

The Gods in Chains

by C. Jinarajadasa

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The world is full of knowledge, and yet man is always wanting to know something more. Probably there never was, in the past history of the world, such an abundance of knowledge as we have today. In the department of religion, we can find in our public libraries translations of the scriptures of all the great religions, and in addition many standard works on comparative religion and anthropology. In philosophy, all the philosophies of India, China, Greece, mediaeval and modern Europe can be studied by us, if we will go to any university. Modern science is giving us fact after fact in her many departments of knowledge, which are so vast in quantity as to stagger the imagination. And in the domain of art, so far as mere knowledge of art is considered, we can today know what was the acme of artistic creation in the ancient world, and supplement it with the numerous publications which tell us what art is today.

Yet man is still in search of knowledge. We are not satisfied with what has been discovered by others; we want to discover for ourselves. But why should we, who are less competent than trained investigators into knowledge, desire to discover for ourselves? Why are we not satisfied with the accumulation of their knowledge? The answer is, that knowledge gathered by others only partly solves the chief problem which is continually facing us. That problem is, "What am I? Where I come from? Whither shall I go? Am I only the product of physical forces, or am I an immortal soul?" In forms which are ever new with every new experience, this problem, "What am I?" comes up for answer day after day, year after year.

On the answering of that question, by ourselves to ourselves, depends our true happiness. No man is really happy because he possesses wealth, or health, or the love of friends. He is happy, only in so far as these causes of happiness answer for him that question as to himself which can never be suppressed. Each of these external causes of happiness states a solution, and in the light of that solution men are happy. Yet why does not wealth always bring happiness to all? The rich are not necessarily those who are supremely happy. Why are those in perfect health so often restless in heart and mind, while those on beds of pain are sometimes serene and beautiful centres of peace to others? It is because each external cause of happiness only puts to sleep, for a while, the restless desire which is in us to know what we are. Therefore, after a period of quiet satisfaction, the question presses on our attention once again.

It is not difficult to put completely to sleep this inquiry into our own fundamental structure as living and suffering and enjoying human beings. One easy way is to accept the dogmas which are offered to us by religious instructors. When they say to us, "My child, do not worry your head about those problems; do what we tell you, and trust us", it is indeed with comfort we accept such advice, especially if our guide be of a pure and noble life. Another way is to turn to Materialism, and say, "There is no answer, there never was an answer, so let me live for the day, and turn away from the problem". There are millions today who prefer thus to be led by others in their thinking and in their aspiration, and yet millions more who have given up in despair every hope of a solution. But also there are tens of thousands, of keen brain, keen emotions, and full of a spirit of service of God and man, who are eagerly seeking to know for themselves, however small may be the knowledge accessible to them. It is to these, above all others, that Theosophy

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has a message.

There are today two main lines of inquiry into the problem, "What is man?" The first is coming more and more to the front, the method of modern science. Along this line, we have a clear answer, though it is not hopeful. Science tells us that life is a vast process in nature, and that in the course of evolution man as a species is the highest type of entity. Of this species, "man", each one of us is an example. To ourselves, we are indeed most important; the whole cosmos has no value, unless it exists for us. If the sun shines, the true meaning of its function of shining is that it may give us light and life. Each one of us regards every phenomenon of nature in this light; the *raison d'être* of the universe is, so far as each one of us is concerned, to give us the sense of individuality.

But unhappily for us, science very swiftly destroys this sense of value which we most naturally attribute to nature. Science shows that nature is interested in us, just for an infinitesimally brief period (for nature counts in millennia) of seventy or eighty years, not as individuals, but solely as specimens of a type, homo sapiens. Nature endows us with a sense of life and joy and success, not for our sakes, but solely for the sake of the progeny which we are to leave behind us to carry on the type. So far as evolution is concerned, we men are not different from bacteria which live half a day, though we may live a hundred years. Nature makes us out of protoplasm, and breaks us up into protoplasm again, when death comes. Along the line of science, the inquiry as to "What is man?" produces an answer which brings nothing but gloom.

In contrast to this answer of Materialism which science gives, we have the answer of Religion. Religions exist in two main groups, first those which tell of a Creator, a Personal God, and second those whose systems of ethics are based not on the idea of a creator, but are deduced from the structure of nature. Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam belongs to the first group, while Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shintoism belong to the second. I will omit the solution which this second group offers to the problem, "What is man?" and consider the solution which theistic religion gives, and especially the solution of your own religion of Christianity. What does Christianity, through its many Churches and sects, teach as to man?

As you are all aware, Christianity postulates an omnipotent God, who creates everything, from the electron to the largest star. It is God who has created man; you and I, and all the millions of our fellowmen, have been created by God. But between God the Creator, and us who have been created by Him, there is an infinite chasm. Even though we are told that God made man "in His own image", Christianity makes clear that God and man are eternally separate in nature. Just as the two banks of a river are eternally separate, and can never meet, even though a bridge connect them, so are man and God. If God is perfect, if He is omnipotent and omniscient, man by contrast is imperfect, weak and ignorant. This antithesis between man and God is essential to Christian thought, because man's salvation depends on the fact that he is subservient to God. God saves man by the wonderful gift of grace which He sends to man, not because man has earned it, but because God is pitiful to the soul who has erred and begs forgiveness.

Different fundamentally from the conception of man, given by science and by Christian theology, is that offered by Theosophy. But before I explain what is the Theosophical conception of man, I must state that Theosophy is not a creed which is offered to men to accept, with an implied threat that, if they do not

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accept, some terrible calamity will fall upon them. What is termed Theosophy today is an aggregate of thought which is found, in part, in every religion and philosophy. Nor is Theosophy a new philosophy created by a new school of thinkers; it is far rather a selection from the best thought in ancient religion, philosophy and mysticism.

This selection, I myself hold, is based on facts of nature; the laws of Theosophy are to me, who am an old student of Theosophy, just as real and a part of the order of nature as any law of physics or chemistry. Therefore Theosophy is a science of nature, just as modern science is; the difference is that Theosophy takes into its survey more facts than science has as yet cared to do. The facts of the supernatural, of mysticism, of abnormal psychological states are considered in Theosophy as much the data of knowledge as the data discovered in scientific laboratories. But there is this in common between Theosophy and science; both being philosophies of facts, men who do not care to study them are not threatened with punishment. Before the light of knowledge, the only punishment which an ignorant man earns is to continue to dwell in his darkness, and suffered for want of light, he will turn of his own volition towards the light. That is our attitude as Theosophists when we offer our philosophy to the inquirer; while we ourselves know it as truth, we know that it is not yet truth to another, and will not become truth to him, till his faculty of reasoning judges the facts which we present, and deduces from them a truth similar to our own. Theosophy is a body of philosophical truth to examine critically, not to accept blindly on the ipse dixit of another.

When the question, "What is man?" is asked of Theosophy, the answer is simple, though startling. It is, "Man is God". This may sound blasphemous, but an examination of what Theosophy says on the matter will show, that the Theosophist is just as full of reverence towards God as the most bigoted theologian. Remember that it was just this same charge of blasphemy which was levelled at Jesus by the Jews of His day; He claimed to be God, and to the Jews such a claim merited stoning and death. What was the reply of Jesus? It was to give them a quotation out of their own prophets who were well known to them, a thought as to the divine nature of all men which the Jews had ignored. Jesus's reply was, "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods?" He quoted these words from Psalm 82, where the full verse, No. 6, reads "I said, ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High."

It is that same answer which contains the principal thought of Theosophy as to the nature of man. Certainly God exists; the whole universe is a revelation of God. Everything imaginable of goodness, greatness or beauty, the omnipresent power which has made out of universal chaos a cosmos of law and order such as we are discovering today by sciences, all these reveal to us that what we term "Life" is not a mechanical or chance meeting of nature's forces, but the manifestation of a Divine Consciousness and the result of a Divine Action. The most ecstatic realisation of God by saint and by mystic, the hymns of praise and adoration which the human heart in every age has poured out towards God, are still only the ABC of that language of true comprehension of who and what God is which humanity will attain to some day.

But though the nature of God, the Source of all, is still a mystery which baffles our highest imagination, there is one fact about God which is stupendous. It is, that the vast and wonderful nature of the Godhead resides in man. Man, collectively as individually, is not merely created by God, but holds within his human nature the Divine Nature also. Not only is man created in God's own "image", it is God Himself who appears as man- as the humblest and lowliest man, as the greatest and most magnificent. Until this fundamental thought of Theosophy is grasped intellectually and emotionally, it is little use to go further

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into its study. I will therefore expound this thought a little fuller now, at the commencement.

It is never possible to prove intellectually that man is not merely a thing of flesh which dies, but an imperishable soul who partakes of the Nature of Divinity. Yet a man may know that this is the truth, though to prove it he must start with the mind, but proceed beyond the mind. He must go deep into himself to experience new states of consciousness, and by means of them attain to an intimate realisation of truth; both these are possible for him. He can experience them directly for himself. It is only through such experiences that he will prove to himself, first, his deathlessness, and then, that he partakes of Divinity. But it is advisable first to understand clearly with the mind the nature of the problem.

The relation between man and God, when not experienced directly by each for himself, can be stated from without only with the aid of symbols and similes. One which is suggestive is to say that God is a Flame, and that the soul of man is a spark in the Flame. Since the spark is fire, of the same fire as the Flame, there is no difference of quality or nature between the Flame and the spark which it enshrines. There is of course a difference in energy and in result; the spark cannot give out the light and heat which the Flame gives. But it might do so, provided the tiny spark obtains the fuel necessary for its increase.

A more suggestive simile still is to compare God to a perfectly cut diamond and the soul to the rough diamond dug from the earth. An uncut diamond has a crystal shape, but not sharp and precise; it is dull in colour and does not sparkle. Mount that uncut diamond on the diamond-cutter's wheel, grind it according to his science, then slowly, after long grinding, the stone being unmounted and remounted again and again to present new angles for grinding, it shines at last as the perfect cut stone, flashing all the colours of the rainbow as one turns and presents facet after facet to the light. How the rough diamond objects to the grinding! What can it know of its destiny as the perfect diamond to be set in a ring to adorn a lovely hand? It only knows how hot and uncomfortable the grinding is; it groans as the grinding table turns, it protests against the oppression of the tyrant, the diamond-cutter, who grinds it down against its volition. Yet what a difference between the rough diamond and the perfect precious stone set in a beautiful ring. If we were the rough diamond, and before being ground, were shown a picture of our perfection and beauty, would we not accept the pain of being ground from the rough stone to the perfect one?

It is a fundamental axiom in Theosophy, that God dwells in us. But while He is the Perfect, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the utterly Free, we are if bound in chains, and therefore imperfect, weak, still in search of wisdom. But just as the difference between the perfect diamond and the rough diamond is not one of essence or nature, so is the difference between God and ourselves. God is free, and rejoices in His freedom; we are His children, we partake of His Godlike nature, but we are as prisoners bound in chains, not free but awaiting our freedom.

From this axiom, that we are "Gods in chains", a great philosophy of life is developed which is called Theosophy, or the Wisdom of God. For that is what the word Theosophy means. And this philosophy states that all life, in every phrase discovered by science, pondered over by philosophy, moulded by the arts, is the process whereby the Gods in chains are released from their chains.

Our release from bondage, which is the breaking away of chain after chain which binds us, comes only in one way, that is by the experiences which we gain. It is not by a miracle that we become perfect;

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Perfection, Salvation, Liberation, call it by what name we will, is a natural process intended by God, for the release of the Gods in chains. Just as God, through His forces of fire and pressure, made the rough diamond, taking millions of years in the process; just as it is He who, through the brains of His children, slowly fashioned the turning wheel of the diamond-cutter and the science of diamond-cutting; so God has established laws of nature in a world which He has fashioned with a purpose. That purpose is to achieve the freedom of the Gods in chains. But, just as to make the perfect diamond, forces must be brought to bear on the rough diamond from without, so God has arranged the forces of experience to work upon man, so that, through experiences of good and evil, joy and pain, sacrifice and selfishness, man, the God in chains, may shortly free himself from his chains.

Why is the world today what it is? This earth of ours has many climates; each zone- tropical, temperate, Antarctic- varies in temperature, bringing different vegetation and natural surroundings. We know that these differences in surroundings- seas or mountains, hot climate or a cold one- make for variations of psychological response, differences in the way men and women think and feel. Men live meditatively, or passionately, or sluggardly, according to the climate in which they are born. And then, accordingly as you are a Latin, or a Teuton, or a Hindu or a Chinese, is your reaction to life. That does not mean that men vary in goodness, or in capacity for knowledge, according to race; but rather, that they differ in the way they understand the problem of life.

Why do all the diversities of climate and race exist in the world? Ask the devout Christian who believes in God; he has no reasonable answer. He replies only, "God so wills it". But if you ask, "Why" he thinks you are blasphemous. If, as they hold in orthodox Christianity, God wants us all someday to live with Him in heaven, why does He, who is omnipotent, not put us all into one race, one climate, make us speak one language? Why are the two sexes? The division of the human race into the two sexes has brought to mankind some of its greatest joys in the realm of goodness and beauty. But if we are going to be angels after death, a kind of neutral being, why should women have to go through the pangs of childbirth, and not men? Why are some of us Hindus, or Brazilians, or Portuguese, or Spanish, or English, if beyond the grave all our differences of temperament and culture are valueless in the angelic world? If God is the God of Christians only, why has He allowed the appearance of Islam after the coming of His son Jesus, and before that coming, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Confucianism?

All these many questions are unanswerable from the orthodox standpoint. But at least what seems a rational answer appears in Theosophy. It is that Life, with its varieties of climate and race, the two sexes, the differences in culture, the many religions and philosophies, is purposely intended by God to be what it is. God needs, for His purpose of releasing the Gods from their chains, many tools: each tool, which removes a chain, must give to the imprisoned God a particular type of experience. Just as before a boy or girl grows to be the man or woman of high purpose and culture, there must come in succession the Kindergarten, the Elementary or Grammar School, the High School and the University; just as not language alone, but geography, mathematics, history and science must be studied to expand and train the mind; and in addition to all these studies, athletics and sports, and training in the social duties of the home, the community and the nation are also needed to make the perfect citizen of balanced heart and mind and of executive capacity; so is it in God's Plan to free the Gods in chains, the children whom He has created.

It is for this purpose of making us free, by sending to us the necessary experiences, that the Divine Plan has worked through the ages to bring into the world its many races, religions, philosophies, arts and

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sciences. Each soul for its perfection requires experience after experience; the soul must grow purposely, not blindly, to perfection. He must do the right, because he wills to do the right, not out of fear of punishment, but because he knows by experience that to do wrong is to mar the beauty of God's Plan, and thereby bring pain and retrogression to himself.

If, as I postulate, God dwells in us; if it is by experience that the Gods in chains are released from their bonds; one thing is evident, that for the perfecting of a soul such experiences as one lifetime only gives are not sufficient. Suppose there were no decay of our faculties with the passing of the years, when we come to begin our life beyond the grave, would we be so very much wiser and nobler than we were at the beginning? Certainly we shall be to some extent wiser and nobler; but how little is that extent, compared to the wisdom and the goodness of the great ones of the world!

No, we grow very little in one lifetime; there are no miracles in consciousness which make the average man or woman grow into a genius before he or she dies. Nature's growth is slow; evolution proceeds by infinitesimal gradations in the material world, as science shows. It is the same in the spiritual world. Perfection requires not one lifetime of a hundred years, but many lifetimes of many hundreds.

If the concept offered to you is attractive, that God dwells in us, and that slowly we grow to be like Him by accumulating experiences of goodness and virtue, then only a little examination will show that the process called Reincarnation must be a necessary part of the method for the perfection of the soul.

The idea of Reincarnation is found throughout the world, both among savage peoples and among the highest civilised. On the idea of Reincarnation are based the great religions and philosophies of Hinduism and Buddhism. Pythagoras taught it in Greece, and Plato acknowledged it in his theory of reminiscence. It was known to the Jews, and is taught in the Talmud. It was indeed so well known to the Jews that, when John the Baptist began baptising, popular gossip asked the question, "Is this the prophet Elias come again?" When Jesus was asked if this rumour was true, He replied, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

There are many forms in which this belief appears; one form is known as Metempsychosis, and according to it men are sometimes reborn as animals, to expiate their wickedness. This is not taught in Theosophy, because to be reborn as an animal is to retrograde in evolution, and any purification necessary of man's wickedness is more efficiently accomplished by being reborn as a human being. Another form of the idea is called Pre-existence, that is, that before the soul enters into the embryo in the mother's womb, it already exists as a developed entity in a spiritual world, and then descends into incarnation, for just one birth and no more. This form of Reincarnation is also considered in Theosophy as not in accordance with facts.

We teach in Theosophy that, once a human being, always a human being. It is true that our highest evolved animals, our pet dogs and cats, who show almost human intelligence and affection, ascend the scale of evolution one by one, and are reborn as human beings of primitive intelligence, like simple-minded savages; this is evolution, a progression from the lower to the higher. But any rebirth of a human being as an animal would be a reversion and a retrogression, such as is contrary to the march of evolution.

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In Theosophy, then, it is taught that Reincarnation is part of a natural process for the evolution of men. After the death of a man, there ensues a period, short or long, of life in those invisible worlds, which are graphically though somewhat inaccurately termed hell or purgatory and heaven. When this period is over, the soul takes birth again in a human form, to resume his experiences. Obviously, it would be fruitless if he merely repeated the experiences which he has already had; he must acquire new experiences, while he tests and elaborates those which are old. Therefore, as part of the process of Reincarnation, various laws appear, which can be studied by those desirous of fuller information than the general theory affords.

One law is that the soul is reborn in various races of mankind, according to a certain succession; for each race calls out of the soul a particular kind of faculty, which another race is unable to do. The introspective character of the Hindu, the emotional and artistic sensitiveness of the Latin, the objective and intellectual attitude of the Teuton, these and other race characteristics are slowly but methodically called out of the soul by reincarnating in the races which show them. More noteworthy still is the fact that Reincarnation involves a change of sex; usually a soul has a succession of male or female births, from three to seven in number, and then afterwards changes into the opposite sex. It is in this way that the soul, which is neither male nor female, slowly develops the attributes which are latent in it of the highest capacities of both man and woman.

I have said the souls of men, the Gods in chains, are released from their bondage, not by a miracle, but by the only process we know of releasing ourselves from ignorance and wickedness, which is experience. It is by thinking, feeling, acting, by enduring what life sends us, by struggling with our environment, by success, by failure, by happiness, by misery, by aspiring to ideals, that we grow. But growth requires not mere experience, but a recognition by the soul of the purpose of experience. It is here that there enters into the problem of Reincarnation a second law called the Law of Karma or Result.

This "Law of Result" is known by the physicist as affecting all substance; he calls it the Law of Action and Reaction, and it is the third of Newton's Laws of Motion. In its wider application, it is given in the axiom, "As we sow, we reap." It has been well stated in a sequence of cause and effect, as follows:

Sow a thought, and reap a habit.
Sow a habit, and reap a character.
Sow a character, and reap a destiny.

Put in this form, it is obvious to us all, because we have experienced this law. A thought repeated again and again, day after day, becomes a habit of thought. We are Catholics or Protestants or Atheists by habit, that is, because we have thought repeatedly along one particular line, till a time comes when our thoughts are automatic, and we have the habit of thinking as a Catholic or Protestant or Atheist.

When therefore an individual appears on earth, seemingly for the first time, as a baby, it is not so. He has lived on earth before many times; in nearly every race and civilisation in the past of the world, he has been a man or a woman; he has thought in them, he has acted in them, and thereby he has slowly fashioned a character for himself. That character may not have been perfect, when his last life on earth ended; he had perhaps many vices and a few virtues. When he is reborn, he returns with his character. Of course, his material body is provided for him by his parents; but he chooses his parents.

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Many of us would rebel at the thought that we chose our parents before birth; for we feel sure that, if we had any choice, we would have done better. Nevertheless, it is we who choose our parents, just as it is also true that it is our parents who choose us as their children. This choice is not exercised by us at the time of birth, or even at the conception of the embryo; we exercised our choice during our last life on earth, and sometimes during many previous lives. As in that long past we thought of our parents; as we felt towards them love, or indifference, or hatred; and we helped them or obstructed them; as they, in their turn, helped us or did not help us but hurt us; so the interplay of good and evil between us and them made a bond of Karma between them and us, which now reappears as the bond between parent and child. In that past, we may have been a parent, and they our children; or we and they may have been brothers and sisters, relations or friends. The name of the bond between two souls does not matter; what matters is that a bond exists, which is the reaping of a sowing of good and evil, help or injury, between two souls.

The doctrine of Reincarnation, coupled with the doctrine of a Law of Result, offers a more satisfying explanation of the inequalities and injustices of life than any other theory. According to the ordinary Christian explanation, we have to believe either that God is not merciful, or that He is not omnipotent. For, would an omnipotent, all-loving Father create blind children, cripples, idiots? What chance for growth in goodness has a child born of syphilitic parents? He is handicapped at the start. If we were to analyse carefully our brethren in our prisons, whom we call criminals, we shall certainly find that the majority show physical defects which are the result of heredity. And then, to condemn to an eternal hell those unable to live a righteous life, because they are handicapped at the start, is scarcely according to our idea of justice.

The Theosophical explanation accepts the doctrine of physical heredity, and also the fact that character is influenced by environment; but Theosophy says that we reap the particular heredity given by our parents, because we have deserved it, by thoughts, feelings and deeds of our past lives. Similarly too with our environment; one child is born in a rich family, and another in a poor one, because each has made that environment for himself in the past, the rich child because he has caused in that past happiness for others, and the poor child because he has omitted to do so. The opportunities for growth and for happiness which come to us as we live from year to year, or the obstacles which thwart us as we try to change our present circumstances into something better and happier, are both the reaping of a sowing. We have forgotten where and when we sowed good or evil; but our forgetting when the debt was contracted is no excuse for not paying it when asked of us.

Life on all sides is asking us to pay our past debts, or is paying us for past credits. It is God who has established the Law of Karma, that effect follows cause, that reaping comes after sowing. Having once established the law, He refuses to interfere to modify it. He is not angry that we break His law; He sends us the results in pain, and no amount of penitence will prevent that result coming to us. He is not flattered that we obey His law; He sends us happiness as the result of co-operation with the law, but He does not favour us with results which we have not earned.

But while God does not interfere to diminish our evil or to increase our good- for that part of the work He leaves to our own initiative- He does balance and combine the forces of our good and evil, in such a way that those forces do not work blindly or mechanically. God is ever on the watch to release the God in chains, the soul of man who has come from God. Therefore we have what may be termed a divine interference, in guiding a soul to be born in one nation or family rather than in another, as man or woman

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rather than as woman or man, in a favourable environment or in an unfavourable one.

Though God is omnipotent and all-merciful. He is supremely just to all alike; therefore He does not interfere to lessen the unpleasant Karma of a soul at birth, for God cannot annihilate the Evil force created by that soul. But in all the adjustment of our past good and evil, which comes as our present happinesses and pains, God combines both our good and our evil, so as to send us a type of experience which will make us in the long run wiser, nobler and stronger. The opportunities or the calamities which come to us are not rewards or punishments; they are the reaping today of things of good or evil sown in the past. But while we reap, He arranges for us, if we desire to do so, to release ourselves from our prison of ignorance and impotence. Each suffering nobly borne, or each happiness unselfishly accepted, can release in us capacities which are hidden in us.

It is in order to spur us to reveal the Hidden God within us that God surrounds us with His many religions, sciences, arts, philosophies and all the activities in life. Every event in life, pleasurable or painful, every experience which is ours, whether consciously selected or imposed on us from without, is intended in the Plan of God to release in each one of us the Imprisoned Godhead. Like as the sculptor works on a block of marble, having in his mind the image of the statue which he desires to create, so God works on each human soul. God has before Him the "Archetype", as Plato called it, that perfect expression of the soul, which in its ultimate perfection is utter beauty and goodness and truth. With that Archetype before Him, God adjusts our Karma for us, our good and evil, so that little by little, now by pain and now by joy, we begin to realise that goodness and nobility and perfection are not virtues alien to us, but are our heritage as the children of God.

The realisation that God dwells in us, and that the soul of man is a God in chains, brings profound modifications in thought, not only concerning ourselves, but concerning everything in the world. Our usual attitude towards the world's miseries and imperfections is either that of the believer in an omnipotent Creator, or that of the utter sceptic and materialist who believes in no Creator at all. The former, worshipping God, and thinking himself too insignificant before God's majesty, leaves everything to God; he considers that his business is primarily to worship God, and not to make the world better. If he is charitable, or a reformer, or an internationalist, it is all largely as a means of earning his salvation. The average materialist simply leaves alone the problem of the world's evil, or if he is fundamentally philanthropic, as are the greatest sceptics and atheists, he does his best to reform the world, but seeing how feeble are man's forces for good before the vastness of the world's ignorance and backwardness, he toils with no great assurance that the goal will ever be reached.

But when one accepts Theosophy, then, with the realisation that God dwells in us, comes too the realisation that God does not work alone, but only through man. Because He dwells in us, we are as the fingers of His hand. He, the source of goodness, has made us to be the channels of His goodness; He, who has in His mind the perfect Plan for the world's redemption, has arranged to achieve that redemption, not by Himself unaided, but with the aid, and by the means of, the souls who have emanated from Him. When Christianity teaches that God sent Jesus, His Son, to redeem the world, that teaching is only a fragment of the more wonderful truth of Theosophy, that each man is a Son of God, just exactly as Jesus was, and that it is God's Plan to redeem the world through each one of us also.

It is obvious that God, who is omnipotent, could have created a perfect world. Has He done so? Look on

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all sides at the world's miseries and injustices, at the mighty grinding down the weak, at the rich exploiting the poor; look how the hopes and longings of men are frustrated again and again by a fate that is more adamant than the diamond. Why does God allow an imperfect miserable world to exist? Because, in order to make that world perfect, He needs our assistance. He dwells in us, little though most of us know the wonderful inspiration of that fact; He is awaiting our call. But we are asleep, and do not know that our true life begins when we work with Him to carry out His plan. We are immersed in our personal self and its personal happinesses; the materialist concentrates his energies on getting as much happiness as he can out of a fleeting world, the devotee to prepare his soul to live eternally in heaven. Both miss the immediate object of being born as a human being; that object is to feel God's thought and emotion and will flaming in us, and to go out into the world energised by our Divinity, and make the world perfect.

This world, in spite of its miseries and injustices, has its inner framework a wonderful Idealism. God's thought, which is the sum total of all that is the Good, the True and the Beautiful, is the framework of everything, whether it is a pebble on the seashore, or a cruel or ugly character in a human being, or the vast world. But just as, when a great architect gives the plan for a magnificent building, but passes away before he can supervise its completion, and lesser architects come after him and alter his plan, thinking to make it better but in reality only achieving what is worse; so too is the world. If man did not exist, and God alone were the creator of the world and the shaper of its events, we should have an ideal world. But man does exist; God sends him purposely into that world. And so, on the perfect framework of Divine Thought, man in his selfishness blunders and builds ugliness and horror. But man, even in his many generations extending to millions of years, cannot prevent the final success of God's perfect Plan. God waits patiently, sending man on the long round of births and deaths, teaching him to reap as he sows, and to learn to sow more wisely because to sow evil and imperfection is to reap pain and ugliness. It is thus that God trains man, till man is ready to co-operate with the Divine Plan.

I say again and again, "God dwells in us". Therefore, man is fundamentally good, fundamentally pure, fundamentally beautiful and perfect. But he is all these things as a Fragment of Divinity, as a Spark in the Divine Flame. It is because he does not realise his wonderful nature that he allows himself to be led astray by his passions, by his ambitions, by the selfish and evil forces of the world. Place in a chariot a man unaccustomed to horses, put in his hands the reins, how shall he control spirited horses and guide them aright? So is man, the soul, as he lives in the physical body. Man does not have a soul; he is the soul, and has a body. If the horses are spirited, and for lack of proper guidance wreck the chariot, it is not their fault; they should have been guided. But if the charioteer did not know the art of controlling horses?

So too is the problem of man's sinning. Man does not sin voluntarily; he is made a slave to his lower self by the attractions of his senses, because he is not yet awake as a soul. He follows evil, not because he knows it as evil, but because, blinded by his impulses, and glamoured by the world's attractiveness, he vaguely hopes and believes that some happiness and beauty lies along the path which he follows. It is this truth, that man is fundamentally good and not evil, which is uttered by all great Teachers. When Jesus, the Perfect One, said, "I am the Vine, and ye are the branches", did He not mean that somehow we share His nature? Did not St. Paul, Jesus' greatest apostle, say concerning us, "Christ in you, the hope of glory?" Consider too what the great Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus said about the evil that we do, "Vice is at its worst still human, being mixed with something opposite to itself". (Enneads I, 18, 13)

None among the poets has better expressed than Dante this great thought, that even in our mistakes we

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are somehow trying to find the right; how even when they sin, men are in their feeble way trying to walk towards the Light of God. Thus speaks Beatrice to Dante:

“Well do I note how in thine intellect already doth reglow the eternal light, which only seen doth ever kindle love; and if aught else seduce your love, naught is it save some vestige of this light, ill understood, that shineth through therein.

Within us, always, God dwells. In the innermost holy of Holies of our heart He resides, whispering to us what noble dreams we are to dream, of courage, purity and sacrifice. But so often we will not listen to His voice, preferring to listen to the voice of our senses. And our senses, after we have indulged them, sooner or later hurt us deeply; then we seek comfort, and turn within, into our own inmost soul, and there we hear once again the voice of God. That voice tells us what all the great Teachers repeat to our ears- that we must forget our sorrows, and go out into the great world of sorrow, and discover our consolation by consoling the world. That is always the gospel of every great Teacher- that we must lose ourselves to find ourselves, that we must turn away from the interests of our little self and become one with the interests of the Great Self of the world.

It matters little, at the beginning of our search for truth and reality, whether we call that Great Self by the name God, or Humanity or Idealism. What matters is that we should forget ourselves in a great cause, become one with a noble work. It is this noble work which Theosophy reveals to men. For each, the daily task is to be an agent of God's Plan, a channel of His forces for the reconstruction out of an imperfect world of the perfect world which shall reflect God's Archetypes. Theosophy is less a gospel of salvation than a gospel of work. For the eternal danger which threatens man's happiness is absorption in his self; let but a man turn outwards to dedicate himself to a noble work, and then he discovers for himself what is true salvation. Salvation that is unchanging and eternal cannot be given to a soul by another; he must achieve it himself, by breaking away the chains which bind and imprison his Divinity.

It is only as a man works, that is, produces changes in the world in which he lives, that he discovers a glorious truth which transforms all life for him. When the soul, as the worker, sees God's Plan for men, and co-operates with God for the success of that Plan, then slowly he discovers himself as the Archetype of God sent forth to do a work. As teacher or statesman, as artist, scientist or philosopher, the soul sees the divine image according to which he is being fashioned, the God freed from all chains. And more wonderful still, he sees on all sides of him the Archetypes of God at work through men. In the great Saviours of the world, in Jesus, in Krishna, in Buddha, the Divine Archetype stands so clearly revealed, that men bend the knee before its beauty and majesty.

But the Archetype is there also in the sinner, in the criminal, in every man and woman who is outcasted by society as unfit to belong to the social order. The worst of men is still a God in chains, though we may see only the rust on his chains, and not the light on his face. To the true worker, who ever co-operates with God's Plan, there is only one vision, that of the Archetypes of God. Then he knows that a soul who is ignorant, who commits evil, who refuses to co-operate with God's Plan, is only a God in chains; then he can help his brother-God with understanding, with pity, free of all resentment, to unchain his Divinity, for he knows that the evil in men is only transitory, while the good in them is eternal and unchanging.

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To a soul who sees the Archetypes of God on all sides of him, what matters the race a man or woman belongs to, or caste, or age? What matters then to him if a brother-soul is in man's form or a woman's? Only one thing supremely matters, that an Archetype of God, when seen, should be revered, for the soul understands something of the mystery of the Divinity within him by worshipping the Divinity without him.

Thus understanding God's Plan, thus determining to co-operate with that Plan, the answer is at last found to the ever-recurring question, "What am I?" And that answer is, "A Son of God in the image of God." With the direct experience of what Divinity is- both of the God who is within the soul and of the God who is without the soul- all the problems of the world fall into their place in a great scheme of Idealism. Then wisdom comes from within a man's own heart; he needs no external guide, neither priest nor scripture, for the God who dwells within him leads him step by step on the road to the realisation of his Archetype. Sciences and arts, religions and philosophies, the daily work for livelihood and service, the duties to family and friends, to community and to nation, each becomes as a string in a divine lyre, on which the soul plays a divine melody.

And for each one of us God has written a great music, and He is waiting till each is ready to give it to his fellowmen. But we must all learn the technique of our instrument, and we must learn also the message of our music. For that learning, He sends us out into His universe, to work, to play, to enjoy, to suffer; and all the time He watches and guides, whether we co-operate with Him or thwart His Plan.

What a vision is this of the world, that is revealed in Theosophy, that God dwells in all men, and is ever working upon them, from without with religions, sciences, arts and philosophies, while at the same time He works upon them from within, with dreams of ideals of beauty, joy and service. It is a vision of Divine Brotherhood, where God dwells by man's side as a fellow-worker, as a fellow-sufferer, inspiring His little brother from effort to effort, till that little brother of God who is man knows that he and his Great Brother are one and not two.