

toilet, place and time of amusements, every feature that is suggestive of impropriety should be rigidly excluded from all such assemblages as a necessary condition of conformity to sacred obligations.

THEOSOPHY.

The fact that theosophy in this age is commanding a great deal more attention among the educated classes of the world than it has done for centuries past is significant. The reason is not to be found in its novelty, for it is probably as old as either philosophy itself, or systematic theology, but it must be due to other circumstances.

In the first place, the thirst of man for knowledge of the mysteries of creation, the existence of a Supreme Being and the origin of evil has never been quenched by the offered dogmas and suppositions of the theological and philosophical teachers of the world, notwithstanding their multiplicity. They have so far been satisfactory only to those who for one cause or another prefer not to exert their own reasoning faculties, or who are interested in their maintenance, while others have long ago given them up either because of their demonstrable inconsistency with facts, or because of their inadequacy to produce practical results, such as the establishment of that state of millennium or universal brotherhood for which mankind has been yearning since its historical infancy.

In the second place, theosophy has lately been taken hold of by men and women whose superior intellectual powers have enabled them to advance it into broader spheres of thought and give it a system which can be analyzed and critically examined and consequently more easily defended by its enthusiastic exponents. As long as theosophy was known by the writings of men who, like Jacob Bohme, did not possess education enough to state their views in grammatically clear sentences, or like Emanuel Swedenborg, who soared so high in the visionary that he was almost invisible to common spectators, the system could make but little progress. This is now changed. Theosophists have placed themselves in contact with their fellowmen and their ideas are all the more readily absorbed by many who find in them, as they suppose, what is needed for the happiness of mankind.

Notwithstanding the new dress in which theosophy at present is presented to the world, its fundamental principles remain the same. It professes to solve the questions with which philosophy and theology are concerned in a way peculiar to itself. While philosophy deals only with facts such as can be perceived by the senses, and with deductions to be drawn from them, and while theology in addition to this recognizes the necessity of revelation for the true understanding of things beyond the reach of mere human perception and reason, theosophy gives prominence to intuition or an inner perception of truth, superior to the knowledge derived by means of the exterior senses, reasoning processes and revelation.

As the system meets us in the doc-

trines of the early Essenes and the Gnostics, it represents the Supreme Being as so much exalted that His attributes and form cannot be conceived by human intellect. He cannot even hold direct communication with anything that is created. How, then, is creation possible? The answer given at that time was that by the Divine will an evolution took place by which a being emanated a little lower than the Supreme Being. From this emanation another evolved by the same process, and then another and so on, each succeeding emanation being less perfect than the preceding one, until the last was imperfect enough to come in actual contact with matter, and creation became possible. In this way the origin of evil is explained as being simply imperfection in matter, and salvation is to overcome this imperfection and to start on the road of evolution back to the Supreme Being.

In such a system revelation is impossible, since man cannot communicate with God except through those intermediate beings, the so-called sons, or angels. Atonement, as understood by New Testament writers, has no significance except as "at-onement" with Christ, who is looked upon as one of the great "adepts." Knowledge is not regarded as the prerogative of all men, but as the property of a few initiated.

These are some of the leading features of the theosophy with which Christianity in the earliest ages came in contact. Fortunately, the writers of the New Testament meet all these views with statements that cannot be misunderstood. Very early the churches at Ephesus and Colossæ were troubled with teachings of this kind, and the letters directed to those churches combat them most emphatically.

The author of those epistles declares that in the realm of knowledge there must be no class distinction, no exclusiveness. The object of the Gospel is to warn every man and teach every man in every wisdom, that it may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." So that while "wisdom" among the theosophic gnostics was the exclusive knowledge of the few initiated, it was the property offered to all in the Gospel. Further the "wisdom" of those teachers is called by the inspired writer "pretended wisdom" as distinguished from the real wisdom or philosophy of the true Gospel. There was no foundation, Paul argues, for the supposition of Divine emanations, such as conceived of by those theosophists, because in Christ, who was both God and man, the whole fullness (pleroma) dwelt, and He was therefore a competent Mediator. Moreover, through Him the worlds were made and through Him their redemption would be effected. If there be such intermediate beings of different grades, Christ is superior to all and Lord of all, and He alone can bridge the supposed chasm between God and man.

These teachings of Paul on these points may well be considered the cornerstones of the Gospel and they indicate the direction speculation must take in order to arrive at truth. On this basis the Gospel of Jesus Christ has always rested. So far from representing the Supreme Being as the inconceivable

one, it designates Him by a word most familiar and dear to all—Father. And it teaches man to communicate with Him as a child. It promises Divine help in all emergencies of human life and invites each individual to test for himself the promises given. In brief, while the mysteries of theosophy are the property of the few, the favored class, the Gospel is universal in its scope as in its application to mankind.

No one will deny that theosophy presents much that is good and true and that the system has many followers of great moral excellence. Nor shall it be disputed that it may do much good in a world almost inundated by stagnant dogmas. It may serve as a breeze of new thought and awaken to life some of the dormant powers of men. But in its essence it is antagonistic to the Gospel of Christ and as much inferior to it as human intellect is to that of omnipotence, for the simple reason that it establishes its conclusions independent of revelation, without which there can be no true knowledge of things Divine.

THE ENGINEERS, AND "SYMPATHY."

When the strike is all over, the debris cleared away, and all classes of people get down to solid thinking once more, the friends of labor everywhere will be forced to unite upon the proposition that the man who of all others has shown the best sense, and has done more than all others to make the cause of organized labor dignified, influential and worthy, is Chief Arthur of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. He is one of the few among the leaders of the labor unions who will come out of the contest with a reputation improved by the ordeal. Against such pressure as few in his position would have withstood, he has courageously maintained a high and patriotic position. And whatever may be the effect of the present conflict upon the labor and trades unions generally, he and the great order behind him will have secured an enviable place in the esteem of all law-abiding people, and will have the right to expect a hearing and favorable consideration whenever they feel to demand it. That he is a hard fighter and shrewd has been already many times proved to the satisfaction of the railways and all who have watched his course. But he is also gifted with that rare discretion which is no less potent than valor; he tries to see the end from the beginning; and, above all, he evinces a desire to be sure his cause is just and his course is right before going ahead. In all these respects he could give many lessons to the impetuous Debs, who has tried to be dictatorial without being prudent, and made a dashing and prodigious leap without ever ascertaining where he might reasonably hope to land.

Of the railway engineers, firemen, conductors and brakemen, it may be said that as a whole they are a choice element in the industrial world. Vast responsibility is placed in their hands; precious lives and incalculable values of property are hourly entrusted to their keeping. Only by long years of training are they able to