolute. It is the opposite of matter in that it is dimensionless, eludes analysis, and is capable of infinite expansion without changing its essential nature or attributes, while the slightest change in either the chemical or physical relations of physical molecules changes the nature of "matter" completely. Thus, conditions of temperature change water into ice or steam; while some unknown rearrangement of the atoms within the same molecule causes such widely differing qualities as are seen,

*For the philosophical, scientific, and phenomenal proofs of Reincarnation, consult "Reincarnation," by E. D. Walker; "Reincarnation," by Mrs. Annie Besant; and "Reincarnation, a Study of the Soul," by the author of this work—all or any of which may be obtained of any Theosophic Publishing Company.

for instance, in oil of turpentine and oil of lemon, which have precisely the same chemical constitution.

The philosophy of Theosophy teaches that the manifested universe is ensouled by an infinite number of these centers of consciousness, or souls, at infinitely varying stages of their evolutionary journey, and that it is the object of evolution to widen the sphere of consciousness of that which starts on its cycle of necessity as an atom-soul into a center whose conscious sphere embraces worlds and universes. Throughout the whole process it is the same center which possessed in potentiality all the infinite attributes of its Absolute Source, and which potentialities the process of evolution calls into active potencies as the experiences of the soul includes larger and larger areas of consciousness. But these constantly widening experiences of the soul bring it of necessity into relation with lower entities in very different states of consciousness. This is the key to the solution of the mystery of a thinking, reasoning soul inhabiting an animal body—a body whose consciousness, at the very best, can only be classed as sensuous. The relation of the soul to its body is, as we have seen,* both for the purpose of widening its own conscious area through the experiences had by means of that body, and for bestowing its own higher essence upon the lower entities, or souls, who are normally associated with the matter of which the body is built up. All the multiple relations which the soul sustains toward the entities composing its body, as well as the relations set up with other souls not so intimately associated with it as those constituting its own habitation, are karmic—fall entirely under the supervision of the law of cause and effect. The relations to parents, community, nation, and race are also not in any sense fortuitous, but are all definitely determined through the same law. It will be seen, therefore, that the workings of Karma in the process of incarnation are so vast and far-reaching as to permit of only a hasty consideration, in a work like the present. A full examination would require, and fur-

*Chap. III.

nish the materials for, a complete philosophy of life. Only the most superficial glance can therefore be had at this time, and enquirers are referred to the works already mentioned* for fuller information.

The karmic relation of the soul to its own body is one that ought to be understood, but one which is, strange to say, entirely ignored by both the Christian religion and Western philosophy. The hierarchies of entities ensouling the "matter" of which the body is built up are all below the thinking plane, and most of them even below that of desire. The consciousness of the myriads of cells, for instance, every one of which even science admits possesses a life of its own, is very far below the plane of sense-consciousness. Yet, low as is this cell-consciousness when related or compared with mentality, it is nevertheless directly affected by the incarnation of the thinking soul, and its faintly budding desires turned in selfish or unselfish directions accordingly as the thoughts and habits of the soul are gross or pure. Below the cells, again, are the hosts of lower "lives," which are constantly incarnating and reincarnating, in order to maintain the life of the cell. These receive a like pure or impure impress; so much so that those from grossly impure bodies seek, or are attracted to, the bodies of animals—a teaching the misunderstanding of which has led to the absurdly incorrect idea of metempsychosis, or that the human soul can descend into the body of an animal. It can do no such thing, of course; the lesser can not contain the greater in consciousness any more than it can in physics; but these lower lives can and do descend, under the bestial impress of the sensualist, to the very lowest animal bodies. Thus, each soul is making the very world he gets his body from either the better or the worse for its having lived in it. More than this, the karmic relation is established so firmly that at succeeding incarnations these same elemental or atom entities are again attracted into the body which the soul constructs for its new habitation, and there tend to draw it down to the plane of its former animal desires and habits. So that he who thinks that death

*Loc. Cit.

will forever relieve him of a body with which he has become justly disgusted is making a mistake which his religious teaching in the West entirely fails to point out, but which is nevertheless most serious.

Farther than this, in associating itself with a definite human body, the soul establishes definite relations with the human elemental which synthesizes that body. By the act of incarnation it assumes the responsibility of guiding this irrational entity, whose only consciousness is that of instinct and sensuous desire, until it shall have developed to the full stature of a thinking, reasoning man. The karmic tie is as close as the association is intimate. The struggle to overcome and spiritualize these sensuous desires, now blazing up under the fierce stimulus of mentality, of recollection and anticipation, is a most arduous one, and occupies hundreds and hundreds of lives, and eons of time. He who has learned to dislike the body with which he finds himself associated, and fancies that death will relieve him of it forever, makes the same mistake, and from the same causes, as the last mentioned. The atoms come and go many times in the course of even one life, but the association of the soul with this which is known as its "personality" is continuous, until that lower entity shall have attained birth into the realms of mental egohood, or else until the true ego shall have been overpowered in the fight, and a "lost soul" result. Life after life the association is renewed; slowly the budding soul widens its powers and makes stronger and still stronger efforts to free itself from the domination of the raging desires of its lower associate. Every effort, or struggle; every weakness, or vacillation, yielding, or temporizing—all are under the law of cause and effect, and the effect adjusted to the cause by the immutable decrees of Infinite Wisdom. The yielding to the desires of the flesh to-day only makes the struggle harder to-morrow; each sin or vice whose effects we fancy we have eluded only awaits us in some future life, when we will be, perhaps, not so well prepared to pay the karmic debt. So that he who recognizes the relation his soul bears

to his body—that it is under the inviolable law of cause and effect, and that he can neither evade nor be forgiven the consequences of any act, will see the necessity of taking his lower nature sternly in hand, bearing also in mind the promise—which is but an exemplification of the law—that the enemies he slays in this life will not return to fight him in the next.

Desire and attachment, under the law of Karma, govern rebirth wholly; the variations and differences surrounding the soul's reincarnation are but the differentiations of the one principle, Kama, or desire, as distinguished from mentality above and instinct below. The universal desire to live which tends to preserve and maintain life on the objective plane brings each soul back unfailingly. Then, differentiated desires attract to some particular race; others still more specialized will take it to country and nation. Then, individual thoughts and acts assume control, and land the soul among those for whom it has formed strong attachments, or whom it has hated very intensely. These will form its immediate social environment—its parents, brothers and sisters, and so on. There is no attraction which will guide a soul to certain individuals more surely than the intimate and loving association growing out of a former parental relation; thus effectually barring the possibility of separating those who truly love each other by any gulf of death, however wide this may seem to yawn. True love is a force as potent and as sure as is so-called gravitation, and will as surely bring loving souls together as that the latter will keep the planets in their places. It will bring together lovers, whom parental love or other karmic causes has caused to incarnate in widely separated families, from the very ends of the earth by means, perhaps, of those vaguely understood impulses and desires to change one's location which are so often quickly followed by marriage.

In short, the action of the law of cause and effect, guided by love and affection, would be perfect were humanity but a little farther advanced on the pathways of peace. As it is, its effects are but too often nullified by the surrender of the soul to its lower instincts and

passions. The child who has become indifferent to its parents will have to take parentage among those indifferent to it, but whose characters are sufficiently similar to attract it to them, and which very similarity of passions and desires makes an unhappy childhood almost inevitable. In like manner, upon reincarnating, parents who have ceased to love and become indifferent to their children must take those similarly unloving who come without this attraction; with whom they have never before, perhaps, been associated, and who are more than likely to bring but woe and sorrow into their lives.

Under this general attraction of similar characters too many souls now return to rebirth. Indeed, among some families hatred is quite as potent an attraction as love, and is continually rebinding together those who would seek the ends of the earth to avoid each other had they the disposal of their incarnations. The fateful "attraction of repulsion," exemplified in electricity, brings them together again and again, until they at last are compelled to learn the lesson of tolerance and forbearance. For only indifference will cut souls asunder, with either love or hate this is impossible. The soul, therefore, which rejoices and exults in the strength and intensity of its hatred of another little dreams how surely it is binding itself to that other—which is but another illustration of the utterly wrong teachings of our Western religions and philosophies. The former has provided an eternal hell for those whom they hate—or whom God hates, which amounts to the same thing,*—vainly imagining they have severed disagreeable associates from them forever.

Many Theosophists, it seems to the writer, take too mechanical a view of the process of reincarnation. Thus, all manner of speculations are indulged in as to the time occupied in the subjective state; some setting the figures at from 1,500 to 3,000 years; others at 500 to 1,000 years, while others are inclined to still further shorten the period; which all seem to think rests upon some such cyclic law as

* No teaching of an eternal hell appears in Jewish theology until after the captivity; it was apparently conceived through the violence of Jewish hatred for their captors, and added to their eschatology in order to adequately punish those who so oppressed them.

governs the revolution of the earth around the sun, for example. Cycles of consciousness are of necessity the exact opposites of cycles of matter—such as the revolution of the earth around the sun, instanced above. Therefore, the one affords no data whereby to estimate the periods of the other. While the time between two earth lives may reach or exceed 1,500 years, the important thing to remember is that earth years do not govern the return, as is commonly supposed. Were each soul independent of all other souls when the subjective cycle closed by the cessation of the impulses which maintain the soul upon this plane, reincarnation would normally occur. But this is not the case, so that Karma, acting from many directions, brings the soul back when the sum of karmic attractions are from the objective plane, irrespective of whether the time be long or short, or whether or not the soul has completed its normal subjective existence. Thus, strong affection may draw the soul of a beloved child into incarnation before it has experienced any devachan at all, and many souls are undoubtedly drawn to immediate rebirth who would have normally spent many years, or perhaps centuries, in the subjective state. Those well-authenticated cases where a child well along towards man- or woman-hood reincarnates in the same family, and often retains the memories of its preceding incarnation, are directly in point. Given strong, unselfish parental affection for a deceased child, and, if other karmic causes permit, a reincarnation again of the same soul to the same parents is inevitable. Like causes produce like results, not alone in the realm of physics, but upon every plane of nature.

The law of cause and effect, then, guided by or expressing Infinite Wisdom, governs reincarnation from its every aspect. It brings the soul to its own through the causes set up by love; it brings to the soul all its former qualities through the law of the conservation of conscious energy, which is but a phase of the many-sided action of Karma. For if the working of the law is so certain and definite in the external relations of the soul, be assured it is equally so in the dealings of the soul with itself. He who widens his sympathies by

altruistic labor, who builds up the power of endurance by toil and self-denial, who adds to his store of wisdom by unceasing effort, will find that he has invoked the law of Infinite Justice, and will surely come into his own heritage. Genius is but the karmic result of effort applied to some definite end throughout, perhaps, many lives. On the other hand, those who are limited, vexed and perplexed, who have little wisdom or discretion, for whom a bitter fate ever lies in wait, are but reaping their own sowing in former lives.

So the lives of men flow on—sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind, until one almost despairs for the race. The ideals, incentives, motives of the men of to-day; their petty aims, ambitions and thoughts; their unblushing and unbridled passions—to what can all this lead but to karmic woe unspeakable? Therefore it is, as declared by a Master of Eastern Wisdom, that there is no teaching so important as this of Karma and its twin and companion, Reincarnation, for until these are understood men will still regard this life from the ignorant, foolish standpoint of the one-life theory, and will rake the muck heaps of matter for their evanescent satisfaction. The perspectives of life must widen before men will take the larger view; but when through the vistas of reincarnation they perceive the myriads of lives which await them upon this earth under these material conditions, each life the result of the causes set up in past ones, then will they become more philosophical, more unselfish, and infinitely more happy.

CHAPTER VI.

KARMA, AND POST-MORTEM STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

THE law of Cause and Effect is absolute upon every plane of consciousness within the universe; therefore, its action is as certain when the soul is no longer connected with a body as it is when that soul is incarnated. A moment's thought will convince any one that the commonly accepted opinion that the soul generates no new causes after passing out of the body is untenable; it would imply a chaotic plane in nature where this supreme law did not obtain. The manifested universe is but a continuous sequence of causes and their effects, and to assert their cessation, therefore, is just as serious an error as to suppose that death ends all human existence. Indeed, both are of the same nature, and both due to much the same cause. Death is looked upon by the materialist as annihilation because the modes of being differ so greatly in the objective and the subjective phases of life that he does not link the one with the other. Similarly, the action of Karma differs so greatly in the subjective, after-death, state from its action in objective existence that the untrained observer thinks that it has ceased to act altogether. Faulty methods of reasoning and imperfect observation are the causes of the error in both instances. Nothing can be more certain than that sequences of causes and their effects govern the after-death states; it only remains, therefore, for us to study the modes of karmic action under these conditions. With the vast majority of mankind, the after-death states of consciousness are wholly subjective; therefore, new karmic causes which bind the soul to its fellows, or to its environment, are not engendered; the soul is related solely to itself. There is no true self-consciousness or consciousness of the "me" and "not me," except in the very rare cases of the Adepts, if we except a portion of

the state technically known as "kama loca." In this latter condition, too, the soul is not yet in a completely subjective state; it still receives external impressions and constructs its partly subjective, partly objective environments oftentimes very largely in response to these impressions.

The after-death states of consciousness are almost wholly the effects of causes set up while in the body. They are technically classified as "Kama Loka," "place of desire," and "Devachan," meaning broadly "land of the gods." The first, the writer inclines to believe, is an abnormal and unnecessary state of consciousness, brought about by ignorance, wrong conceptions of life, and false teachings upon the mental, and by disease, accident, or violence cutting short the normal term of life, upon the physical side of its causes. Abnormal causes must be followed by abnormal effects, and this kama loca state is an awful example of the possibilities of erroneous teachings and unrestrained passions in producing strange and terrible byways of consciousness into which normal and wholesome evolution would never lead the soul.

The phenomenon of death leaves the soul bodiless so far as physical form is concerned, but with all the dominant thoughts of its physical life in active operation. Desire, in one or more of its multitudinous forms, is the dominant mode of consciousness during this portion of the evolutionary arc of humanity; and the soul which passes away with the fierce longing for sensuous pleasures still raging within it will continue to be the same fiercely desiring soul after death has deprived it of a body. But its consciousness, viewed from the bodily plane, is as truly subjective as is that of a dream in the great majority of cases. Abnormal death, as we have seen, must produce abnormal states of consciousness, and that soul who is torn out of the body by accident, suicide or disease, while the bodily activities are in their full strength and vigor, can not pass into the same state, mentally, as one who has completed his normal life cycle. These unfortunates, and especially suicides, are often in most un-

happy conditions; neither sleeping nor waking, neither dead nor alive. Many of these retain a sufficiently material astral body (torn out of the physical one) to permit them to plainly perceive what is transpiring upon earth, although even these are unable to communicate except through abnormally constituted persons, or "mediums"—who are themselves as much upon the astral plane as upon that of earth, and having as genuinely a diseased astral as any hyperesthetic or neuralgic has a diseased physical body.

But still the broad rule obtains, and it will always be well to return to it when in doubt, that without physical molecules contact with physical matter is impossible, and this is the condition of most of the dead. Even the Adept has to carefully (and by persisting through more than one life) build for use a special astral, or *Nirmanakaya*, body, by which to cognize physical things. Without this, or its transient imitation resulting from violence, the recently dead are at once removed from all knowledge of or contact with the earth. Their life, however, is not subjective merely because of this. They are still able to externalize to a limited degree astral environments, although in the absence of any true self-consciousness upon this plane of matter their own subjective thoughts, taking form through their image-making power, will always be mixed and confused with these environments. When the soul shall cease to respond to the clamors of its lower associate by thus terminating its active cycle and passing into latency, then the purely subjective state of Devachan supervenes. Here there is absolutely no response to or knowledge of environment; the world of the dreaming entity is created by his own thought alone, and here, naturally, the action of Karma will again materially differ from its modes upon lower planes.

Keeping this teaching in mind, we may now proceed to an analysis of the workings of Karma in these two after-death states. There are, of course, other and higher states of consciousness; but these two include all that can be properly classified as after-death states, in the sense that they depend upon the dissolution of the physical

body for their supervening upon the ordinary sense-consciousness, and that the immense majority of all human souls must pass into them when death overtakes them.

The kama loca state is the effect of the lower, or sensuous and intellectual, actions of the soul while in the body, modified to some degree by its astral surroundings. The devachanic is due wholly to the higher, spiritual thoughts and aspirations of the soul while likewise entombed within the body. The actions and thoughts of almost the whole of the Western world, their motives, ideals, aspirations, occupations—in short, their whole life—tend to create only kama loca effects. They are all on the sensuous plane; they all pertain to sensuous or intellectual gratifications. Whether the desire be for riches, fame, pleasure, or power, the dominating ideas are upon self, and the direction of the thought earthward. Hence, in the subjective struggle, with its new and uncanny environments, when the soul finds itself out of its body all its desires will rage earthward. Half-conscious of the unreality, and wholly conscious of the unsatisfactory nature of its present environments, the soul struggles earthward with all its powers; and, if it chance to come into contact or "*rapport*" with a medium, it is once more fairly within the play of cause and effect upon the self-conscious plane of life, and can generate new and tremendous causes for which it is wholly responsible, and whose effects will be as far-reaching as the same causes would have been had they been set up while it was still in the body.

Here, then, is a plane where cause and effect run just as they do in the body. The executed criminal, the robber, the murderer, the depraved sensualist, in the worst sense of this term, who parade themselves to their mediumistic victims as angels of light; "guides" who use the credulity and trust of the foolish to betray them into lax morality or wantonness for the satisfaction of their own devilish desires—is it to be supposed that the law of cause and effect takes no note of these? It certainly does; and as the causes are set up on the astral plane, or by an entity who is normally upon this plane, their effects

must, by the laws of analogy, run out or take place also upon the astral plane. What new woes such astral criminals bring upon themselves it were useless to conjecture; but we may rest assured that since such acts bring about the very worst of all punishments when done in the body, they must work unutterable woe to those who take advantage of the most sacred feelings—the intense desire of mortals still in the body to reach their loved ones, snatched from them by death—in order to gratify their own unnatural and unholy longings. Many of these *succubi* and *incubi*—these executed “pirates,” or almost wholly depraved wantons—who live upon the life forces of their helpless victims will probably never reincarnate, but will plunge lower and lower, separate themselves farther and farther from all that is divine within themselves, until they at last are caught in the fatal maelstrom of the mysterious eighth sphere, and go down to eternal extinction.

A few degrees higher is the plane of the astral light where the great mass of mankind find themselves after death. They know nothing of earthly doings, or of earthly life except as they construct a kind of unreal environment out of their astral surroundings, and color and people it with their own fancies. But this is by no means the dream of devachan, upon which they enter later. It is composed wholly of earth desires; it is the unconscious struggling of the soul to return to that life it so dearly loved. Indeed, it requires after death quite as much effort and trust to drop quickly into the devachanic condition as it does to resign ourselves to the unknown mysteries of sleep during our waking existence, and often in both instances the soul must be overcome with fatigue before it will yield. The *kama loka* state is first created and then almost indefinitely prolonged by the earthward desires of the soul, just as sleep may also be indefinitely put off by the soul persisting in fixing its attention upon the affairs of waking life.

But the karmic effect of these acts and thoughts is but to prolong the *kama loka* state; they produce little or no moral karmic effects

Sooner or later, the wearied soul will yield to the wooings of nature's sweet restorer, and will sink into a slumber which will rest it to its very heart's core. For rest consists not in oblivion; its purest essence is complete change of occupation. And in this devachanic sleep subjective life is truly entered upon, and the conditions of existence are so wholly altered that the change is rest, indeed.

For here the soul knows naught of earth, in any sense. No vibration from that harsh realm of toiling and struggling, of suffering and sorrow, disturbs its perfect repose; no memory of its loved and lost brings even the shadow of a grief to mar its perfect peace. It has become a thinking center; it contends no longer with external thought in any form; it has formed itself into that perfect sphere from which all external vibrations glance aside; it is a unit of consciousness again; once more One with the All.

But its dreams—if such vivid and real visions can be compared to dreams—are again wholly due to causes set up in its waking life. All the higher impulses and unrealized longings find now their full fruition. Its loved ones are with it; all pain, trouble, or sorrow have not only fled, but their very memory, even, has passed away; it knows not that such things ever were. Its heart moves to the perfect rhythm of the harmonious Over Soul, of which it is again an integral part. It were idle to suppose its perfect happiness rests upon its visions alone; sight is but a single differentiation of that perfect consciousness which it now enjoys. The music is in the ear, not in the instrument; and the peace is in the soul, not in its imaginary environments.

Here the great law of Karma is in full activity. Far above the soul's present state of consciousness (for it is not self-conscious in devachan), undisturbed by the interference of the constant interjection of new causes, the law is taking these visions, these high and holy aspirations, and weaving them into the spiritual character of the true man. It is the assimilation of the fruits of the last life's acts; the garnering of its varied experiences. The soul is as unconscious

of what is taking place as it now is that the body is assimilating the nourishment necessary to its preservation; both are far removed from the plane of self-consciousness, and both illustrate the perfect working of the divine law of Karma, although no ideative or self-consciousness be involved in the process. It is that perfect harmony between the cause and the effect which accompanies the action of the divine consciousness both above and below the planes of thought.

Yet even the length of this state of bliss depends upon the causes set up while in the body; no new ones can be generated to either prolong or shorten it, as is the case upon the kama loca planes. If sufficient spiritual aspirations, if enough unselfish acts and thoughts have been engendered, then the soul will have a proportionately long devachan, or heaven (this state is the basis for all the extravagant speculations or theories concerning "heaven,"); if not, then the devachan will be proportionately brief. But immediate reincarnation must not be inferred as the fate of all souls whose devachanic dream ceases. There are other modes of karmic law which must be recognized, and one of the most important of these is that the karmic ties set up between individuals are stronger than any devachanic dream or its mere cessation. If the dream shall have ceased, and none of those having karmic ties with the soul are already in incarnation, it may have to pass a long period in one of those mysterious "interregnums of consciousness" before opportunity is again afforded to take up its old earth life.

The action of Karma in binding the soul to those it loves or hates is one which forever removes the law from the domain of blind or mechanical force, however difficult it may be to conceive of its mode of motion, or the manner in which its decrees are carried into effect. But all its decisions are wrapped in the same profound darkness, if traced to their ultimates, for Karma is the Will of the Infinite, and is not to be conceived of, or analyzed, by finite understandings. Of this we may be sure, however, that no power on earth or in heaven can separate souls who truly love, or who truly hate. As surely as

the needle turns to the pole, so surely will these be again and again associated in the closest of human relationships until the force of the bond is weakened by the neutral state of indifference. This is the explanation for the intense affections which so suddenly arise between two apparent strangers, and which continues to the day of their death—aye, and after. It also explains those cases of unnatural hatreds between members of the same family; and, indeed, exemplifies most clearly the fact that Karma takes note of the moral and emotional causes with the same unerring wisdom, and adjusts their effects just as certainly as it adjusts effects to causes upon the plane of molecular physics.

So far from the after death states being karmaless, then, the action of the law of cause and effect is seen in its highest and most divine aspects. It sifts, separates, and adjusts all of the almost innumerable causes set up in earth life, to their appropriate effects; each effect in turn appearing as a new cause until the past is securely woven into the very being of the soul, and the new character crystallized into the unit entity, or assimilated with and become a part of the very essence of the soul. It has also brought to the soul the cup of devachanic bliss, without interfering with its other and deeper action. It has secured to the soul the presence of its beloved during this dream of bliss; and has likewise assured the actual bodily association of the soul with these same beloved companions in the next earth life. What higher, more divinely compassionate view of the Dark Source of all life can there be than is afforded by the study of these revealed glimpses of the Divine Will thus shaping our ends, "rough hew them though we may," into the pathways of peace! So that we can lay our bodies away, and enter upon the long rest of the after-death states of being with the full realization that we are just as safe—more safe, if such a thing could be—as when we compose ourselves to slumber at the end of a day's toil. We rest, indeed; but Karma, the tireless, infinite Will of Divinity, is ever at work in that wondrous process of mental assimilation, so that when we reappear upon the arena

of active, self-conscious causation, we are all our past; every thought, word, or deed has been by Karma, in some divinely incomprehensible manner, woven into and become a part of that mysterious center, or unit of consciousness, our human-soul.

CHAPTER VII.

KARMA AND SEPTENARY MAN.

AS ALL great truths may be viewed from many aspects, so the bringing of any tenet, dogma, or even philosophy under the measuring wand of Karma will prove helpful and instructive. For Karma is the one great truth, underlying every phenomenon in nature, and every phenomenon must be expressed in karmic terms at its last analysis.

Much of the doubt, confusion, and uncertainty surrounding the study of the (so-called) compound nature of man may be removed by bringing the septenary division of his being into its proper karmic adjustment. Assuming the soul to be that which it undoubtedly is, a center, or unit, of consciousness, then the whole, formidable array of its "Principles" are but its karmic relations to the Infinite, and to other units of consciousness. Let us say that it has at some—it matters not what—point in eternity differentiated (*why*, we know not; *how*, we know not) within the Oversoul, and so become a center of consciousness. It holds within it, but only potentially, all that we can ever dream of as god-like, or even infinite, consciousness. To make these divine potentialities actual potencies, it is dependent almost wholly upon its brother-souls; it must assimilate their consciousness, or make their conscious experiences its own; else would the cycle of necessity become the cycle of infinity; the goal would never be reached. At the same time, it is aiding other unit-souls through its own conscious experiences; but that which it gives, when compared with that which it receives, is but as the drop to the ocean.

To assimilate experience, it must, during a large portion of its journey through matter, believe itself to be the experiencer; it must imagine itself to belong to, and to be an entity upon, the plane in which it is gaining the experience. This is the necessity for the

"great heresy" of separateness into which it falls when its plunge into matter is complete. This false feeling of separateness so engendered is the great *Maya*—the illusion of all illusions.

Let us take the present status of the human soul as an illustration. We are taught that it has passed through all the lower kingdoms of this planet and has assimilated their consciousness. It does not follow from this that it ever was a vegetable or an animal upon this earth; but that it fell under the illusion of feeling itself to belong to these kingdoms undoubtedly does so follow. In former world periods, and upon suns and planets whose very remembrance has faded from the heart of nature so distant had they their fleeting life, the human soul had already widened its conscious area until these lower states of mineral, vegetable, and animal consciousness had been left eons behind; yet this "new heaven and new earth" which it here encountered had wisdom and power in store for it, as well as karmic duties to perform for the entities embodied in these lowly material conditions. So, trusting the Divine law, and its own Higher Self (the great Over-soul), it plunged fearlessly into these kingdoms; identified its consciousness with these new conditions, and so made their states of consciousness actually its own. Do we not find analogical proof of this teaching in its present condition? What is easier of demonstration, both theoretically and practically, than that the soul is not its body? Yet do not the overwhelming majority of mankind now believe themselves to be their bodies? Do they not say "*I am hungry,*" "*I am cold,*" "*I desire wealth or fame,*" when the true soul neither feels nor desires any of these things?

The soul is just beginning to emerge from the animal kingdom, wherein for weary ages it has been assimilating the passionate experiences of the animals without ever for a single moment having been one, although it has believed, and still believes, itself to be but a kind of higher ape. It is associated with an animal body; into all of whose appetites and desires, passions and emotions, it enters as fully as if they were its own, which, as we have said, it verily believes. When

it shall have completely emerged from the animal and entered the human or thinking kingdom it will still believe itself to be in essence a thinker; and only when thought itself has been surpassed will it rejoin its divine source, and at last recognize what it is, as well as the nature of the great illusion through which it has passed.

Man's Principles, then, are the various hierarchies of conscious entities with which he must associate himself, *volens volens*, while upon his journey through the great Cycle of Necessity. From many planes of consciousness he synthesizes them, for he is the microcosm of the macrocosm, and he must leave no plane behind in his onward march. He is the Son of Eternity; he carries the burden of the ages with him; therefore, is it necessary that he assimilate the consciousness of all lower hierarchies as he sweeps along. He synthesizes hosts of entities, whose consciousness is normally upon the molecular plane, into his body, which thus becomes the Principle which enables him to relate his thinking soul to the consciousness of these entities. By this association, he imparts the essence of his own consciousness to them; he advances or retards them; he makes them better or worse for his having been associated with them in the intimacy of incarnation. Thus he sets up almost infinite causes which bind him to his body and to rebirth, for he himself must experience their effects, which he can only do in the body and upon the molecular plane. While hosts of these lowly entities are karmically bound to the race at large, so to speak, it is at once apparent that other hosts must become bound to each separate soul, so individual and particular becomes the connection of cause and effect. This is what constitutes man the microcosm of the macrocosm—the karmic bonds which he of necessity must establish with entities upon every plane of the cosmos which he reaches.

Upon the astral plane, into which the physical passes by imperceptible degrees, he has set up other karmic associations, the lowest of which produce that Principle known, technically, as the *Linga Sharira*, and the higher hierarchies of which fuse into his "Kama

Rupa," or body of passions and desires. His body itself is synthesized (as are the bodies of the animals) by an entity whose consciousness is wholly upon the plane of desire, except when temporarily lifted above this because of the presence of the thinking soul during the intimacy of incarnation. This desire-consciousness is the highest normal consciousness of any of the hosts of entities which compose the hierarchies of man's microcosm, while that of many of these do not even reach up to this plane. Therefore, when the soul falls under the influence of, let us say, anger, Theosophists say it is functioning through its fourth, or kamic, Principle; that it is using its "animal soul," etc., greatly to the confusing of the lay public, who cannot understand these various "souls." If Theosophists would first clearly comprehend, and then teach, that by "functioning in its fourth Principle" they mean that the soul has identified itself with and mistakes the consciousness of the entities upon this plane for its own, the relations of the ego to its "souls," or Principles, would be much more easily understood. When it rises above the plane of desire, it is said to be "functioning" in its Fifth Principle, or that of thought, which, from its standpoint when functioning upon the plane of intuition, is just as great an illusion as when it fancies itself to feel the desires of its lower associates.

But in dealing with the Fifth Principle we are trenching too nearly upon the relations of the soul to the Infinite for the analogy to wholly, or even largely, apply. For the soul is not, in its divine unity, a mere mathematical point; it is during the first half of its cycle of necessity a conserver of conscious experiences (those received almost automatically during its sojourn in the more material states), and, during the latter portion, by virtue of its widened conscious area, a creator of conscious experiences, and thought is its agent in creating. So that upon the plane of thought it is beginning to exercise its god-like functions, and a goodly portion at least of its thoughts are its own. The soul itself has become a "mind-born son," through and because of its long cycle of evolution—which appears to be the only

logical reason for that weary cycle. The illusion consists in the fact that it considers the very essence of its being to be thought; it will discover its error when thought throughout the universe ceases.

All the other Principles relate the soul more directly with the Infinite, and not to its brother-souls. But all alike fall under the supervision of Karma. Prana, as the Life Principle is called, is that portion of the universal life principle which reaches the body through the agency of the "fiery lives," a differentiation or indirect wave from the same source which reaches the true soul directly. Atman, Buddhi, and Manas are but the triple aspects (although Atman is said, metaphysically, to include all below it) of the differentiated Monad, the Unit of Consciousness, which constitutes a true microcosmic (and macrocosmic) center. With the action of Karma upon these super-spiritual planes we are not at present concerned; they lie above the conscious levels to which we have so far attained. But we may be sure that the same omniscient certainty and divine impersonality obtains there which we see exemplified around us in nature, and with this we remain content.

CHAPTER VIII.

KARMA AND SUICIDE.

ONE of the strangest mysteries connected with human life is the possibility of apparently bringing it to a close at will. This possibility is, of course, only apparent—not by any means real. Were it truly within the power of the human soul to terminate its existence peremptorily—to annihilate that which before the act thought, willed, loved, hated, enjoyed, or suffered, no soul, however despairing seemed its condition, could ever nerve itself to the more than desperate deed. Both the belief and the act growing out of that belief are but on the surface, so to say; deep down within the soul knows that so-called death does not end its being; just as it likewise knows that the teaching of eternal punishment is not true, though superficially it may subscribe to, and fancy that it really believes in, this revolting dogma.

That the thought of self-destruction is one possible of conception in the human mind shows, more convincingly than any materialistic philosophy is capable of controverting, that the soul is independent of its body; is not the outcome of the chemical or physiological activities of this, nor in any way dependent upon these for its existence. Fancy a rock, a tree, or a flower, willing that its life shall cease! No matter how much the soul, through false conceptions caused by erroneous teachings, imagines itself to be identical with its body, the moment it raises its hand in attempted self-destruction it betrays the fact that it knows that it is not that body. Matter can not war against matter; duality supervenes when self is arrayed against even seeming self.

Since the soul is unquestionably free to quit its habitation whenever it chooses, and since this act, like every other phenomenon of existence or manifestation, falls under the law of cause and effect, what is the effect of suicide? What karmic results follow? What

has been accomplished by the forcible separation of soul from body? How has the suiciding entity changed his environments, altered his destiny, or escaped his fancied or real sufferings? And what portion of the man as he appears to mortal eyes has perished because of the act? How much has survived? and in what condition is that surviving portion? Where is it? What becomes of it? All these are questions which Theosophy alone is capable of satisfactorily answering. Its teachings of the complex nature of man enables it to point out where the forcible separation of the differing elements entering into man's complex being occurs; the knowledge of the divinely impersonal law of Karma enables the fate, or the effect following upon the heels of the cause set up by the act of suicide, to be traced; its doctrine of reincarnation, under this law of cause and effect, makes the chain of evidence complete, so that the sequence of suicide in all its ghastly bearings can be understood.

Let us first examine the teachings of Theosophy concerning the evolution and the complex nature of man, so that we may obtain an intelligible idea of what the act of suicide accomplishes in its forcible and premature separation of soul from body. Briefly stated, the philosophy of Theosophy recognizes in man three distinct evolutionary processes going on at the same time, which, though intermingling and interblending at all points, accomplish quite differing purposes in the evolutionary progress of the soul. These are the physical, the mental, and the spiritual. The physical pertains to the gross body of man, and to the appetites, passions and desires growing out of physical existence. The mental represents the widening of the consciousness through thought, and passes in its higher aspects into the spiritual. The spiritual is that broad, monadic or basic widening of consciousness in which all the egos or entities rooting in any particular plane or portion of it as their spiritual base equally share.

Although so closely interblended, each of these three streams of evolution is capable of being carried on independently of the others, and hence both a natural and an unnatural, or forcible, separation may

be brought about at two points in man's complex being. That is to say, man's spiritual nature can be separated from the mental, while both spiritual and mental may be separated from the purely physical. The latter is a perfectly normal process in the evolution of the soul, and occurs at each so-called death of the body; the other is always abnormal after consciousness has reached the human plane or condition. Merely physical evolution is suspended at each normal death of the physical body, and the lower mental evolution ceases at the same time as an active, fact-gathering process, and takes on a subjective, assimilative character. With the spiritual, or monadic, evolution we are not at present concerned. Consideration of the other two must be had, if we desire to intelligently pursue the nature and effects of suicide.

Man's body, considered as a merely physical organism, is not his own creation; he is a self-imposed tenant in addition to its normal occupant as completely as are the owls and rattlesnakes which invade the domicile of the prairie dog. His thought has acquired only a modifying potency so far as molecular matter is concerned, not a creative one. His body appears as the result of the thought of beings so powerful that the differing laws which appear to so blindly govern matter are but the expression of their wills. Under the mighty impulse, expressed in these laws of nature, hosts of lower entities—far below the self-conscious state—build up his physical form. Each cell is an entity, having its own proper consciousness; differing groups of these are again synthesized into organs and systems by entities higher in the evolutionary scale. The chief of all these is that "human elemental" which will be the next entity to step upon the human plane when we shall have become fitted to pass beyond this, and so enable it to make another advance in the ascending scale of evolution. This human elemental is the normal occupant before alluded to. It synthesizes the differing cells of the body, and attunes the aggregate consciousness of all these widely differing hosts and hierarchies of elemental beings ensouling the cells of the body into

its own proper consciousness—that of sense. The five senses belong wholly to it; and, if sensuous impressions reach the budding soul of man, it is because he is a co-tenant with this entity, and, through the mysterious intimacy of incarnation, is thus a co-experiencer of the sensuous vibration which constitute this mode consciousness.

This lower entity, with which the human soul is so intimately associated, which is now riding upon the crest-wave of purely physical evolution, and which it is the task of the associated human soul to first intellectualize and then to spiritualize, may carry on its evolution—or, rather, have this carried on for it by the will of high Creative Logoi—independently of the fact as to whether or not a human soul is associated with it in a helping or guiding capacity. Animals have precisely similar “elemental” souls, a step lower in the process of evolution, as their synthesizer and in which is stored the knowledge acquired by means of their sense experiences. Such animal souls pass through multitudes of experiences precisely equivalent to those of the purely human-animal; this experience is sufficiently individualized to require the preservation of the exact entity upon whose evolving brain the experience was alone impressed; therefore, if man has a soul, they have souls. It follows from this that it is quite possible for the human, or thinking, soul to leave its body, and that the latter would then be perfectly able to go on performing those functions necessary to merely animal existence. And it is also evident that when the normal life cycle of this lower entity terminated, the human soul would be compelled to abandon the dissolving habitation. This in truth is the normal process of death. No entity on the molecular plane of life is able to indefinitely prolong its existence; all alike, whether clothed in the form of a plant, an animal, or a man, must retire to subjective realms when their cycle of objective existence closes.

The nature of normal death is thus apparent. The life cycle of the body closes; the soul retreats to inner realms until its own recurring cycle of objective life permits it to again associate itself with an ele-

mental returning to incarnation. Indeed, it is its own personal elemental, associated with it in numberless past lives, which its energy causes to reincarnate. For once the human soul has associated itself with that elemental entity which it is its task to humanize, the karmic ties so set up become so strong that the elemental is gradually cut out, so to say, of the current of general evolution, and its future incarnations and progress become the specialized task of the human soul incarnating in its body. So that the "human elemental" no longer obeys the general law governing its own cycles of objective and subjective existence, but conforms its incarnations to the larger, more imperious cycles of the soul which has its evolution in charge. It returns to life under the impelling desire of this human soul; but, once returned, it blazes out into the full vigor of all its former sensuous nature, thus constituting that opposing force which the human soul needs in order to bring its potentialities into active potencies through the forced exercise of its faculties.

The primal relation of the soul to its body, and the nature of each before the incarnations began, is thus clearly apparent, and the phenomenon of normal death becomes equally clear. But we must analyze the human soul a step further before we can understand suicide clearly. For the suicidal act does not accomplish a mere separation of the soul from its animal host; did it do this only there would be no difference between the fate of a suicide and that of one who died a perfectly normal death.

If there be any meaning in existence, or in the great drama of evolution which we see being slowly enacted in nature about us as well as within our own souls, then this association of a thinking soul with an animal body can but have for at least a portion of its object the bringing into existence of a perfected human soul. This is the great teaching of Theosophy—that the primal, or atom, soul is capable, through its infinite experiences while journeying through its cycle of necessity, of evolving first into a man, and then—into a GOD. Therefore, that immense period of time during which the soul is accomplish-

ing the human stage only has been named by Eastern Sages a "manvantara," or "man-bearing" cycle. Technically speaking, this new "man" is brought into being by the true soul of man, or his Higher Ego, "sending out a ray," which ray incarnates in the human-animal form, and by the opportunities so afforded for struggle and growth at last becomes "like unto its Father in heaven." Put scientifically, the process is almost exactly analogous to that method of physical procreation known as budding, or fission. It is the mind separating a portion of itself, which portion, without lessening any of the functions, powers or glory of its parent, gradually grows into a complete and perfect a being as its progenitor. But this growth, or evolutionary becoming, is very gradual, and is the true reason for those almost numberless incarnations which are necessary for the final perfecting of the "budding soul" of the new man.* At each incarnation there springs up, concomitant with the evolution or growth of the human brain—and, indeed, causing that extraordinary development of the cerebral lobes in man by its presence and necessities—a more or less distorted image of its "Father in Heaven," which is the creation of the budding soul, and which plunges through life, guided as best it may by that Father in Heaven (whose voice is that of conscience), gathering all manner of sense experiences, struggling with, overcoming, or yielding to, its senseless (reasonless) elemental associate; and then, when the stormy life cycle of this is ended, returning (because the mental fission is not yet complete) to the bosom of that Father, and there dreaming in a kind of beautiful exteriorizing of its own thoughts (just as it in life exteriorizes its mentally perceived environments) the highest and most spiritual conceptions of which it was capable while in the body. This after-death state of the budding soul, technically known as Devachan, occupies most of the time between two earth lives, and is utilized to assimilate the wisdom growing out of its past experiences, and for its rest and strengthening for a future life struggle. Yet before the

*" When to the world's turmoil thy budding soul responds," etc.—Voice of the Silence.

"budding soul" can pass into this perfectly subjective state, it must be entirely dissociated from the disturbing clamors of its elemental, or animal, associate. So abnormally is human life now shortened by the ignorance of nature's laws, by wars, vices and crimes, that the elemental soul is but seldom permitted to entirely complete its objective life cycle, and to pass into latency at the death of the body. This fact is the chief reason for an after-death state of consciousness, technically known as *Kama loca*, in which the consciousness of the budding soul, though compelled to become subjective because of the death of the body, is still intermingled with that of the human elemental. Itself likewise without a body in which to experience sense consciousness, this elemental, being yet in full possession of its powers, rages furiously earthward, and, if it has gained the ascendancy in the last life, it is aided in this earthward tendency by all the perverted longings of the budding soul.

During life the purely sense consciousness of the human elemental is so confused with the intellectual consciousness of the budding soul that but few are able to distinguish between the two, and these only after the most arduous training. The ordinary individual speaks and thinks of himself as being hungry or thirsty, or as feeling this or that appetite or sensuous desire, when, in truth, these lower desires arise wholly in the consciousness of the human elemental with which he is associated, and are not his at all.

A little reflection will make this quite clear, although much reflection and effort are necessary before it becomes a portion of our normal consciousness. The essence of a human soul is thought; lower states of consciousness are foreign to it. No purely sense consciousness can affect it excepting only as it arouses or gives food for thought. No desires can be aroused in the budding soul except by and through thought. The normal longings of the soul are for intellectual possessions only; for things which afford food for thought. The whole of the immense mass of desires which are sensuous in their nature, such as the longings for riches, ease, epicurean gratifications, and so

on, have arisen in the budding soul because, in the intimacy of incarnation, it has mistaken the sense consciousness of the lower elemental for its own; confused things intellectual with those purely sensuous. It is as abnormal for a pure thinking soul to desire to taste rich food, for example, as it would be for a dog to bay the moon because of a longing to know the mysteries of spherical trigonometry.

Out of this strange interblending of two modes of consciousness, because of a thinking being having incarnated in a purely sensuous animal, there arises at each incarnation that strange anomaly, the lower self. In some instances it reflects back the glories of its Father in Heaven until all the world recognizes a saint; in others, when the elemental has conquered in the struggle, a devil incarnate is the result. Every person, without exception, feels these two conflicting forces within his breast, yet fails to recognize, because of our ignorant and false Western theology, the reason why he is so torn and distracted; why he is now urged to sin and vicious delights, and again aspires towards everything pure and holy. Theosophy throws the full blaze of reason upon this mystery. The budding soul is in the throes of a mental birth which occupies ages as mortals compute time; it has become so bewildered by the passion and clamor of this sense consciousness, which seems its own because of the intimacy of incarnation, that it believes itself to be that body which is only its temporary host; it mistakes the raging desires of the proper tenant and real owner of that body, the human elemental, for its own desires and passions; it surrounds these purely sensuous and animal delights with the glamour of its own creative thought; revels in them both in anticipation and in remembrance; builds the higher of them into the most gigantic ambitions and sensual gratifications; imagines the entire universe to have been called into being to afford it a foothold upon life, so inordinate becomes its vanity and egotism; thinks the sum of all possible human happiness consists in possessing the good things of life now, and in passing on at death to a heaven which, in most cases, its conceptions make fully as material, and with delights just as sensual, as earth.

One can perceive that, dying under this delusion, there must intervene a time in which to permit these sensuous longings to expire. For just as the budding soul and human elemental act and react upon each other during life, so do they likewise after death; the cycle of existence of the elemental being unnaturally prolonged by the forces of the desiring lower soul, while that soul in turn is prevented by the activities of its reasonless associate from entering into that which is its normal after-death condition—the peace and safety of its subjective, or devachanic, thought while resting “in the bosom of its Father in Heaven.”

What the act of suicide is and the conditions of consciousness it brings about, can, in view of this philosophy, be clearly understood. The suicide deliberately forces his budding soul out of the body while the passions and desires of that body, or those of the elemental soul, are in their full vigor. There is no hope of peace or rest for such a soul. It will be exactly the same deluded, despairing compound of human thoughts and elemental passions that it was before the act. There will be no relief from even the sufferings, however terrible they may have seemed, which led to the suicidal act. For here enters a most important law to know. It is that the subjective life of the soul will be dominated by the mass-chord, so to say, of its thoughts while in the body. Especially important, as determining and modifying this mass-chord, are the thoughts which are dominant in the mind at the moment of death. Life is a sequence which can not be interrupted, and the entity dying must perforce begin its new state out of the materials it takes over from the old; it is the same law which compels the association of ideas in life; only a supreme will may rise superior to it.

This fact is clearly set forth in the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita.*

*“He who closeth all the doors of his senses, imprisoneth his mind in his heart, fixeth his vital powers in his head, standing firm in meditation, repeating the monosyllable OM, and thus continueth when he is quitting the body, goeth to the supreme goal.”—Chap. VIII. “Those who worship the gods go to the gods, and those who worship me come unto me.”—Chap. VII. “This is dependence upon the Supreme Spirit, and he who possesseth it goeth no more astray; having obtained it, *if therein established at the hour of death*, he passeth on to Nirvana in the Supreme.—Chap. II, etc., etc.

Now, suicide is the most supremely selfish act of which the human soul is capable, however much the suicide may delude himself into thinking it is for the good of others; just as to sacrifice one's life to save or relieve others is the highest act of unselfishness within human power. The thoughts of the suicide are fixed with a terrific force upon self; his woes fill his mind completely; why has such suffering been permitted to come upon him? He will not face the dishonor, or misery, or pain, or other degradation which his own acts, either in this or some former life, have made an absolutely necessary condition to his evolutionary progress; he can not see his loved ones suffer (poor, contemptible weakness!); or for a thousand reasons, every one of which will be found, if analyzed, to be intensely selfish, he concentrates all his will upon the supremely selfish and cowardly deed, and tears his soul and its elemental associate together out of the body. The violence of the act may benumb his consciousness for a time, but very soon his new thoughts will begin to build themselves upon the old, and, though he may struggle ever so desperately, the old conditions will arise in his mind, the old suffering be re-enacted in his imagination, the old sequence or train of thought be pursued—all culminating in a repeating of the act of suicide,* which is not one whit the less terrible because it is enacted only in the imagination. *Only* in the imagination! Can all the agonies of physical pain equal, or even approach, mental suffering? Let the excuse for suicide itself answer. In ninety-nine cases out of an hundred men-

* While investigating the phenomena of spiritualism, some years since, the following illustration of the truth of this law occurred. A prominent spiritualist committed suicide by shooting himself in the head with a pistol. "Those who worship the gods, go to the gods," and this man actually "materialized" the evening of the day upon which the act was done, and continued to do so for some little time thereafter. At one of these materializations the writer was present. The ex-spiritualist became visible for a few moments, and then disappeared within the cabinet. While the sitters were awaiting some new "manifestation," there suddenly rang out the sharp report of a pistol shot. At first, the writer thought it but a bit of deception upon the part of the medium to make the seance more realistic, but the entire absence of any smell of powder in a small, closed room, and other necessary phenomena which would follow a real explosion, negatived this theory. He remained profoundly puzzled by the occurrence until Theosophy, later, afforded the wanting explanation. The act of suicide had been repeated by the unfortunate victim.

tal, not physical, distress has led up to the awful tragedy. So that he who hopes to escape any form of agony by suiciding makes a most terrible mistake. With all the energies of his being concentrated upon self, he can not hope the dominant ideas which will control future thoughts and imaginations to be other than those which led up to the act. Therefore, the wretched entity goes on living over the agony, and repeating the grewsome deed by which he fancied to escape that agony, until the normal term of his life cycle has elapsed, and the cessation of the activities of his own lower mind, and those of his elemental associate, permit him to at last reach the safety of subjective life, with its rest and peace. But no soul will ever repeat the act. Even the abyss between two lives is not deep enough to bury the effects of the awful experience, and no matter what sufferings may again overtake him (and those which he thought to escape by suiciding will surely confront him with added bitterness) he will not resort to this horrible method to avoid them. Something within will make him revolt and tremble at the first approach of the idea.

This, then, is the penalty which follows the sin of suicide—to live over the agony, and to repeat the dreadful crime, throughout weary, despairing ages of what would be time upon earth. For we must remember that the tragedy, although it may have taken years to lead up to and to weave in the final act, may upon this plane of finer substance and more rapid vibration be re-enacted in all its former horror, and with the utmost fidelity to the most minute detail, in the space of a very few minutes, at the most. Let him who doubts this reflect that the suicide reaches of necessity only the lowest and most material of the astral planes—that upon which most of the ordinary sense or chaotic dreams occur; and that just as rapidly as he can now dream, so can the suicide then experience. So that untold millions of times may he go on repeating his awful suffering—a suffering of which only those who have been afflicted with nightmare can form an adequate estimate. For the suicide is neither asleep nor awake, neither dead nor alive, and this state of consciousness, which is so ter-

rible even as the fleeting event of a moment in troubled sleep, becomes a permanent one for years of even astral time, with its lightning-like happenings.

Recognizing that the act of suicide, then, falls under the purview of the law of cause and effect, and recognizing, further, that life is continuous, and that the soul returns to earth life after life until its evolutionary tasks are completed, it is evident that the Theosophist looks upon suicide from this larger standpoint, and regards the ordinary reasons advanced for or against it as the result of a profound ignorance of the nature and functions of the soul, and as not worthy of even a passing mention. Among people who know nothing of the after-death states, who believe that one life ends the drama of existence, or else that the rest of eternity is spent in one eternal praise-service of some being who "saves" them, it was to be anticipated that only the effects upon this side of the grave would be considered, and that moral or legal right of the suicide to commit the act would alone be of interest. Such puerile discussions are brushed aside the moment the law of cause and effect in all acts or thoughts is recognized; they are dismissed as unworthy of even a moment's consideration, and the act of suicide is recognized as utterly unjustifiable under any conditions whatsoever, and as the most fatal mistake the human soul can make, in any event.

CHAPTER IX.

KARMA AND ACCIDENTAL DEATH.

IT MIGHT be supposed from the arguments brought forward in discussing the effect of suicide, in the preceding chapter, that a similar fate awaits all souls whose normal life-cycle is cut short by accident or violence. A little reflection, however, will quickly show that the two classes are divided by a chasm as marked as any to be found in the moral scheme of nature—and ethics or morals is at nature's heart, and demonstrable in her every method. This chasm is to be found in the dominant thought which will color the post-mortem state of the victim of accidental or violent death, as compared with the dominant thought which colors that of the suicide. The man "hurled into eternity" (as if one could be hurled either into or out of eternity!) will retain just the same character that he had before the accident. That he will be all that he was previously to his death as to appetites, passions and desires is true; but it is also true that he will be all that he was before in his higher, spiritual nature—a fact too often lost sight of when casting an after-death horoscope. Such an one will be morally certain to enter upon a subjective state which will almost exactly represent what his life would have been had he continued it in the body. His "dream"—which is not that of Devachan—will follow the lines which dominated that life at the time of death. The fact that he is the complete master of his mental surroundings may never dawn upon him; but, as surroundings respond to thought, he will gradually build up for himself a happier life, without realizing that it is not due to his apparently physical efforts; and so, little by little, he will idealize his state into the perfect peace of the devachanic condition. Besides, we are told that there are devas whose especial duty it is to protect infant and helpless souls while in the subjective condition, so that the class of accidental

deaths is fully guarded in all directions by the compassionate provisions of the Creative Logoi.

Many of these victims of untimely death are not aware that the great change has happened to them. So quickly do they pick up the thread of their old life that they have no suspicion it has been interrupted by an event which they, perhaps, greatly dreaded, and so they go on with their death dream, toil away at their daily vocations, engage in all their usual pleasures, until their normal life-cycle is closed, with no greater hardships or suffering than would have been their lot in the body. Many, however, are fully aware of what has occurred, and are full of wonder, and oftentimes delight, to find, after having been "killed" in some great battle, perhaps, that they are still alive. These are among the "spirits" who haunt mediums, and from whom almost all the accounts of "Summerland" are drawn. Not being able to pass into the normal subjective life of Devachan, not even knowing of its existence, they sincerely believe that their condition is that of all the souls of the dead; that their half-subjective, half-real and half-illusory contact with earth is the normal state of all after death. They realize that they are not really dead, and so they swarm back to earth; each unconsciously following the bent of his old inclinations. If he who was thrust out of his body by accident or violence was a selfish sensualist, he will haunt mediums and sensual places in the endeavor to gratify the old desires; if he was a philanthropist or lover of his fellow men, and, especially if he was a bit of an egotist, he will endeavor to teach or "guide" men into better ways. He will describe the beauties of "Summerland," the mistaken conceptions of death which prevail on the earth side of life, or, it may be, endeavor to teach some shallow and near-sighted philosophy of existence—shallow and near-sighted because he can not in any event exceed those which were his normal powers while he was in the body, and death has added little to his experience and nothing to his wisdom. After a time he may note the lessening of his hold upon earthly things, greet it with pleasure, and, supposing that he

has been able to obsess a medium, will notify his friends that after a brief period he will "pass on higher"; or the loosening of his earth-hold may terrify him, in which case he will frantically appeal to his victims to "think more of him," as he is "losing his identity," or "fading away." It is easy to distinguish which class of souls—the selfish or comparatively unselfish—will experience this latter state.

So by many paths, but each one definitely and exactly marked out by the law of cause and effect, does the soul, untimely shriven of its body, pursue its course until it again enters the normal stream of evolution. That it entails additional suffering upon the entity thus undergoing the necessary karmic adjustment of his self-directed efforts in his evolutionary development, is but natural, or in accordance with law. For even "accidents" are also under the action of Karma; he is but a blind observer who has not recognized some underlying and modifying agency concerned in them. One man will fall an hundred feet and escape without any serious injury; another will make a single misstep and break his neck. "Chance," declares the agnostic,* but many isolated yet co-ordinated phenomena are the best evidences of an underlying but as yet undiscovered law. So that while it would be as unphilosophical to assert that there are no accidents as it would be to assert that there can be no "new" Karma set up, it is still plainly evident that many, if not most, accidental deaths are not accidents at all, but are examples of the action of the law of cause and effect, in which the causes are obscured by ignorance of the past. Let him who doubts this search carefully in his own past, and see if there have not been times when the most trivial choice, the idle impulse of a moment, meant life or death to him. The divine soul in man occupies a view-point (to put it purely mechanically) from which it has a much wider range of vision than is possible to its lower reflection, and if one's Karma permits, will cause many a seeming accident to prove a blessing in disguise. He who recognizes that the law of cause and effect governs the Universe abso-

*The Latin equivalent of this Greek word is "ignoramus."

lutely will perceive that even accidents must be adjusted, and harmony restored. So that while it is quite possible for one to suffer unjustly because of accidental or other causes, he may be sure that recompense will follow; that the karmic debt, if it be in his favor, will be settled just as accurately and as completely as it would have been if the balance had been against him.

So intricate, however, are the interminglings of the karmic relations of the individual to his family, his country, his nation, and his race, that units must often prove foci, so to speak, for the discharge of the karmic electricity from the community cloud. Those who fall in battle for their country can not be said to have perished unjustly, although a few hundreds may appear to have been selected by pure chance out of a great army; they bear the weight of their country's Karma; and, while they do not in any sense vicariously suffer for the rest, they *do* suffer, and the law of cause and effect will recompense them to the last iota. They have done that which deserves them the nation's gratitude; be assured the debt will be repaid; it is a cause and must have its corresponding effect.

So much of racial or national Karma, or the setting up of collective and common causes, is satisfied, and the effects experienced, by units of the races and nations, that much of the rewards of Devachan are its direct results. As an unit in the community or race, it is perfectly just that the soul should suffer from the causes set up by his race or community; but so jealously is justice guarded by this divine law that recompense is rendered, even though the debt be just, when the soul has completely sundered itself from all other units in the subjective life of Devachan.

Therefore, while it brings "karmic woe" to both the sufferer from accidental or violent death and to his family and friends, the dire effects of suicide do not follow, for the reasons pointed out. Death will not release such from suffering, but the suffering will not be greater because of the act, as it is in the case of the suicide. The victims of accidental death owe a karmic debt which must be paid, whether

they are in the body or out of the body; but accurate settlement is all that will be demanded. The soul who undergoes this form of discipline may rejoice that an overhanging debt has been satisfied; that he is now free to enter upon a happier and more useful existence in his next earth life. Not so, the suicide. He has set up new causes of the most far-reaching and damning nature. The effects of these he must experience; the cup brought to his lips by his own folly, cowardice, or crime, must be drained to its bitterest dregs. While he is frantically repeating his own supremely selfish act, the other is but experiencing in his dreaming imagination the hardships of that which would have been his normal life. The difference is as wide as motive—than which nothing can be wider.

It were as useless to attempt to follow all the intricate workings of this divine law in the case of deaths by accident or violence as it would be to attempt to trace each separate event of our daily lives to its oftentime far-away source. Mankind must have evolved much farther on the pathway of evolution; must have acquired the power to recall any past life at will, and to deliberately pass in review the old circumstances, before the present environments and character can be traced to the old thoughts and deeds. Meanwhile, let us rest content in the knowledge that the divine law can not err; that the possibility of its failure in a single instance would bring about an universal chaos. The law of cause and effect is at the very root of Being; we may safely paraphrase the Psalmist, and declare that, "Even though it slay me, yet will I trust it."

CHAPTER X.

KARMA AND FREE WILL.

IF KARMA be the ever-present, ever-manifesting will of unmanifested Omniscience; if every phenomenon, whether physical, mental, or spiritual, in man or nature, owes its existence to it—acts through and by means of this law—what relation does the human soul sustain towards it? Is man a mere puppet of fate? a chance result of the blind action of the forces of nature? or an unreal reflection of an infinite and divine reality, but of whose existence the Infinite is unconscious, and of whose finite hopes or fears Infinite Divinity neither knows nor cares? For unless his will equals that of Omniscience, how can he ever hope to contend against this? and unless he can so contend, and even overcome, how can human free will be anything but a mockery and a delusion? If the Will of the Infinite has decreed to accomplish a certain end, can any finite power thwart that Will? or prevent its accomplishing that which Omniscience has willed? Will not man be compelled, *nolens volens*, to perform the tasks set him in the Divine Mind? Is not the omnipotent Will bound to overcome the finite will of man? and is he not, therefore, at best but a temporary rebel against an inevitable destiny, or a self-deceived dupe of self-created illusions of freedom?

To answer each of these questions satisfactorily is, perhaps, beyond human power; but a closer study of the nature of Deity as revealed in the impersonal, attributeless action of the law of cause and effect, will throw at least a comforting ray of light upon many, if not all, of them.

Karma, the law of cause and effect, is, as we have seen, attributeless as men conceive of finite attributes. It knows naught of love or hate, of pity or compassion, of revenge or punishment. But because the Infinite as revealed by Karma thus rises above finite attributes or

limitations it can not be said that it has not infinite qualities, and one such in particular stands fully revealed in the actions of the law of cause and effect. The exact effect follows upon each cause; not something foreign or out of proportion to the cause set up. Therefore, Karma is JUST; or, rather, THAT of which Karma is the expressed will is just. But justice is not the sole, nor even the chief, attribute which we find in nature. Compassion, love, pity up to the point of self-annihilation were this possible, are all to be found in man, and, therefore, must have their source in that Divinity from whence man in common with all nature springs.

Descending to man, the microcosm of the great macrocosm, and seeking by the light of analogy to discover the nature of his divine Source through its reflections, however distorted or faint they may be as they appear in him, we perceive that his will is but one attribute of his being, and that it is dominated by desire (a mode of consciousness), while both will and desire are dominated by thought. Intellect, emotion, desire, and even intuition, are but modes of consciousness of the Ego, or "I," in man. They are summed up by the "I," synthesized out of or separated within the one unity of the Absolute by this Omnipotent "I," upon whom they thus all depend. Therefore, finding an all-dominating ego in man, we must be permitted, by analogy, to predicate an ego in nature. The ego in man is finite, and experiences—apparently can only experience—finite qualities, or express finite attributes. But, as before stated, because finite attributes must differ from infinite ones is no argument for asserting that infinite attributes may not exist, or that an Infinite Ego may not experience and understand them; aye, even develop and dominate them towards some infinite end, in some infinite process of evolution.

Every infinite attribute must be the exact opposite to, and yet the same as, its finite reflection. It is the old Platonic philosophy of "the Same and the Other" confronting us. The reflection in the mirror could not exist did not the real man stand before the glass; the qual-

ities in this illusory, manifested universe, likewise, could not exist did not the realities of which they are shadows also exist. Yet the analogy halts, for reflection as in a mirror only partially illustrates the correspondence. Man, nor nature, is not a reflection of the Infinite, but an EMANATION; and no progress can be made towards a philosophic solution of man's relation towards nature and divinity until the nature of emanation is recognized.

For an emanation is not a mere dividing or separating a portion of itself from the emanating source—an idea which is the product of our materialistic age. There is as well the conscious aspect of this process—which is something entirely different. Consciousness emanates as a potentiality; not as an active potency. The modern expressions “latent” and “potent” have to be given definitions of which materialistic philosophy does not dream before the full meaning of emanation can dawn upon Western philosophy. In latency (the “laya” state of Eastern philosophy) is all potentiality, which has to be developed into a potency by the aid of evolution, be that process as long as a maha manvantara* or as brief as an explosion of gunpowder. The process in every instance is the same; the time and factors involved are as varied as infinity. That which was emanated has to become “like unto its Father.” In other words, it has to evolve into potencies those qualities which it received from its source as potentialities.

And let us pause before limiting the power of the Infinite in any manner. There is nothing which Infinite Wisdom can not plan; nothing which Infinite Will can not accomplish. It is conceivable—nay, it is probable and philosophical—that when the Infinite One caused the separation within itself of those units which we now find at infinitely varying stages of their evolutionary progress it bestowed upon each separate one of all these infinite hosts of atom-souls all the divine potentialities embosomed in its own inconceivable perfectness. Therefore, when, after eons of evolutionary progress, the atom-soul

*Maha manvantara—the duration of the entire Cosmos.

awakens to a knowledge of its divine Source, discovers by evolving the latent divine potentiality into the active divine potency that it is one with the Divine, it makes the further discovery that the divine Will is also its own will, and that as the divine Will is dominated by the divine Consciousness, so also is its newly awakened divine consciousness superior to and capable of dominating and changing the perfectly impersonal action of Karma into a potent factor in its further development.

For there is but one will throughout the cosmos, even as there is but one life principle. That divinely impersonal will is the source of all the personal wills in all the manifested cosmos, for it is Karma, and in it man "lives, moves, and has his being." Non-recognition of the underlying unity of all, non-realization of the impossibility of separateness, lead man to imagine his will to be self-generated and his very own, just as he likewise fancies that his life is a thing apart from all other lives within the cosmos. Consequently, being at this stage of his evolutionary becoming under the dominion of desire, in the effort to satisfy selfish longings he runs counter to the universal Will; opposes the impersonal by the personal, and disaster ensues. This happens because desire is really inferior to thought—an inferior manifestation of the divine energy. Were this not the case a world of desiring, self-seeking entities, such as humanity is at present, could really thwart the plan in the minds of Creative Beings by directing the energies of Karma towards the accomplishing of their own selfish ends. They might set up an infinite series of causes to which the impersonal law would eternally respond. Nothing but reason, or thought, could bring such a series to a termination. The hideous drama of wrong and suffering, of vice and its retribution, would trail its bloody pathway along the eternal ages, did not reason through its superior force bring the series of selfish causes to a close. Just as in the case of the destructive tornado whose violent motion causing friction between its air currents calls into operation the higher, controlling action of electricity, so in this case the sufferings born of

unrestrained and selfish desire slowly evoke and evolve reason. This would be the natural process of evolution did entities as soon as each freed itself from the thralldom of desire abandon forever those lower than itself. It is but another proof of there being infinite attributes in the Infinite Source of Being, that in the evolution of reason compassion is also born; and so these reasoning and compassionate souls return from their throne of thought, incarnate deliberately among men, through him reach lovingly down into the very heart of unconscious (*i. e.*, not self-conscious) nature, and so cut short the weary processes of evolution by unthinkable eons of years. It is the finite aiding the finite; an offering of sacrifice long recognized in Eastern philosophy, those making it being termed "Buddhas of Compassion," while those who go on their selfish way are known as "Buddhas of Selfishness."

The will of man, therefore, is that power which he possesses of setting up independent causes, to which the universal, impersonal will responds by adjusting each to its proper effect. This power comes not through any will of his own, as he imagines, but inheres in him because of his heritage of the potentiality of thought from his divine Source, and which potentiality he has partially evolved into an active potency. Having reached the plane of thought he begins, ignorantly and unconsciously, to exercise its kingly functions; to direct the universal, impersonal will towards either good or evil ends.

So it is seen that in his freedom of thought is to be found the source and proof of man's free will. His evocations of the divine, impersonal law of cause and effect, either in past lives or in this, must inevitably be adjusted, and in so far is he bound. But no circumstances of racial, mental, social or other environment can prevent his perfect freedom to think as he chooses. Differences in character (solely the result of differences of thought) are as apparent in the most degraded savages as in the most highly civilized nations; so long as a single ray from the overshadowing, compassionate Being who has volunteered to attempt to guide him out of the labyrinths of sin and pas-

sion can penetrate his brain-mind, so long is man able to distinguish between right and wrong, and so long will he continue to modify his character, and thus his future, by his choice. Nor must the standards of right and wrong be arbitrarily set, and the mental lives of all men be made to fit one common Procrustean bed. His own highest conception is the rule for each individual, and a wrong done in the sincere belief that it is right will surely lead to the conception of a higher right in time. If this were not true, where would the most holy find safety? All truth is relative; the pursuit and attainment of higher and higher aspects of it is man's eternal occupation.

The most feeble-minded idiot, the most depraved, moral monster, is continuously choosing between right and wrong in his choice between self and non-self. No glimmer of reason may appear to reach him, yet his selection of the pleasant, regardless of the rights or wishes of others, or his almost unwilling sharing of his bit of sunshine with his companions, or his sacrificing it altogether, are his evokings of the divine law; and if he has cut himself off from all higher conceptions, Karma only holds him responsible for that of which he does conceive. Therefore, this divinely just and mercifully compassionate law enables the lowest and most degraded to slowly win back his lost manhood. "It is not the will of the Father that any should perish," said the Nazarene, in trying to make plain this phase of Karma.

Therefore, the workings of the law which seem so hard and cruel are in reality most merciful and compassionate. The blind, the deaf and dumb, the hunchback, and, even far more severe than these punishments, those born idiots, morally "insane," and so on, are but examples in which the divine law is giving those who have failed with higher conceptions an opportunity to succeed with those more limited. The task set is exactly in proportion to the powers of the man, as proven in the actual struggle with sin and temptation in the battlefields of former lives. The idiot has returned to a plane lower than that of the animal in many aspects in order that he may again begin his feeble and child-like ascent toward heights which he has forfeited through his weakness.

Human law recognizes phases of human irresponsibility; and this is right because human law is necessarily finite and imperfect. But the divine law of Karma knows absolutely no being who is wholly irresponsible so long as his most trifling act is volitional. For volition means choice, and in choice the entity is free—else the very term is absurd. Therefore, man has free will to an extent of which he little dreams; or, dreaming, shrinks away from in cowardly terror. He may not oppose infinite will, it is true; but that will is his, and the very law of his being compels him to use it. From his throne of thought he must rule whether he desires the kingdom or not. And so long as he can recognize any choice of any kind is he wielding his sceptre, and so weaving the woof of his own future happiness or suffering in the web of the eternal Will as expressed in the divine law of Karma.

Every thinking being, therefore, has free will to the extent that he is capable of choice. This capability is only limited by the stage reached in the evolutionary widening of the atom-soul into the god-soul. That is to say, the greater his progress, the more divine the state he has won, the greater his freedom of will. For at each step the true nature of his energies will become more apparent, the egotistical sense of separateness and self-importance will disappear, and the essential unity of his will with that of the Divine Will will dawn upon the soul, and, no longer desiring a selfish happiness, but rather the good of all creatures, his will will become that of Divinity, and even in this sense will he be "absorbed in the Universal." For this is all that absorption, or Nirvana, means—to recognize the unity of all, and to work in perfect harmony with the will of the Divine. Then nature "makes obeisance"; man becomes a divine "creator," and takes a self-conscious part in the construction and government of that world in which he now seems to occupy such an insignificant and subordinate position. That he is not, however, in any such position of irresponsibility even in terrestrial phenomena which seem utterly outside the sphere of his interference or influence, that the

mass-tone of humanity's thought is capable of evoking terrific karmic results, will become apparent when we come to study the relation of man as a whole to nature, under the law of Karma.

Meanwhile, let us ground ourselves well in the truth that man has free will, and recognize the nature and source of this, as outlined above, before passing on to the study of more intricate problems. For this freedom, although arising out of the superior potency of thought, is, nevertheless, of a distinctly moral nature—roots in the ability to choose between right and wrong rather than in the mere power to think as one pleases. Choice implies preference, preference is decided by experience, experience supplies a motive, and motive precedes choice again; so that from this utilitarian standpoint, even, is plainly evident the fact that nature desires the welfare of man, but because of the infinite potentialities locked within his being can not bring about his happiness without his own consent. Therefore, she eternally offers him the choice between good and evil in this schoolhouse of the soul, and illustrates the necessity of choosing the former by the unhappy effects which, under the impersonal and therefore divine action of the law of cause and effect, follow the choice of the latter.

CHAPTER XI.

KARMA AND PREDESTINATION, OR FATE.

ENOUGH has already been said* to show that Theosophy recognizes no such thing as predestination, or fate, in the sense these terms are commonly understood. There is no fate to which any man is bound except that he must inevitably suffer the effects of the causes which he himself originated. We have also seen that these effects are accurately adjusted to their causes, so that exact justice is secured and no injustice possible.

In the unphilosophic and dogmatic speculations into which modern Christianity has degenerated the principle of justice, or that the effect shall only equal the cause, has been entirely ignored. Especially has this been the case when the relations of man to God have been under consideration. Religious teachers and philosophers have endeavored to preserve a rough semblance of justice in adjusting or defining the relation of man to man, but free rein has been given to the most foolish and unwarranted speculations when the attempt has been made to define the relations which must exist between man and God. Here the law of cause and effect is entirely ignored—even, as we have seen,† denied to exist. All Christian eschatology turns upon the teaching that finite causes can be and are followed by infinite effects. The soul that dies with the most trifling sin “unforgiven” is eternally punished; the feeble and oftentimes trivial finite cause being followed by infinite and eternal effects. It is true that the Catholic branch of the Christian sects teaches a purgatory in which certain sins may be expiated, but this is only in the case of those who have complied with the laws governing this particular church, and is so restricted as to exclude even those necessarily perfectly innocent children who die unbaptized. But this partial and short-sighted attempt

*Chapters III and X. †See note page 13.

to render just the dealings of God towards man does not mend matters at all, logically. It still leaves a large class of finite acts or causes which are followed by infinite consequences, and so places the Catholic upon precisely the same footing, philosophically, as his protesting opponent.

Upon this foundation all speculation as to the relations of the finite to the Infinite must rest; that the finite and Infinite are eternally disparate; can under no possible or even thinkable conditions be equal, and that, therefore, it is impossible for a human or any other finite soul to commit any sin whose effects can be infinite. The cause and effect are not—can not be—equal, and all sophistical arguments fall to the ground in the presence of this axiomatic truth. It is true that each effect becomes a cause in its turn, and that thus an infinite series may be conceived; but at each setting up of a new cause out of the old effect the free will of the entity has had its opportunity to modify the effect which is to come, and thus no act of the past can bind a soul eternally, because of this eternally present opportunity to modify coming effects.

The older Christian idea of hell, for example, supposed a fire which burned without consuming the asbestos-like soul, or its own inconceivable fuel; the more modern conception, which is slowly and with difficulty* replacing the old (that the torture or suffering is mental) is equally absurd, because it supposes that mental energy is incapable of exhaustion. The finite universe is a panorama of causes and effects succeeding one another with a constancy upon which the existence of the universe itself depends. If any cause, such as a mortal sin, for example, could block the steady succession of effect upon cause in the way that an eternal effect following upon a single finite cause must of necessity do, then would chaos ensue. A wheel would be compelled to come to a standstill in nature's workshops; and, where all are so

*A few years since the San Francisco *Examiner* obtained a symposium of opinions from the ministers of the city upon the nature of hell. While a few held to the view that the punishment was mental, the great majority openly and boldly subscribed to the actual fire theory, although none of them attempted to explain how a soul could burn without being consumed by the flame.

nicely adjusted, and where the action of each depends so entirely upon all acting in harmony, this would be physically impossible—not to speak of its philosophic absurdity. The mental or physical torture is a cause, and produces its effect as certainly as any other cause within the universe. That effect must consist in mental or physical change; that change, in its turn, produces other changes, and so on. It is in precisely this manner that modifications of form and character are brought about in nature. Why the divine law of cause and effect should become inoperative or even directly antagonistic to its own modes of action because an entity which has been utilizing a certain vehicle or body finds itself compelled by higher laws to abandon this which is only a vehicle at best, has never been properly examined into—much less explained—by these short-sighted eschatologists.

We must continuously recognize the fact that nature, or God, is one vast Whole, and that that which is law upon any one plane or place of conscious manifestation is likewise law upon every plane. As the author has often pointed out, there can not be two opposing forces in the universe, for either these must be equal or unequal. In the former case, each must exactly neutralize the other and all motion and life cease; or, in the latter, the greater must of necessity overpower and annihilate the lesser. Therefore, if we find the law of cause and effect obtaining upon the plane of physics, we may safely predicate it as governing mental action likewise, even if we had no proof that this is so. The law of life is change; change is necessary to any experience, whether of pleasure or of pain. A changeless state of either suffering or happiness is precisely the same thing as “motionless activity”—an absurdity and an impossibility.

This utter lack in Christianity of reason, logic or philosophy when dealing with the relations which finite man sustains towards his Infinite Source can not be too strongly insisted upon or put in evidence. Nature is governed by a mighty purpose which, so far as man succeeds in penetrating its secrets, is seen to be founded upon law, order,

reason, philosophy, divine will, and compassion. For this reason any scheme of philosophy, or any alleged "revealed" system of religion, whose tenets or "revelations" can be shown to be not only illogical but (therefore) unjust, may be safely condemned as not only not divine, but as being the antithesis of this—born of human cravings for power and profit. The Christian dogma of predestination or fate is an instance exactly in point. And while all Christian sects do not teach this openly, they do by justifiable inference—although they may declare the opposite. There is no church whose members are more devout, whose missionary work is more energetic, who stand higher in the eyes of Christian nations to-day, than the great Presbyterian branch of the Protestants. Yet, listen to their authorized, official "Confession of Faith":

"By the decree of God, and for the manifestation of His glory, some men *and angels** are predestinated unto everlasting life, *and others foreordained to everlasting death.*

"These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed; *and their number is so certain and definite* that it can not be either increased or diminished . . . As God hath appointed the elect to glory, neither are any other redeemed by Christ, *effectually called*, † justified, adopted, and sanctified and saved, but the elect only.

"The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his *glorious JUSTICE!*"

This confession, of course, represents the very apotheosis of unreason, and from a philosophic standpoint is unworthy of either refutation or notice, but as the professed faith of a body of men who offer themselves as guides to other men in shaping their eternal destinies,

*Italics mine. What kind of beings are these "angels"?

†The ineffectual calling implied here is on a par with the cruel "tempting" attributed to Jehovah.

whose churches are to be found scattered over a large portion of the earth, who seek by every means in their power to influence the beliefs of others, and to extend these awful and most pernicious teachings, it must not be passed contemptuously by. A doctrine which so paralyzes human effort (for if God has not chosen you, why strive?), which so outrages even feeble, human conceptions of justice, must be held up to view in all its hideousness, that men may turn from it with the loathing it deserves.

It is the doctrine of fate carried out to its logical termination. In the abysses of infinity, eons of ages before hapless man appeared upon the scene of human hopes and fears, his eternal destiny was pre-ordained. How worse than useless, then, for such an one to attempt to live a life of truth and justice. If he succeeded, he would only convict God of greater cruelty and injustice, for he must still go down to that eternal hell of suffering to which divine justice, "for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures," was pleased to foreordain him.

Predestination is the distorting of the truth that each cause must be followed by its effect; the binding to the result of one's own actions has been magnified into an eternal law which controls the destiny of the soul from all eternity. It is the same confusing of the Divine with a single manifested attribute which has led to such conceptions of God as that he is "good," to the exclusion of all other qualities, and so on. It is the attempt to bind the Infinite within finite bounds*; to distort the minor part into the Infinite Whole; a blind effort to reconcile the omniscience of God with events which occur in illusionary time. A phenomenon has taken place; God is omniscient; *ergo*, God must have foreknown it; *ergo*, he willed it—is the vicious train of reasoning followed. It entirely ignores the fact that if there were such a being as the Christian's conception of God he would of necessity be just as omniscient and as omnipotent to-day as he was at that "beginning of eternity" which the Christian con-

*Canst thou bind the sweet influence of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?—Job, xxxviii: 31.

ception presupposes, and that he could therefore "foreordain" things anew at any time. The idea that God, having existence at the beginning of eternity and being omniscient, must have foreknown, and that that which he foreknew can not but happen (else his omniscience is at fault), supposes him to be a free agent only at one moment of his existence—at the somewhat vague "beginning of eternity." At all other times, and throughout the eons since, he has been but a helpless spectator of that which he foresaw. No creature could be more bound than this; none more helpless or impotent to change events which were going wrong, and entailing endless misery and woe because of this.

The theosophic conception recognizes the Divine as always free; as always omniscient and omnipotent. But it further recognizes that time, both past and future, is but an illusory reflection of THAT which eternally IS; therefore, foreordination in the future is as impossible as foreordination in the past. Nothing is foreordained except as pointed out, that each cause shall be followed by its corresponding effect, and this not because of the will of any manifested or finite creature, but because it is the mode of Being of the Infinite as it appears to finite intelligence. All Divine existence must be thought of as an ever-present Now, if we would avoid the error of attempting to limit the Infinite by our finite conceptions. Perfected existence, perfected life, perfected peace—all that we can conceive of as divine and blessed, must simply BE, without the shadow of any termination of that perfectness through the limitations of time or space. Finite happiness is always alloyed with the knowledge that it can not persist; that change of some nature inevitably awaits its experience. Not so, that of the Infinitely Perfect. It can not be increased by anticipation, nor lessened by regret for the past; neither past nor present can enter into its infinite field of consciousness. How unphilosophical to predicate of such Divine, Infinite Consciousness that it "foreordained" some poor, half-conscious being to eternal flames before even the nebula of which his earth was con-

structured crystallized out of the cosmic ether! Exactly as man, in his finite, microcosmic limitation, has eternally the power to choose the most potent of all choices—that of moral motive,—so has the Infinite an infinitely Free Will. It was NOW when the morning stars sang together for joy; it was NOW when humanity descended to this earth and clothed themselves with the “coats of skin” formed of its matter; it was NOW when the mighty Atlantean civilization was at its zenith; it is NOW that we are struggling and striving in those same lethal coils of materiality; it will still be NOW when the light of the sun shall fade and the heavens pass away like a scroll!

Let man but get this basic idea of the real nature of Duration as contrasted with time, and the question of fate or foreordination either in his own destiny or in that greater Destiny of Nature will cease to vex him. He will no longer bind either himself or Divinity with the withes of an illusory “past”; but recognizing his oneness with the ALL, will look upon the illusions of time with an untroubled eye. He will recognize that that which he has dreamed of as his past or hoped for as his future is but this eternal NOW; and then, truly, for him this mortal will have put on immortality. For immortality is within the present reach of every one who can separate the Immortal Observer within the recesses of his own soul from the Great Illusion fleeting past him upon the Screen of Time.

There is a clever illusion, known as the Haunted Swing, in which by means of appropriate mechanism a stationary observer is made to feel that he is being whirled rapidly and dizzily around, when it is his surroundings which revolve about him, instead. This is a most apt illustration of the state of the soul when caught in the coils of matter. So completely is it deceived by the illusion of the senses that it imagines itself to be performing all the actions which it sees passing before its eyes, and identifies itself so entirely with this phantasmagoria as to continually bind itself to the “Wheel of Rebirth.” The day that it recognizes that it is not an actor but a spectator—that for it there is no death nor change—that day will see the begin-

ning of its final emancipation from the coil of matter to which it now clings so desperately.

For the "I," the thinking, imagining, experiencing, knowing, sorrowing, rejoicing ego in man, is the real entity; not the garb of flesh which that ego puts on, nor the fleeting panorama of illusions with which it is encompassed about. With the first recognition of self in the child the sense of individuality is just as strong as in that same ego after ninety years' experience in the body. All the changes of mental or physical growth; all the wisdom acquired, or all the foolishness developed, have not increased nor diminished this sense of "I-am-ship" in the least. The inner soul knows and recognizes its stability and oneness with the eternal; and although unable to convey this knowledge to the brain-mind it thus silently and unconsciously gives its dumb testimony to its own divinity.

Let man, therefore, recognize his soul as a stable center of consciousness separated temporarily within—not from—the Divine Consciousness, and he will perceive how completely he is the master of his own destiny. In so far as he has bound himself to matter by self-identifying actions or thoughts, so far must he make obeisance to the divine law of Karma, from which even the gods are not exempt. But while suffering these, the compassionately just effects of his own deeds, he may and must preserve that tranquillity which points out the uninterested observer. By so doing the karmic bonds loosen one by one; with each falls a veil from before his eyes which obscured his recognition of his oneness with Divinity, until at last he stands face to face with his own godhood, and discovers that he is but a unit in the great sea of Universal Consciousness.

The real karmic bonds are those of matter. With material fetters the strongest soul may bind itself to an almost endless destiny, if it so chooses. But upon the spiritual side of its being the soul is ever free. As force must have a vehicle in which to act, so Karma must have matter as tablets upon which to write its decrees. Yet matter is powerless to bind unless the soul is either ignorant of its true powers

or willfully misuses them. Karma is the creature of thought; not the creator. Thought rules; Karma serves. Man has but to realize how entirely his true essence is one with thought to also realize that he is "of the kings of thought," and that nothing can bind him or dispossess him of his kingdom. When he has recognized this; has separated himself from his "body of illusion"; has looked upon "the divine form as embodied in all forms"—his selfish personal will will disappear. But he will not then have lost his free will, for lo! he will discover that his will has become the eternal Will, his purposes those of the Divine. His finite, impotent will will have become Infinite and Omnipotent; nevermore will he fight against God, for he will have recognized that he himself is but a portion of Divinity.

CHAPTER XII.

KARMA AND VICARIOUS ATONEMENT.

THERE is no dogma of modern Christianity which Karma more completely overthrows than that of vicarious atonement. And there never was, perhaps, a teaching calculated to more completely poison the soul than this one, whereby the ignorant and unphilosophical Fathers of the early Church sought to deify the Nazarene Adept, and so magnify their own power and importance as dispensers and distributors of the favors of Jehovah. The small and insignificant Jewish sect, which the followers of Christ originally were (the first fifteen Bishops of Jerusalem were circumcised Jews), may or may not have had the opinion that he was the "Son of God" in the sense understood by modern Christians (are there not thousands who believe the same thing to-day of the Teeds and Schweinfurths?), but it is certain from the testimony of the New Testament itself that the mass of the people who heard of him believed him to be a reincarnation of Elias, or of one of their old Prophets*. The description of the crucifixion and sufferings of Christ, as portrayed in the Bible, is only an attempt at an allegorical explanation of the voluntary incarnation of the divine soul in man, its sufferings because of this act of divine compassion, and the final redemption of the human soul through this voluntary incarnation of the divine soul in the human form. But it is a crucifixion which takes place within each human breast until that time arrives, after almost numberless incarnations, when the lower soul, the son of its "Father in Heaven," has evolved under the guidance of its divine instructor to the point where it can also say to that Father, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

This relation of the human soul to the divine Oversoul, its "Father

*He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am? And they said: Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets.—Matthew xvi: 13, 14.

in Heaven," is one recognized in every ancient philosophy or religion. It is a portion of the scheme of evolution—the compassionate plan in the Divine Mind—that the stronger should eternally assist the weaker. That it should have been so distorted as to substitute for this universal incarnation of the divine soul within each human form the absurdly unphilosophical dogma of one man vicariously suffering a purely material crucifixion whereby the rest of humanity was to escape moral responsibility for their sins, was not dreamed of by the Nazarene. Everywhere in the accounts which have reached us is to be found the assertion that each man can become the equal of Christ in all respects.* But the original gnostic doctrine was hard to comprehend, and the life enjoined still harder to live. It was far easier for the ignorant or selfish mind to accept a theory of life at once so simple and childlike, and which, after a long life spent in vice or crime, offered an easy road to Paradise through the vicarious atonement of Jesus, provided the sinner only accepted him as his Savior—even at the last moment.

This is the fatal effect that the doctrine of vicarious atonement has had upon Western religious belief—that it has practically offered an "indulgence" for contemplated sins and crimes in the shape of another assuming their consequences, thus letting the real offender go free. The basic principle of justice is entirely lost sight of; the vilest sinner swings from the scaffold into Paradise if he only "repents" a few moments before his execution, and accepts the vicarious atonement of Christ.

There can be no doubt of the tendency of this teaching to foster vice and crime. It is the nature of the lower man to live in the senses, and to put off anything which might interfere with this sensuous enjoyment to some more convenient season. The stern and continuous fight which must be maintained against the lower nature

*I ascend to my Father and to your Father; and to my God and your God.—John xx : 7. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.—2 Gal. iii : 27. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.—2 Gal. iv : 6, etc., etc.

will not be made by any one until he is convinced of its necessity, and vicarious atonement renders this strife and toil wholly unnecessary. "While yet the lamp holds out to burn the vilest sinner may return," states the Christian creed rhythmically, if not poetically, and what man in the full vigor of his sensuous life feels that his lamp is dimming sufficiently to warrant him in changing all his lifelong habits?

If, on the other hand, the real teaching of Christ had been insisted upon, that "as ye sow, so also shall ye reap," how might the destinies of the entire human race have been set in fairer directions than at present! Death-bed repentance and vicarious salvation have been the warrant for all this mad rushing after sensuous delights—after wealth, power and fame. The despot who wades to his throne through rivers of blood, the millionaire who accumulates his greedy store by grinding the faces of the poor, the robbing "stock-sharp," the whole host of human harpies who fatten on the woes of their brothers—all these can go down to their graves tranquilly, for "Jesus died and paid it all"—all the debt which they fancy they owe!

What a monstrous doctrine! What a perversion of the holy teachings of Christ! Just how much of the sacred and secret teachings concerning the nature of the soul of man and its relation to its Source, the infinite Oversoul, was given out by the band of Adepts, of whom Christ, Appoloneus of Tyana, Marcian, and perhaps many others were members, can not now be determined from the data at hand; but the well-known gnostic theory of "emanations" proves that the veil of Isis was drawn very widely aside by them. In the *Philosophumena* and other writings, the nature of the descent of spirit or consciousness into matter was very definitely and very philosophically taught. The fact that each human soul is a "mind-born" son of its "Father in Heaven" is plainly apparent even in the garbled, borrowed, or forged garments in which the history of their sayings have come down to us, and this fact is the key note to the comprehension of the entire philosophy of life. More useless than to question the stony

Sphinx of Egypt is it to ask of the Infinite *why* this separation within its bosom of these apparently finite soul-atoms—with their awe-inspiring Cycle of Necessity marked out over which they must travel if they would ever regain their Infinite Source. We can only recognize that it *is* so; and we have seen that in the divine law of Karma a means is provided whereby they may return, if they so will. But this return involves a scheme of compassion so passing comprehension, a sacrifice so great, that we stand in awe in its presence.

The atom-souls are, as we have seen, taken in charge by high and holy Creative Beings, who clothe themselves with them and impart enough of their own divine essence and wisdom to constitute those so-called "blind" laws which guide their evolution through all the states of consciousness below that of self-consciousness. This voluntary incarnation of these great Beings is the first act in the eternal sacrifice, and extends over those unthinkable periods necessary for the progress of the soul-atom, or ego, out of these conditions. Then comes, if possible, a still greater sacrifice. Each one of these souls—at this time but a raging, desiring, reasonless animal—is definitely and individually taken in charge by a thinking Ego from higher realms (its Father in Heaven), who repeats the compassionate act of those beings who incarnated previously, but under what differing conditions! The ego is no longer the quiescent atom-soul, yielding blindly to the superior will, but a raging, sense-loving, desiring animal. Out of this lower desire is born the lower will, and this will the brooding Father in Heaven must overcome, these sensuous desires it must spiritualize and transmute; and, above all, it must lift the passionate soul up to its own plane of thought, and teach it first to reason and then to be guided by that reason, until in the course of the ages and after eons of suffering its crucifixion is ended; the world-travail is accomplished, and its "mind-born son" is indeed born—born in the anguish of its own mind, born through and because of this sacrifice of its own high estate, because of the deliberate association in the mysterious

intimacy of incarnation of the Divine Father with the repulsive, raging "animal soul," which the atom-soul has now become in its journey through the Cycle of Necessity. The Father in Heaven has bestowed by the equally mysterious process of emanation enough of its own thinking essence to arouse in the animal man the latent potentiality of thought; it has kept the spark so bestowed alight; it has watched and endeavored to thwart the mad attempts of the animal-man to sever this restraining connection against which every impulse of the lower nature rebelled; it has experienced the agony of failure; suffered in oftentimes utter helplessness when its lower associate utterly refused to listen to its conscience-whispered pleadings; it has been a helpless witness of the vices and crimes, the mistakes and littlenesses of this which it hoped one day to redeem as its god-like "mind-born son." Its crucifixion has been daily and hourly, throughout countless ages of time, through interminable abysses of anguish and despair.

This is the magnificent sacrifice, this the infinitely great suffering of crucifixion, which was dwarfed and caricatured by the early Church Fathers into the sufferings of one man for some three mortal hours of physical anguish upon a wooden cross! If by any freak of fancy we could imagine Jesus as an omniscient God, then how pitiful to that God must have appeared those few hours of a purely physical torture—a torture exceeded in millions of instances by his own creatures, and to be presently followed by his accustomed eternal bliss! And if answer is made that the torture was mental, then why the farce of a physical cross upon which to suffer this mental torture?

The human mind, with its sense of justice inherited from its divine Source, revolts against the absurd travesty of divine truth. The cause does not equal the effect, and before this simple magician's wand the whole edifice of childish imaginings falls to the ground. It is the same utter failure to recognize the eternal inequality of the finite and infinite; an attempt to measure the abysses of space with the petty foot-rule of the human mind.

It is an awful fact that the soul can by repeated assertion of a falsehood to itself at last come to believe it to be true; and this perversion of the teachings of Christ, which no doubt began in deliberate falsehood among those who sought to conceal the truth for their own selfish ends, is an instance of an untruth having come to be believed through its constant iteration by an entire nation—aye, by a large portion of the race. While this benumbing dogma has been believed in by foolish man, nature about him has fairly shrieked into his ears the real truth; showing him how inexorably the cause is followed by the effect; but with the sole result that man has divorced himself from her; has declared that the laws of his environment by whose aid he has not only evolved to his present state, but upon which he depends for his very existence, moment by moment, do not apply to nor concern him!

This belief has led up to and fostered the most absurdly egotistical ideas as to man's importance in the scheme of existence, aside from the harm it has wrought in philosophical and moral directions. Having nothing in common with nature (as he believes), the earth becomes but an accessory to his existence—the sun created wholly to light him by day, and the moon and stars to shine for him at night, and so on *ad nauseum*. His God is a being a very little wiser than himself, while infinitely more cruel; eternal happiness or damnation depends upon a little water sprinkled upon an unconscious babe, or a little oil rubbed upon various parts of the body of a person long past any realization of what is being done! Foolish forms and ceremonies supplant philosophical teachings; gestures and genuflexions stand for knowledge and wisdom; the outward show takes the place of the inner reality; and the generations of men are born and die—each foolishly trusting to an unphilosophical dogma for his forgiveness whenever it shall please him to repent! “The fool saith in his heart, There is no God,” wrote the psalmist; how much better might he have written “The fool says in his heart, There is no law,” for this is just the assertion of every one who trusts to the vicarious atonement

of Jesus to relieve him of the burden of the responsibilities of his own sins and crimes.

Admit even the shadow of vicarious atonement, and human happiness depends entirely upon the favor or whim of some god. But Karma places men upon the footing of the gods themselves, and assures happiness through justice, without either cringing or sycophancy. How clearly the truckling, place-worshiping weakness of human nature is seen, indeed, when men have woven it into their conceptions of the character of the Most High! "The Lord bestoweth or withholdeth mercy at his own pleasure"—this is exactly that which Eastern despots do to this day, and the same idea runs like a poisoned spring all through the stream of our Western civilization as well. Where the source is contaminated the whole stream is corrupt; wherever man attributes injustice to his god, be sure there will injustice flourish and thrive. Vicarious atonement outrages all sense of justice between man and divinity; makes man a helpless, servile sycophant during life, and occupies his eternities with the praises of the being who out of his grace has "saved him." The baneful effect of this teaching is at the root of most of the vice and degradation of the world to-day, nor will men ever become more just in their dealings with each other until this conception of and belief in divine injustice has been obliterated from their minds. When once men recognize that the law of cause and effect is absolutely without exception, whether that cause be an act, a word or a thought; that each thought, even, is an appeal to a wisdom which can not err, and which knows not favor nor partiality—then will humanity have taken a long stride towards reaching the "terrace of enlightenment."

CHAPTER XIII.

KARMA AND FORGIVENESS.

THE views already presented* outline with perhaps sufficient clearness the theosophic conception of forgiveness, and but little further elucidation will be attempted here. It must not be supposed, however, that Theosophists do not believe in forgiveness; on the contrary, they do most sincerely; but when this is alleged to set aside or annul the action of the law of cause and effect it becomes unphilosophical, destructive of all logical ethical conclusions, and therefore a highly dangerous doctrine. And this conception of a setting aside of the law of cause and effect, and of permitting the guilty who appeal for forgiveness to escape the just penalties for sin and crime, is just the meaning which Christians understand by the term. On the other hand, Theosophists deny that this is or ever was the idea intended to be conveyed by those writers who are now quoted as authority for the interpretation. To attempt to restore to the word some portion of its original and noble meaning will constitute the motive of this chapter.

Forgiveness consists wholly in the mental attitude of one soul towards another. It is a mental cause whose effects are experienced entirely by the one who either forgives or refuses to forgive. Upon the one forgiven the effects are *nil* so far as relieving him from suffering the penalties for the wrongs he has done, or, in other words, the effects of the causes which he has set up. Any disturbance of harmony can only be equilibrated when all the disturbing force sent out has returned and reacted upon its source. A pebble thrown into the ocean compels every separate drop of all that vast body of water to readjust to some degree its relations with every other drop, nor can the process of readjustment cease until all the force sent out by the

*See chapters on Vicarious Atonement, Free Will, etc.

pebble returns to it, and it receives an impact exactly equal to that which it gave. Just as little as the throwing of a second pebble will prevent the returning impact upon the first, will the interjecting of another set of karmic causes by a second individual prevent the first actor from receiving the full effects of his actions.

Therefore, another definition of forgiveness is, the refusal to become intermixed with the violent causes set up by another soul; a willingness to leave the divine law to right all private injuries. He who recognizes the certainty and omniscient wisdom of the law of Karma will never seek to replace its divine action by his imperfect, short-sighted view of what would be correct or just under any given conditions. This is the true meaning of the biblical expression: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

To deliberately refuse to cherish even the faintest desire that another soul should suffer in return for sufferings it has inflicted is one of the most divine acts of which the human soul is capable. The compassion which lies at its base roots in the very Absolute itself. For no thought or wish to escape the karmic effects of the setting up of violent causes must color the motives of him who forgives; otherwise, his forgiveness becomes but an act of supreme selfishness arising out of his intellectual knowledge alone, and not in his heart.

"Father, forgive them; they know not what they do," must be the ever-pitying cry of the Christ-like soul who truly forgives. For "all human actions are enveloped by faults, even as a fire is by smoke," says the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the awakened soul must remember that the sin, vice, and violence which it meets in the world are due to ignorance almost wholly; and although ignorance of the law is not admitted as a plea in human courts of justice, nor in the physical or material laws of nature from which these would seem to be copied, it *is* a plea before the higher Courts of Consciousness; for it must color motive, and is, therefore, taken into full account. Our ignorance of the nature of our own souls, of our divine potentialities, of our god-like destinies, of our infinite responsibilities to ourselves

and to nature, must be a never-ceasing plea before those divine Beings who have the evolution of humanity in their tender, compassionate care.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged; condemn not, that ye be not condemned; forgive, that ye may be forgiven,” is the solemn injunction of the Nazarene Adept, and no sentence in any sacred tome is more full of profoundly occult meaning and teaching. By refusing to judge we decline to constitute ourselves karmic agents; we limit the area of disturbed equilibrium by just so much; we refuse to add to the violent forces already engendered, and so to increase their reactionary effects. For even mental condemnation links us in some degree to the act condemned. We have interjected the force of our thought into the arena of disturbance; it is a cause which must react upon our own souls—in that subtle hardening of character which tends to make us unmerciful, if in no other way. “Forgive, that ye may be forgiven!” Only by the exercise of our spiritual faculties can these grow or widen, so that by assuming the mental attitude of perfect charity for the wrong-doer, of complete forgiveness for the wrong done, we so aid the development of our own diviner nature that assistance can be given us mentally and spiritually, and our past offences be forgiven even by Karma; for, though we endure their just effects, they touch us not; we recognize the perfect action of the divine law, and our sufferings become indeed blessings in disguise.

As compassion is the highest, so is revenge the lowest, of all human attributes. Indeed, it is not human in the higher meanings which this term connotes, but arises wholly because of the perverting influence of our lower, animal nature. The suffering of another can not make ours one whit the less; yet most human punishments, whether administered individually under the force of passion, or collectively under the authority of the law, have but this end in view. True, a wider spirit is beginning to manifest itself, and more effort is made toward making legal punishment corrective rather than punitive; but this can not be said to have made much progress when one man

is still legally killed because he has taken the life of another. It is small wonder, then, that forgiveness has no place in our laws, nor legal recognition (other than the irresponsible pardoning power bestowed upon certain officials), but is referred entirely to those metaphysical realms "where cause and effect do not obtain."*

Forgiveness must be made a living power in our daily lives, its importance as an ethical factor recognized, its potency as a force upon conscious planes fully understood, before it will cease to be anything but so-called "sentimentalism" to men. Like many other divine truths, it has been degraded into an unphilosophical dogma by Christianity. The evil causes set up during a long life are instantly nullified if a capricious Jehovah chooses to "forgive" us as we draw our last breath! And even this so-called "divine" forgiveness is hedged about with conditions requiring acceptance (such as that Christ was the son of Jehovah), or by absurd ceremonial observances (such as the sprinkling of a little water, or the anointing of certain portions of the body with "holy" oil). What conceptions of forgiveness, or of anything requiring even intellectual comprehension, can be held by those who entertain and teach such religious beliefs? They are but children, playing at philosophy and logic.

Forgiving, like free will, can only be an attribute of a divine, thinking soul which ever is; for which past, present, and future are but an eternal now. As one may, with perfect unconcern, see two men violently quarreling, so before the eyes of the divine soul may pass the panorama of phenomenal existence without arousing any desire to participate therein. This is precisely the attitude of the one who forgives. He may perceive the act which apparently injures him, but he recognizes its illusory character, and that his injury is only apparent, and not real. Woe to him if, losing his divine self-control, he precipitates himself into the arena of disturbance, already under the direct supervision of the unerring law of cause and effect!

*See note, page 13.

Then, indeed, he becomes a "karmic agent" (the oftentimes specious refuge of those who would justify their desire for revenge), but he, himself, will be the chief sufferer from Karma. If, instead of this, he permits the ever-present, divine compassion to well up in his heart, then his position as an eternal onlooker renders him secure; he has not bound himself to the lower passionate existence by beclouding his mind with the fumes of its passions and hatreds.

Forgiveness, then, is one of the many aspects in which the human soul remains forever free. No one can ever debar the soul from the right to forgive. It is one of the phases in which we assert our divine birthright; ally ourselves with the eternal; refuse to confound the ever-fleeting with the everlasting. The act of forgiveness is but another expression of that eternally present choice between the evil and the good which the soul eternally enjoys. Time affects it not; space has for it no limitations. We can forgive, we can love, we can hope, we can be truthful and unselfish, utterly irrespective of any of the limitations of time or of this sensuous mode of existence. In the exercise of these eternal verities, we rise to the plane of real existence; we taste, if but for one brief moment, the sacred ambrosia of the gods. We feel the breath from the wing of the Swan of Life fan our cheeks; we know that we exist, that we ARE, and that this higher consciousness is also eternal. The thrill of joy which follows upon the act of truly forgiving reveals, if but fleeting and faintly, the bliss of those supernal states of consciousness which will be again ours when we shall have won our way out of and above the hard lessons which this passionate cycle of existence sets before the soul as its necessary tasks. Let us, therefore, claim our birthright; let no one—not even ourselves—rob us of this our divine privilege—to forgive our enemies; to pray (work) for those who persecute us, and to do good to those who spitefully use us. So shall we not only obey the precepts of the Nazarene, but also the command of every other divine Teacher that the Great Lodge has ever sent to our aid.

CHAPTER XIV.

KARMA AND ANIMALS.

THE study of Karma in the animal kingdom is beset with much difficulty. That the law of cause and effect governs evolution here as elsewhere, it were idle to question. Upon the human plane mental illumination, however feebly, introduces motive, and motive sharply distinguishes one individual from another. Hence, the law of cause and effect becomes perforce largely individualized in its action, which individualization permits greater ease of study. It affords opportunities of analysis and analogy wholly wanting upon planes where mentality does not enter as a factor, or enters at the most to a very small extent.

Upon the lower strata of the animal kingdom the action of Karma must be almost wholly hierarchical. The experiences of the individual, having no color of personal motive, can be and no doubt are conserved by its hierarchy, or by that portion of the colorless and attributeless monadic essence which constitutes a kind of community or hierarchical soul for budding entities at this stage of evolution. Apparently complete personalities are put forth from this common soul much as the temporary "limbs" of an amœba, and, having served a like temporary purpose, are withdrawn in a manner exactly analogous. The experience is added to the hierarchy, and advances equally each successive personality which the hierarchy may thereafter produce.

This community or hierarchical consciousness is not a far-fetched theory; it is an easily demonstrable fact in nature. Observe a school of fishes, and watch how the alarm of one or more of them instantly communicates itself in some inexplicable manner to all the rest, when the whole mass will descend deeper in the water, evidently moved by a common impulse. The gyrations of flocks of birds, the "swarming"

of bees, the behavior of ant—sall afford the most conclusive proof that there exists in nature these hierarchical souls which, so far as separation of form is concerned, inform and control numerous personalities.

For form is no assurance of a distinct personality; only the presence of an individualized, motive-obeying center of consciousness constitutes this. The Higher or Reincarnating Ego in man puts forth many transient, but not contemporaneous, personalities. In these lower instances, utterly uncolored by motive as they must be, there is no difficulty in one hierarchica¹ soul putting forth almost numberless personalities at the same time. Nor need such an hierarchical soul be upon the plane of mentality; it may be but obeying the will, expressed in "laws" of nature, of Creative Beings upon planes very much nearer the divine than human.

One can easily see that increasing incarnations, however, would constantly tend to make the particular experiences of these common personalities more diverse, and that there would therefore appear within the limits of the hierarchy a tendency to a "segmentation" analogous to that in the embryonic cell, and which is the basis for that wonderful diversity of form seen in all the kingdoms of nature. This increasing and inevitable differentiation would produce at first smaller segmentations, so to speak, of hierarchical souls; each hierarchical soul informing more and more limited classes, until, at the apex of the animal kingdom, the basis for distinct and time-separated personalities would have been laid—which is exactly the teaching of the Secret Doctrine in this particular.

With the Karma of the lower portions of the animal kingdom, therefore, we have small concern; it is (so far as the illusory separation of personalities is concerned) a colorless, motiveless action of the law of cause and effect. So much phenomenal experience, so much conscious energy conserved, the cause here, as in all other cases, exactly equals the effect; no further elucidation is needed.

But in the higher portions of the animal kingdom the case is quite different. Here personal contact gives rise to most perplexing

questions of karmic adjustments between men and animals, and the action of Karma in adjusting the relations between animals themselves is also to be studied.

One broad, sweeping assertion must now be made; let the reader accept it or not as he chooses; it is but the author's individual opinion. It is this: Much of the passions, venom, cruelties, hostilities, fiercenesses, and other so-called "animal" qualities, are reflected into that kingdom by man. Animals do but dumbly obey the impulses received from above—from their "gods," or human beings. The struggle for existence may and does make brutes of men; it does not make brutes of animals. It can go on in a kindly disposed, affectionate species of animals until extinction occurs, without developing any cruel element or sanguinary taste. And even in the carnivoræ animals refuse to prey upon their own kind, and a whole species may disappear without having evolved that capacity for cruelty which men, their leaders in the process of evolution, have succeeded in doing. Any wanton or unnecessary cruelty, any senseless desire to work destruction, may be safely assigned to the effect of human thought reflected from above, and not to forces generated from below.

Nor need this reflection be understood in any but a strictly scientific meaning. The constant interchange of atoms which of necessity goes on between man and all the other kingdoms of nature makes the interchange of qualities, to some extent at least, inevitable. Yet the advantage, or force, rather, is all upon the side of man. The power of thought to color, modify, and mold matter is far superior to that of emotion or passion. Hence, although man is to some extent influenced by the animals about him,—and especially is this the case when he actually devours the bodies of his lower associates,—the influence is but faint compared with that lethal effect which his coarse, passionate thought exerts in turn upon the animals.

If the view outlined above be correct, it is at once apparent how far-reaching is the karmic association, and how close the karmic ties which bind man to the animal kingdom. As the model for and the

teacher of the animals beneath him, it is evident that it is his next and paramount duty to undo the work which in his ignorance he has accomplished, and to make kind and humane those animals which his own passions have at least helped to make fierce and cruel. The prophecy of the old Jewish mystic, that "the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and a little child shall lead them," is a true one, in that this condition must be brought about before man will have discharged his karmic obligations to animals; and karmic debts can not be evaded, however much they may be at times postponed. It is said of certain yogis in India that no animal, however fierce, will harm them. If this be true,—and it is certainly reasonable—it only illustrates the dominant position which man holds, or might hold, in nature, as well as the power of true kindness and fraternal feeling. Certain it is that there are no animals which are not susceptible to human kindness.

In the direct association which man holds with many of the animals in the domesticated state, the action of the law of cause and effect adjusts each action with the same unerring certainty that obtains throughout the Universe. It is not to be supposed that the same man will be confronted with the actual animals he has wronged and be compelled to make individual reparation, as but too often happens in human relations. The effects will rather be seen in that hardening of character and blunting of the finer feelings which is sure to extend to the human relationships of the offender, and to thus bring about the painful experiences necessary to its correction. The animal in its dumb way forgives; being still under the divine guidance of instinct, it refuses to mingle its Karma with that of its torturer. And nature will find some method of recompense—the very cruelty itself may be turned to its benefit by arousing more quickly than would occur in the normal way those faculties which will be of inestimable benefit when it in turn passes into the human-animal stage of existence.

Heedless and needless cruelty to animals will react—must react—

just as severely as in the case of its infliction upon the helpless or children. It is one of the most horrible outgrowths of our Western civilization that killing animals should be regarded as "sport," and indulged in without the slightest apprehension of its ethical bearings. "It is a fine day; let us go out and kill something," quotes the Frenchman, when wishing to illustrate the ways of his English neighbor; while he himself is just as cruelly heedless of the suffering of animals in other directions. What kind of a heart must beat in the "scientific" breast of a vivisector who amputates the mammae of a nursing bitch "to see if she retains the maternal instinct, and still tries to suckle her offspring?" In what manner was the cause of science advanced by the fact that the poor, maimed mother still tried to nourish her young, even after this ghoulish crime had been inflicted upon her?

The heartless cruelties practiced against animals during the "amusements" of hunting, fishing, and so on; the torturing of that type of innocence, purity and faithfulness, the dove or pigeon, during the "gentlemen's" barbarous "sporting" tournaments; the cruelties heedlessly inflicted upon those domestic animals which man has enslaved to his immediate service—all these and a thousand other unnamed horrors will have to be atoned for, to the last iota. Karma-Nemesis seems to delay sometimes; but she never forgets. And for most of these barbarities the religion of the West, which has taught man that he has nothing in common either with his animal associates or with the rest of nature, is responsible. The Western man has been taught by his religion to look upon himself as a thing apart; and while he believes that Jehovah created the animals, he still thinks that evolution holds nothing in store for them. They are his playthings, created for his sole benefit; and when he cuts their life short, either for his amusement or for food, no moral responsibility is incurred, for that is the end of them. But it is not the end. The higher animals—and this includes a large portion of the animal kingdom—undoubtedly survive death and reincarnate as individualized person-

alities. Some of them unquestionably have a post-mortem existence similar to that of man which immediately follows death, or kama loca. This is proven by the fact that many of them dream, and all animals capable of dream are also capable of maintaining, for a time at least, a subjective existence—dream being the simplest form, but yet a perfect example, of this mode of consciousness. The same animal elemental soul will reincarnate with its progress, perhaps, aided by the forced evolution (all evolution is the result of experience conserved) because of cruel treatment. But the heedless, heartless persons who inflict this torture will not be aided in their evolutionary upward pathway—of that they may be assured. Indeed, the cruel vivisector is sowing the seed, as pointed out by Madame H. P. Blavatsky, of future insanity—a statement verifiable by the most “scientific” methods of analysis. Consciousness can not be defined as to what it is in its essence; but, examined from a purely physical standpoint, it is a mode of motion; or, better perhaps, it manifests by and through motion. It is a primary teaching of occultism that if the attention be concentrated upon, or even directed fixedly to, any phase of consciousness, the brain-mind tends to take on that particular mode, whatever it may be, by falling into or attuning its own conscious vibrations to those to which its attention is thus directed. This is the secret of hypnotism, and is also the secret of secrets in relation to those self-induced hypnotic states brought about by gazing at mirrors, crystals, and so on. The bodily consciousness is attuned to the rate of vibration of the mirror or crystal; hence, ordinary sense consciousness is annulled, and an abnormal, or so-called “trance,” state takes its place.

In like manner he who concentrates his attention upon animal states of consciousness, and especially he who engraves them upon the tablets of his soul by the horrible methods of vivisection, will give his brain-mind a bent in an animal direction which, if persisted in long enough, will cause it to take on the animal vibration, when of course, although a perfectly normal animal he is an abnormal or

insane man. The process is a perfectly plain case of the working of the law of cause and effect along intelligible lines, and by easily traceable methods. The teacher who takes a childish view of things; the parson who becomes feminine in the worst sense of this term; the monopolist who worships money only—are they not constantly with us—living object lessons of the effects of concentrating the attention in a single direction? Indeed, concentration, or directing the whole force of the soul in any given direction, is the cause of all those differentiations of character, whether good or evil, which separate one man from all other men.

In the relations of animals to each other, the working of Karma is necessarily along different lines than in the human kingdom. Intellect is absent, instinct rules alone, and the law of the survival of the fittest, which seems—and is—so cruel when applied to humanity, becomes in reality most beneficent in this kingdom. For death to the animal is not dreaded as it is by man; it knows nothing of the horrors of anticipation or of the sufferings of remembrance. The upbuilding of form is the great task of this plane of nature; and were it not for the continual extinction of obviously unfit forms, man would yet be surrounded by the ungainly monsters of the reptilian age. So that the rise and fall of species, in nature's constant efforts to produce a form capable of the indwelling of a god, is not cruel; except man interferes and instills his passions and vices into the process. The extinction of the unsuitable is followed by the upbuilding of the suitable form; the inner entity has suffered little in the process, and nature's great purpose advances one step nearer completion.

In the very highest examples of the animal kingdom, and especially among those which are associated with man in the intimacy of domestication, there occur cases where the animal indulges in needless cruelty, as shown in the torture of a mouse by a cat before killing it, and in many other instances. Although none of these can be said to be colored by a distinctly conscious motive, they approach sufficiently near this to fall under the action of individual Karma.

Whether given the bent towards cruelty by the direct contact with man, or only indirectly by the influence of his thought generally, it is certain that this or any other undesirable quality or characteristic must be corrected in the furnace of actual suffering. Marked traits, such as those possessed by many animals, probably await the contact of a human soul in the intimacy of incarnation, before they can be overcome and eradicated. The character of an animal, therefore, remains practically the same until it enters the human kingdom, and even here is only very slowly modified by the association with a thinking soul. As before stated, the intimacy of incarnation is so great that the soul almost invariably mistakes for its own the desires and passions of its animal associate, and even glories in many of these as qualities to be encouraged, rather than eliminated or spiritualized.

Nor need difficulties as to changing forms raise doubts as to the identity of any particular animal soul. Soul is not measurable by length, breadth and thickness, as form is; and an ugly, vicious character will show its true nature, even though the extinction of an old leads to the evolution and perfecting of a new, as diverse from the old as is the form of a cobra from that of a wasp. Form is quite secondary to the qualities which manifest through that form. This is not meant to assert that cobras reincarnate as wasps; the lesson intended to be conveyed is that extinction of species does not mean extinction of animal qualities or characteristics.

While the immediate action of Karma in the animal kingdom is to constantly check undesirable traits in individuals of any species, its activity must be very largely modified by the absence of motive, or a moral recognition of wrong. Only the personal sufferings brought about because of having evolved some vicious trait can be looked upon as operative in this kingdom, and even this is again greatly modified by the absence of a memory other than the mere association of ideas caused almost mechanically by time or place. In short, the great struggle of evolution centers in the human kingdom, where

two modes of consciousness, thought and emotion, meet in deadly conflict. Everything in the animal kingdom tends to separateness—to the formation of distinct individualities. Therefore, desire is dominant there; for nothing so engenders, accentuates, and perpetuates separateness as does desire. The office of the animal kingdom, then, is to prepare for the human by affording through its accentuating and evolution of desire the very force the overcoming of which offers the necessary opportunity for the further evolution of the true, or thinking, soul. The absence of thought, and therefore of moral motive, makes, as already pointed out, the action of Karma quite different here from its modes in the human kingdom. The one is not to be judged by the other; but the influence of the one upon the other is to be carefully studied. A proper understanding of the great planes of consciousness of which this universe is composed will at once and forever banish the cruel law of the survival of the fittest from the plane of mentality, and relegate it to that of instinct, where alone it belongs. Such theories as that of Malthus, with thousands of other mistaken and degrading conceptions of existence, will then be cast aside as unworthy of even a moment's consideration. But, above all, will a recognition of man's place in nature lead him to a like recognition of the place and true nature of animals; that they, too, are souls but a step behind him in the scale of evolution. Realizing thus that brotherhood is universal, reaching downward into the lower kingdoms just as truly as it reaches upward to the gods, man will begin to do his whole duty towards these his dumb brethren, and then truly "the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and a little child shall lead them," for that time shall see the dawn of the new heaven and the new earth which the brother of the Christ saw in his vision of old.

CHAPTER XV.

KARMIC APHORISMS.

THE Aphorisms upon Karma which follow were published over the signature of Wm. Q. Judge in the *Path*, of New York, (now *Theosophy*) for March, 1873, and there accredited by him to H. P. Blavatsky and other Teachers. A single glance will suffice to show who these other Teachers were, for these aphorisms are like diamonds in the clear purity of their language, and axiomatic in their unanswerable statements of truth. They have been written by those whose view-point of Karma was the mountain heights of attainment and wisdom. They really cover the whole subject with their broad, comprehensive statements; and it only remains to students to ponder over and try to comprehend them. They are the broad outlines of truth; that which is left to us is to apply them as a measuring wand to the theories, guesses, wild speculations and assumptions of our Western metaphysical, scientific and religious systems. To a degree, this has been attempted in this work.

APHORISMS.

1. There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it or feel its effects.
2. Karma is the adjustment of effects flowing from causes, during which the being upon whom and through whom that adjustment is effected experiences pain or pleasure.
3. Karma is an undeviating and unerring tendency in the Universe to restore equilibrium, and it operates incessantly.
4. The apparent stoppage of this restoration to equilibrium is due to the necessary adjustment of disturbance at some other spot, place, or focus which is visible only to the Yogi, to the Sage, or the perfect Seer; there is therefore no stoppage, but only a hiding from view.

5. Karma operates on all things and beings, from the minutest conceivable atom up to Brahma. Proceeding in the three worlds of men, gods, and the elemental beings, no spot in the manifested universe is exempt from its sway.

6. Karma is not subject to time, and therefore he who knows what is the ultimate division of time in this Universe knows Karma.

7. For all other men Karma is in its essential nature unknown and unknowable.

8. But its action may be known by calculation from cause to effect; and this calculation is possible because the effect is wrapped up in and is not succedant to the cause.

9. The Karma of this earth is the combination of the acts and thoughts of all beings of every grade which were concerned in the preceding Manvantara or evolutionary stream from which ours flows.

10. And as those beings include Lords of Power and Holy Men, as well as weak and wicked ones, the period of the earth's duration is greater than that of any entity or race upon it.

11. Because the Karma of this earth and its races began in a past too far back for human minds to reach, an inquiry into its beginning is useless and profitless.

12. Karmic causes already set in motion must be allowed to sweep on until exhausted, but this permits no man to refuse to help his fellows and every sentient being.

13. The effects may be counteracted or mitigated by the thoughts and acts of oneself or of another, and then the resulting effects represent the combination and interaction of the whole number of causes involved in producing the effects.

14. In the life of worlds, races, nations, and individuals, Karma cannot act unless there is an appropriate instrument provided for its action.

15. And until such appropriate instrument is found, that Karma related to it remains unexpended.

16. While a man is experiencing Karma in the instrument pro-

vided, his other unexpended Karma is not exhausted through other beings or means, but is held reserved for future operation; and lapse of time during which no operation of that Karma is felt causes no deterioration in its force or change in its nature.

17. The appropriateness of an instrument for the operation of Karma consists in the exact connection and relation of the Karma with the body, mind, intellectual and physical nature acquired for use by the Ego in any life.

18. Every instrument used by any Ego in any life is appropriate to the Karma operating through it.

19. Changes may occur in the instrument during one life so as to make it appropriate for a new class of Karma, and this may take place in two ways: (*a*) through intensity of thought and the power of a vow, and (*b*) through natural alterations due to complete exhaustion of old causes.

20. As body and mind and soul have each a power of independent action, any one of these may exhaust, independently of the others, some Karmic causes more remote from or nearer to the time of their inception than those operating through other channels.

21. Karma is both merciful and just. Mercy and Justice are only opposite poles of a single whole; and Mercy without Justice is not possible in the operations of Karma. That which man calls Mercy and Justice is defective, errant, and impure.

22. Karma may be of three sorts: (*a*) Presently operative in this life through the appropriate instruments; (*b*) that which is being made or stored up to be exhausted in the future; (*c*) Karma held over from past life or lives, and not operating yet because inhibited by inappropriateness of the instrument in use by the Ego, or by the force of Karma now operating.

23. Three fields of operation are used in each being by Karma: (*a*) the body and the circumstances; (*b*) the mind and intellect; (*c*) the physical and astral planes.

24. Held-over Karma or present Karma may each, or both at

once, operate in all of the three fields of karmic operation at once, or in either of those fields a different class of Karma from that using the others may operate at the same time.

25. Birth into any sort of body and to obtain the fruits of any sort of Karma is due to the preponderance of the line of karmic tendency.

26. The sway of karmic tendency will influence the incarnation of an Ego, or any family of egos, for three lives at least, when measures of repression, elimination, or counteraction are not adopted.

27. Measures taken by an Ego to repress tendency, eliminate defects, and to counteract by setting up different causes, will alter the sway of karmic tendency and shorten its influence in accordance with the strength or weakness of the efforts expended in carrying out the measures adopted.

28. No man but a sage or true seer can judge another's Karma. Hence, while each receives his deserts appearances may deceive, and birth into poverty or heavy trial may not be punishment for bad Karma, for Egos continually incarnate into poor surroundings where they experience difficulties and trials which are for the discipline of the Ego and results in strength, fortitude and sympathy.

29. Race-Karma influences each unit in the race through the law of Distribution. National Karma operates on the members of the nation by the same law more concentrated. Family Karma governs only with a nation where families have been kept pure and distinct; for in any nation where there is a mixture of families—as obtains in each Kaliyuga period—family Karma is in general distributed over a nation. But even at such periods some families remain coherent for long periods, and then the members feel the sway of family Karma. The word "family" may include several smaller families.

30. Karma operates to produce cataclysms of nature by concatenation through the mental and astral planes of being. A cataclysm may be traced to an immediate physical cause such as internal fire and atmospheric disturbance, but these have been brought on by the

disturbance created through the dynamic power of human thought.

31. Egos who have no Karmic connection with a portion of the globe where a cataclysm is coming on are kept without the latter's operation in two ways: (*a*) by repulsion acting on their inner nature, and (*b*) by being called and warned by those who watch the progress of the world.

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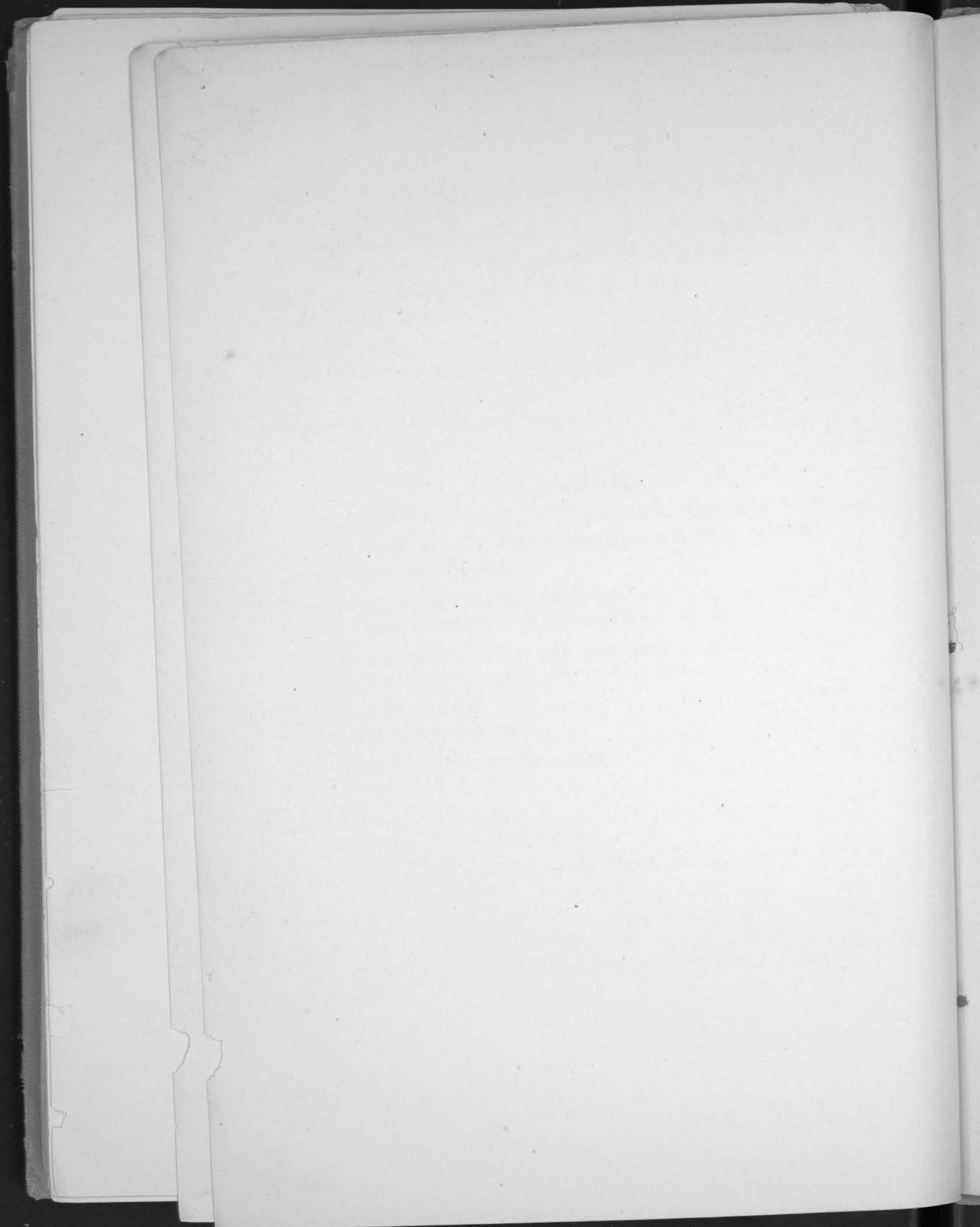
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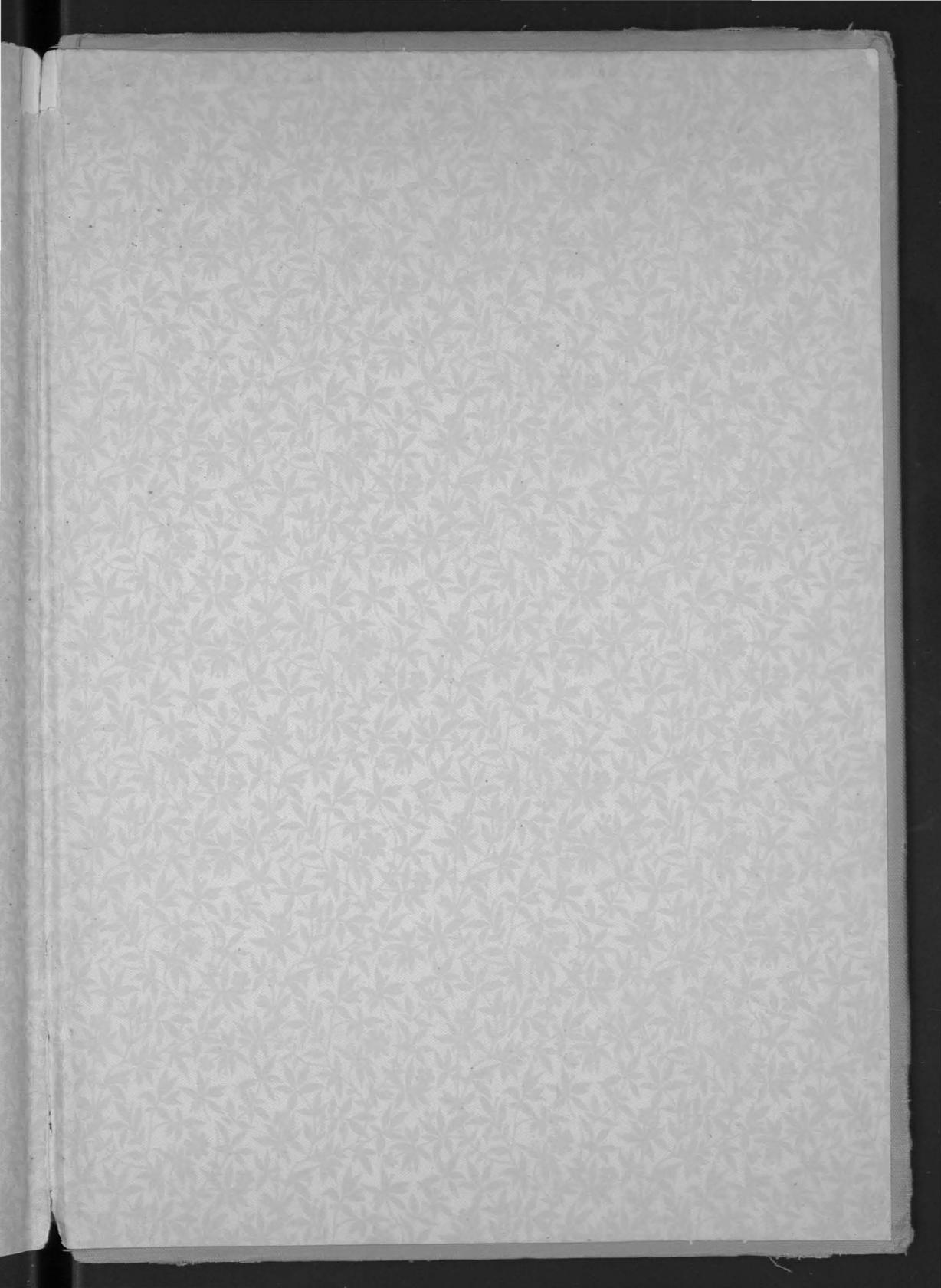
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