

## Concerning the Mortification of the Flesh by G.R.S. Mead

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### STRAY THOUGHTS ON THEOSOPHY

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live".

Paul, Letter to the Romans, viii, 13.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness . . . anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth . . . , putting off the old man with his deeds and putting on the new man who is ever being made new into knowledge — [that is to say renewed] — according to the image of Him who created him — in whom is no "Greek and Jew", "Circumcision and Uncircumcision" [nay nor any] foreigner , . . slave [or] freeman; but Christ is all things and in all things.

Paul, Letter to the Colossians, iv, 5, 8, 9-11. [Page 2]

WHO of us who seeks after Wisdom, does not love the old Mystics and their strivings ? Who of us, even if we do not give assent to some of their propositions, does not delight to hear of their raptures ? Who of us does not sympathise most profoundly in all their endeavours to struggle upward, in their most gallant efforts to solve the riddle of existence ? And yet, who of us does not at moments feel that their heroic measures are frequently an impatient cutting of the baffling knot rather than a patient untying of the mystic tangle ? Who of us today, in the active, bustling Western world at any rate — who of us at least, with the blood of battle still hot in our veins — but feels that the frequent urgings to escape, the repeated promptings to flee, the apparently authoritative commands to hate the world, which so frequently characterise the less wise utterances of countless mystics of the past, are but the gibberings of the ghosts of things gone by, and no solution of the enigma of the present soul of man, no fit victory for the Warrior today ?

"The Flesh!". "Carnal!" What hatred and hostility are roused in the puritanical heart by these words; what fear and trembling in the heart of the ascetic and the contemplative ! For, is not the flesh one of the "Persons" of the Infernal Trinity: the World, the Flesh, and the Devil ? The Devil the Father, the World the Mother, and the Flesh the Son! [Page 3]

Poor, poor body ! "Lead us not into temptation" — says the great prayer attributed to the Master; but "I am thy God, not thy Betrayed" says the earliest Mystery-ritual of Christendom. Poor, poor body of ours! What, after all, has it done to deserve the hate and fear of such unreasonably angered and frightened possessors of it — if indeed they possess their body, and their body does not possess them ? For surely

such a view is unreasonable, nay, is not only unreasonable, but unjust, thankless.

For what, after all, is the cry of the mortificatory brotherhood the world over ? Is it not: We must escape out of this Sodom of a world, out of this Gomorrah of a body ? “The world is very evil”, says popular Christianity in that most prolific breeder of heresy, the Church Hymnal; “the world is false” — says popular Vedantism; “the world is sorrow”, says popular Buddhism. Sin, untruth, pain is the mother of it; in such a womb is it born; and the seed of it is the Devil, the “father of lies”, *Agnoia*, *Avidya*, *Moha*. It is the Flesh that keeps us from the Gnosis, the Vidya, the Dharma.

So have the mortificatory race averred in many a clime and age, and the people have often feigned to follow after them in word, amazed at their strenuousness, at the intensity of their assertion. They have, however, rarely followed after them in deed, and this in all likelihood because at the back of their dim reasonings was the overmastering intuition of that [Page 4] saving truth that but for the body, but for the Flesh, there would be no Gnosis, no Vidya, no Dharma. “I am thy God, not thy Betrayer!” But why should not the ascetic have his Devil as well as another man his ? Let the envious say ! And that the ascetic's Devil is very frequently his Flesh, pure and simple, let the delightful mystics of Thrice-greatest Hermes witness when they write:

But first thou must tear off from thee the cloak which thou dost wear, the web of ignorance, the ground of bad, corruption's chain, the *carapace* of darkness, the living death, sensation's corpse, the tomb thou carriest with thee, the robber in thy house, who through the things he loveth, hateth thee, and through the things he hateth, bears thee malice.

Such is the hateful cloak thou wearest; that throttles thee [and holds thee] down to it, in order that thou mayest not gaze above, and, having seen the beauty of the Truth, and Good that dwells therein, detest the bad of it; having found out the plot that it hath schemed against thee, by making void of sense those seeming things which men think senses; for that it hath with mass of matter blocked them up and crammed them full of loathsome lust, so thou may'st not hear about the things thou should'st, nor see the things thou should'st behold.

From the sermon “The Greatest ill of Men is Ignorance of God”. Parthey's text (Berlin; 1854), p. 66.

All of which, though it of course comes earlier in date, reminds us strongly of that despairing and mournful monkish cry of the ghostly counsellor of the ascetic soul in *The Voice of the Silence* [page 3, first edition], who funereally remarks:

If thy soul smiles while bathing in the sunlight of thy life; if thy soul sings within her chrysalis of flesh [Page 5] and matter; if thy soul weeps inside her castle of illusion | . . . know, O disciple, thy soul is of the earth.

In such brilliant and powerful phrases of striking similes, in such strenuous-lugubrious, mournful-enthusiastic sentences, we have the gist of the whole matter, the theory of all mortification, the challenge to the death hurled in the face of the Flesh.

Cleanse and scourge the hateful thing, the insidious and treacherous parasite, the vampire, the dweller on the threshold that ever sucks the life-blood of the true man; tear it off, kill it out; . . . and you shall then enjoy even finer and rarer delights — far subtler sensations! We hasten the funeral of the old race, that we may play midwife to the new brood. Against this way of intenser continuance we have no word to say, except that we do not see that any solution of the problem of sensation is thus acquirable. But perhaps, after all, this is not necessary, and it is enough to live and drink deeply and ever more deeply of the cup, until we become truly God-intoxicated. This is the path for those who apparently oppose matter to a spirit which is but matter written finer and therefore more potent; there are, however, others who think they would fain pierce through the ever sweeter swirl of sense-delights into the calm mind of the mystery, and the thought of the Master for them takes form in such sentences as:

See thou therefore in Me the slaying of a Word (Logos), the piercing of a Word, the blood of a Word, the [Page 6] wounding of a Word, the hanging of a Word, the passion of a Word, the nailing of a Word, the death of a Word. And by Word I mean Man. [ From The Acts of John, see *Fragments of Faith Forgotten*, Page 438]

And by Man, as Thrice-greatest Hermes tells us, was meant Mind — Mind, “Only begotten Son” of Mind; Mind, that is to say, self-generated, begotten of itself alone, alone begotten. For the One, so say the old myths of Wisdom, producing Himself from Himself, perpetually sends forth His own Thought of Himself; and She, the Divine Mother, His Thought, conceives Him in Herself as Father Mind, and brings Him forth into manifest being as Son — and yet, All is One. “The Breath of the Father warms It (the One Thing); the Breath of the Mother cools It”. And Father is the mystery we call Spirit, and Mother is the mystery we call Matter, and It is the Mystery of mysteries — Man.

How then shall we hate our Mother, the Thought of God, in our love of our Father the Spirit; how shall we hate Form and love Life, hate Body and love Soul ? Surely it is all a great mystery, and not a crude antithesis, a naïve dualism ?

“The world is evil” — say the renunciators, the mortificatory folk. “The world is good — say the optimists, the laughter-lovers, the “Greeks” of the world. “The world is mixed” — say sober philosophers. “The world is a mystery” — say the lovers of the Gnosis. [Page 7]

That the presupposition that “spiritual” illumination is dependent upon mortification of the flesh, or at any rate, on strict asceticism, is fundamental with countless schools of mystics the world over, no one will deny. It is quite true that, as a rule, no journeyer on this path stops to enquire very strictly into the meaning and the value of “spiritual” illumination. It is enough to know that it is of the nature of beatific vision of some kind; it requires no justification other than experience, it must be felt. Enough for the profane to know that even in its beginnings it is some intenser sensation, some loftier emotion, some ecstatic experience. Whether or not a “word of wisdom” might be of more general and genuine service to the world, few who have once experienced the inner delights, stop to enquire, and naturally so.

But the greatest puzzle of all is how men began to practise asceticism. Surely they must have begun naturally; they could not have started with *à priori* notions that if they knocked off their physical geese and ale they would become one with Osiris and enjoy celestial ale and geese now and for ever!

Perhaps it was that in the beginning those who *naturally* experienced these more subtle and powerful sensations, as *naturally* refrained from the food and habits of normal man of their time; even as we all do now naturally when we are engaged on some [Page 8] absorbing mental or creative work which entralls our whole attention, or are taken out of ourselves by some deep anxiety or highly pleasurable excitement. In the beginning, then, some of those who heard of the strange inner delights of their ecstatic comrades, would doubtless desire to enjoy such sensations in their own persons, and would accordingly set themselves to copy the outward behaviour of the natural mystics of this kind — the things they *naturally* did or refrained from doing, *because their attention was absorbed elsewhere*. The exoterics would then copy the outward behaviour of the esoterics, hoping that so they might share with them their internal delights.

Few of such outward imitators, however, we may suppose, ever succeeded because of such unintelligent imitation alone; those who succeeded did so because they were already at the germinating stage for this peculiar species of growth within; they were already following the way of the seers and hearers and feelers within, in their own internal economy. And certainly in such cases it seems reasonable to assume that the outward copying will hasten the inward growth, and rapidly quicken it.

But if a man's *charism* is not of this kind, then he may mortify himself and abstain, fast and discipline himself with utmost rigour, and not even the sad visions of sickness and deadly feebleness will visit his eyes. Of course there be those, many of them, [Page 9] who discipline themselves for pure love of chastising themselves for their sins in order to please their God — but we may leave these to this God of their own devising, for such a God has not created our *cosmos* of beauty.

For those, then, whose *charism*, or special soul-*dharma*, is not vision or prophecy, apocalyptic or soothsaying, perhaps the “good things” of this world need not be so strictly taboo. Indeed the unregenerate can argue that there ought to be some compensation, for have not the seers the “good things” of other ranges of sensation to make up for their abstinence “down here” ! “Most of us unregenerates”, I fancy I hear them plead, “would be very content to purchase ecstasies at so cheap a rate, if it were possible. But for most of us it is not possible, simply because it is not our particular *charism*, You might as well say that we can all become poets or architects, or engineers or doctors”.

Consider another *charism* (though Paul does not include it in his list) — music. The way of the musician is certainly not usually the way of the ascetic; and surely the musician is blessed with subtle senses in his own line ? What can be more beautifully expressive of the highest emotions than a masterpiece of the great creators of harmony ? And yet do we not read of some of them, the greatest creators, that they were gross feeders and drinkers, nay, *very* gross feeders and drinkers ? The ascetic [Page 10] will perhaps rejoin: “But they did not write 'spiritual' music”. They wrote at any rate music which can take some of us out of ourselves, raise us to vast heights of holy emotion, and at-one us with greatness otherwise unattainable. But perhaps musicians do not count in this; are not entirely on the line of our average human evolution; perhaps some of them are “nurslings of the gods”; who knows ?

Then again who has not heard strange stories of poets ? Of some who have poured forth their chiefest masterpieces when strong drink had to all outer seeming swamped them; of one of the greatest English

singers, who invariably imbibed a bottle of so mundane a thing as port, before he charmed all ears with his song; of another who, when weaned from the cup by a philistine friend, never wrote a readable line again? Truly does God seem to be no respecter of persons in this? But the renunciators will say: "Yes, we have heard of these things, but how much more 'spiritually' would they have written if they had been ascetics!" Maybe; but in one case at any rate, the friend who "converted" his friend, "gained a soul" but robbed the world of a "poet"; and who shall say whether the world is the richer or the poorer thereby? Who knows? Man is a mystery; when we think we have solved the problem, it appears again to mock us in a still more subtle guise. Who knows? — I say; for I am writing not for the "Nonconformist conscience" but for those who [Page 11] conform their conscience to the facts of life, and especially the less common facts.

And this reminds me of a strange rite in antiquity, a manner of doing things which indicates, to my dull brain at any rate, the guiding of a hand of wisdom. In the most primitive substrata of Indo-Aryan and Irano-Aryan civilisation, in those far-off archaic mystery-traditions of our mother-stock, there seems no doubt but that the neophytes on their initiation into the mystery-lore of their clans, were given to drink of the potent juice of some sacred plant — *Soma*, or *Haoma*. In later times and in higher grades of culture of course all this was changed, and the primitive rites were symbolised and spiritualised into processes of inner purification and psychic discipline. But in the earliest times there seems to be no doubt but that the senses of the neophytes were quickened with the intoxicating juice of some sacred plant, that is to say a plant which was otherwise *taboo*. In this crude state of "entheism" — to coin a word — they "saw". Seeing, however, that they went through a course of stern training beforehand, fasting and purifying themselves, seeing that they entered into the rites with induced feelings of great awe and fearsome expectancy, with feelings that they were approaching the confines of death, and about to pass into the mystic depths of the unknown — this intoxication, instead of proving a curse as it does when profaned, proved a great blessing, being sanctified by the [Page 12] sanction of Religion as a rite reserved only for holy occasions — nay, the holiest of all occasions, namely, the very "possession" by the God.

So too, apparently, in the earliest forms of the "Bacchic" traditions, when wine was discovered, it was used by the instructed priesthood for sacramental purposes in the primitive rites of certain nations. In ancient Cappadocia, instead of *haoma*, or wine, they are said to have used *moly*, the mystic plant sung of by one of the poets of the Odyssean cycle. [ *Moly* is said to be a Cappadocian word, and in the Hellenised Mithraic tradition is found as a substitute for the *haoma* of the Avestan traditions ] . In ancient Mexico they used what is now called *hikuli*! ["A name given to several small species of cacti which live for months after they have been rooted up, and as the eating of them causes ecstasy, they are looked upon as demi gods and treated with great reverence" (see "On the Watch-Tower", September number 1903, p. 7) — just as the *Soma* is personified and revered in the Rigvaidik Mantrah ] among the Huichols of the Sierra Madre del Norte; and this reminds us strongly of the so-called "Mescal buttons", also procured from a species of cactus. And who in this connection will not remember the most sacred American Indian rite of the "smoking of the calumet"; and other allied "sacraments" and "communions" of still existing "primitive cultures" ?

Strange for the ordinary citizen of no imagination to reflect that his "glass" and his "pipe" are the legitimate survivals of original mystery-rites, [Page 13] things strictly reserved for solemn occasions, of sacramental efficacy, moans whereby the man was induced to feel more holy, to feel even "God-possessed"! How wise was the economy of those times! In those days the wherewithal of the means of communion could not be purchased at every street corner for a penny, and that too even by the most

degraded. The Temples of Bacchus were not profaned, and the “orgies” were respectable — nay sacred !

A strange chapter from the history of the education of the human race; and perhaps even stranger still is the evidence from those early days when “men” were more closely kin to the “animals” than they are today, when indeed there was no chance of dominating the animal by the mind alone, as far at any rate as our then infant race was concerned; the mind was young in them and feeble, the life was strong and chaotic. Thus we hear of some in those early days of wild enthusiastic rites, who, for certain majestic purposes, in frenzy emasculated themselves, as for instance the ascetic priests of the Great Mother.

Not only so, but later on, in days when such crude literalism should have ceased, at any rate among those who had been taught the “boundaries of the path of the Good Law”, do we not hear of a like deed being done by one of the greatest minds of antiquity, by the most learned, by far the most [Page 14] ascetic, of the Fathers of the Church, Origenes Adamantius? [And yet Origen did but literally carry out what he believed with all his soul His Master commanded in what he took to be the most authoritative of sayings: “If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off”. And what apologist even today has written its satisfactory defence of the wisdom of that monkish pronouncement put into the mouth of the Master by the gospel-makers ? ]

But to pass from such extremes of mortification; do we not know that in the Eleusinian rites various drugs were still used for certain purposes ?

Just as the hierophant also — not emasculated as Attis, but made eunuch with hemlock juice and divorced from all fleshly generating — in the night, at Eleusis, from beneath many a cloud of fire, accomplishing the great and ineffable mysteries, shouts and cries aloud, saying:

“Our Lady hath borne a sacred son!” [ Hippolytus, *Philos.*, v. 9. ]

But enough of these dim memories from the buried past. It surely requires no evidence to show that with mystics from the very earliest times, the Flesh has been set straitly over against the Spirit. The death of the one was taken to mean the life of the other; the killing of the one, the birth of the other.

“A death, unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness” was but too often, nay up to a certain time universally, translated as a killing out of the natural for the sake of the supernatural, and hence the mortification of the flesh. In brief, the presupposition that matter is evil, inimical, has been at the bottom of most of the purificatory forms of religion and in some form or other of the teaching of nearly every school of mysticism. [Page 15]

Nowadays, however, it hardly requires more than the statement of the proposition to convince it of its inherent fallacy. The whole of the present activity of the world is based upon a far more joyous view of things, a far more just appreciation of the values of the divine blessings. There is a general ineradicable intuition — indeed there has always been a conviction hidden in the heart of the vast majority of God's creatures — that not only is the world good for man, but that those who seek to escape out of it and flee away, are traitors to the common humanity, grumblers against the laws of the common weal, fault-finders with the wisdom of the divine economy — in brief, that they are paying the Good God the worst possible

of compliments, in that they make common cause with those unhappy and thankless pessimists who believe the world-process a failure, and that the highest blessing to all concerned would be to bring it to the speediest possible end.

This hostility to the flesh is at bottom the weak spot in all monkdom as a profession, of all selfish “virginity” as a protest against evil; the counter proposition and crude antithesis to which is the saying of Jewish wisdom: “He who is without a wife is half a man”. Wiser far was the policy of ancient Aryan India, that first a man should fulfil his duty to his race and country by living the householder's life, before giving his undivided attention to “other-worldliness”, and the artificial “freeing of himself”. [Page 16] Such also was the rule apparently among the original Pythagoreans.

It is, however, to be doubted whether in the past the vast majority of striving mystics could have got along without these outer safeguards, these strict antitheses; the mind as yet was not generally strong enough, even in the mystic race. Just as it has not been possible in the past for the vast majority of folk to get along without adhesion to some special form of faith, some sect of religion, so has it been necessary in the mystic race itself to have sectarian forms of mysticism; strict walls of separation have had to be built up. They have had to retire from the world and isolate themselves; they have been compelled in every way they could to try to reinforce their weak wills, and so they have laid the most stringent possible taboos on things physical.

But today, now that the mind is leaping forward with such bounds, today now that the truly divine idea of Religion as aspiration without sectarianism, of there being as many natural ways to Wisdom — to God — as there are souls of men, that truly divine intuition of unity in multiplicity, is charming men's minds and warming their hearts with its sun-clear simplicity; now that this new spirit of true tolerance, the germ of a real love of humanity, has taken root in the soil of human passion, and is removing the mountains of ancient prejudice in its infant pushings-forth to grow into that great tree of life and light, [Page 17] under whose beneficent shade all creatures shall some day rest — today we can understand how that not only on the surface of religion as cult, but also in its depths as inner discipline, there can be tolerance and understanding and reasonableness, and that too of the widest and holiest kind,

“But I say unto you, love your enemies” — yes, your inner enemies as well as those without of flesh and blood. Love them really and not with that refinement of calculated ill-will that renders apparent good for evil, so that “coals of fire” may be heaped “on the head” of the unfortunate foe. [“Clearly a “saying” in circulation among the “saints” of the body, and not a Saying of the Master. ]

Love even those who are, or who you think are, the foes of your own household. Love all the creatures of God rightly, fearlessly, understandingly. Be a Man; not a priest, or a prophet, or a monk, or a nun; and yet be all things, these as well as others — but not one of the lesser things always, as if that were the one great thing.

But all this is doubtless as obscure as Heracleitus; or more so, for he was wisely obscure, so at any rate antiquity believed, whereas all this, for all I know, may be very foolishly obscure. Yet see how some of it at any rate works out in morals. At first, even as at first in crude mysticism, there is the strait setting of one thing over against the other, black over against white (instead of not-black), God over against the [Page 18] Devil, virtue over against vice; for even a Plato in his ethics makes a virtue the antithesis of a

vice. More subtly did an Aristotle perceive that a virtue was a mean between two extremes, two vices; as, for instance, courage is a mean between cowardice and foolhardiness. Nearer still to the mystery were the Pythagoreans, when they taught that the secret of all virtues was harmony; and therefore the leader of the chain of virtues with them was justice — not purity, not obedience, not faith; these latter are the more feminine virtues of devotion, admirable each in their own way, and resolvable by philosophy into the hand-maidens of justice, even as, perchance, from the renunciatory point of view, justice is the servant of this trinity of graces.

So too, with regard to the practice of contemplation, the difficulty is to get rid of the antagonism of duality, of the effort of mind to dominate body, or at any rate a material vehicle of some kind, no matter how subtle it may be. The solution of the puzzle is doubtless, as the old books say, the turning of the mind on *itself*, not on a body — self-contemplation; then and then only is the sensible world transcended in a union that includes all sensation, and at the same time sanctifies it with the holiness of reason. It is not that the mind is some stuff set over against the matter of the sensational world; it is a far deeper mystery, for Mind itself in last analysis creates the very matter of the sensational world; for [Page 19] is not the divine spouse of Mind Thought, and is not Thought the mother of all things ?

Today the mind need not fear to continue in the world, to live in the world; we can carry our “monasteries” about with us, we have no need of built places of wood and stone to shut us in and the world out. Today we need not hate the Flesh; we can admire the wonderful work of our Mother as naturally as did the ancient Greeks. For us the un-human saying ascribed, though doubtless erroneously, to Shankaracharya: “Woman is the gateway of hell” — which, if I remember rightly, was also a favourite aphorism of Tertullian's, and certainly of countless numbers of Western monks — is no “word of wisdom” but a blasphemy against the motherhood of man.

Indeed, what confidence can the virile soul of man have in a monkish neophyte who (as, for instance, among the Buddhists) is ordered by his short-sighted superiors ever to keep his eyes fixed on the ground, and above all things never to look at a woman, for fear he should break his vow! Ye gods of common sense ! how feeble must such an one be, how far below the average, even; what child-souls must be those of our dear neophytes of this type! What virtue is there in this; for surely the true *conquerer* is he who can say his prayers as calmly in the harem as in his cell ?

Saner far are modern conditions, in this country at any rate, as it seems to me. Our grandparents, living at a time when the puritanical fear of the [Page 20] world, the flesh, and the devil was still scourging the land, were no whit purer in reality than ourselves; in fact they were far grosser in their imaginations naturally. Their very taboos are proof of it. A young man in those days who went to a theatre or witnessed a ballet, or even played a game of billiards, was believed to have “fallen into the pit”, was already “burning in the fires of hell”. Our worthy forebears of those days had no doubt on the point, and as they had made their God for themselves they ought to have known. Today our children, as soon as they can toddle, go to theatres, gaze through opera glasses at the ballet, and learn to make a break as soon as their chins are above the billiard table. The consequence is that for most of them the wiles of the devil, in such crude fashions at any rate, are of little allurements; they have become the normal, the banal, the things they have grown used to.

Then, too, the uncharitableness of the ancient ascetics, and modern ones for that matter, the rage

against “the accursed thing” in the breasts of the mortificatory folk; and that, too, in spite of the “word of wisdom” that “it is not that which goeth into the mouth that defileth the man, but that which cometh out”. But use is surely not accursed; it is abuse, at this stage of the mystery-play, at any rate, that disqualifies the candidate; for abuse is the destruction of harmony, the refusal to obey the voice of the wisdom-herald: “Nothing too much”; it is a [Page 21] trespass against all those sweet old truths that are so kindly given in such fair words as temperance, sobriety, moderation, continence, tolerance, justice, fitness, reasonableness.

If then it be asked: “Are Theosophists” — by which we mean those who try to win towards Wisdom — “ascetics, mortifiers of the flesh?” — the answer must be: “By no means necessarily so”. Some, many, are of course abstainers for certain purposes — but they do not call their abstinence asceticism or mortification of the flesh; nor does their abstinence, from whatever they abstain, make them desire to impose their private discipline on others, or in any way to presume to find fault with those who do not follow their way, or to boast themselves as more virtuous than their fellows.

They know too well that men are of different types, that there are races, nay tribes and families, of souls, even as there are of bodies, and that the customs and taboos of souls are as rigid as those of bodies. They do not necessarily expect an artist, for instance, to be naturally a saint, any more than they expect a saint to be naturally an artist; they do not expect a physician to be naturally a general, any more than they expect an admiral to be naturally an architect, and so on through the great series.

Sometimes, of course, there are combinations, but rarely are they *natural*; seldom can a man really succeed on more than one line; there is a key-note to [Page 22] his nature, to which, if he be wise, he had better tune himself. There is a talent which he is not to hide in a napkin, a something in potentiality which is his to bring forth into actuality, and so to delineate it into the image of its greater self.

“The Jack of all trades is master of none”, and the next great natural stage for us, it is said, is that fair state where we shall show forth our own special characteristic in ever fuller perfection, while reflecting the potentiality of all the other types; but he alone can manifest them all in perfection who is Master of all masterhood, and that is the end and no intermediate stage.

But to conclude where we began, with the words of Paul. More understandingly does he write to his fellowship in Galatia than to the “saints” at Rome. In his Letter to the Galatians he reflects the wisdom of his Master, setting forth the true Lesser Mysteries — those Lesser Mysteries in which how few succeed in the tests! For those who do succeed are verily and indeed Christs, and they alone are initiated into the Greater Mysteries. He alone who is Master can tell what is the true Mystery of Man; the rest, even the illuminate mystics, must distort the light-ray through the prism of their prejudices, even though those prejudices be their holiest convictions; and so they can but speak it forth in such beautiful but enigmatical utterances as:

This is the Gate of Heaven, and this is the House of God, where the Good God dwells alone, into which no [Page 23] impure man shall come, no psychic, no fleshly man but it is kept under watch for the spiritual alone, where they must come, and, casting away their garments, all become bridegrooms made virgin by the Virginal Spirit. For such a man is the virgin with child,

who can conceive and bring forth a son, which is neither psychic, nor fleshly, but a blessed  
aeon of aeons. [Fragment of a Gnostic Commentary preserved by Hippolytus. *Philos.*, v. 8 ]

But my thoughts on this subject have already strayed to too great length for my editorial soul, and  
perhaps for my readers' patience.