

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MAN AS SEEN FROM WITHIN



Man Visible and Invisible: Examples of Different Types of Men as seen by Means of Trained Clairvoyance. By C. W. Leadbeater. (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society; 1902. Price 10s. 6d. net.). (Originally published in the magazine *Theosophical Review*, February 1903.)

Our colleague's eagerly awaited volume is before us, and is without question the most striking production which has ever been issued by the Theosophical Publishing Society. In it Mr. Leadbeater does his best to give the normal man who is limited to his five physical senses, some idea of the inner vestures of the soul as they appear to the subtle vision of the trained seer. The difficulties which confront any attempt to depict the nature of the subtle vehicles of the human spirit, which in their very hypothesis belong to grades of matter beyond the physical, are almost insurmountable. When, moreover, the seer tells us, and we can very well believe it must be so, that man invisible is no longer a thing of solid flesh, but a tenuous sphere of subtle matter in rapid vibration, which appears to subtle sight as a kaleidoscope of living colours, colours that even in the lowest subtle stratum, the animal soul or vesture, beggar all possibility of reproduction by means of ordinary colouring, we can very easily understand how exceedingly difficult it has been found to give any adequate suggestion of the inner "auras" of the human mystery.

If even the grosser nature of the so-called "astral" man—a name chosen by the mediaeval alchemists because of the starry light of the state of subtle matter in which that "man" moves and has his being—can only be dimly realised here, by the analogy of the passage of bright light through coloured glasses, how much more impossible is it to give any conception of higher vehicles, the fire-colours of which surpass the brilliancy of the sun in its noonday glory? The higher vehicles of man, as we may very well believe, rise from intensity to intensity of light, and innumerable as are the shades of colour even in this our grey world down here, these colours are but a meagre earnest of the possibilities of the light-worlds. So much for an intuition of the ideal; and now to return to the actual.

The chief feature of our colleague's book is the attempt to depict various types of "auras" by the best means as yet available in the way of colour-printing. We have thus a coloured frontispiece, three diagrams in colours, and twenty-two coloured illustrations. The illustration work has been excellently done by the Photochromogravure Company, to whom it has been entrusted, and we have seen nothing better of its kind anywhere. It must, however, be noticed that one of the coloured diagrams is spoilt by the huge lettering which has been chosen; the diagram is useful but artistically it is out of keeping with the rest of the work.

But the praise for these illustrations does not in the first place belong to the reproducers, excellent though their reproductions are. The praise belongs to Miss Gertrude Spink, who worked up the original rough sketches into the highly artistic illustrations which are before us. Mr. Leadbeater is to be congratulated on having found a so skilful and sympathetic helper. Indifferent illustrations would have severely handicapped the suggestiveness and utility of this most recent contribution to Theosophical literature; Miss Spink's artistic taste has turned this somewhat hazardous undertaking into a success. As for the letterpress, it must be said that Mr. Leadbeater has done his best to set forth the very difficult subject with which he has to deal, simply and clearly. As a frontispiece we have an illustrated table of the different

colours and their main shades, with the meanings which are assigned to them; we have also illustration of types of the causal, mental, and astral vehicles of the savage (sic), of the ordinary person, and of the adept, pictures of the auras of health and disease, and illustrations of such sudden emotions as a burst of mother love, devotion, anger, fear, and of the ordinary person in love, of the irritable man, of the miser, and of a man in deep depression, also pictures of the astral aura of the ordinary devotional and scientific types of men ; besides these we have coloured diagrams of the planes of nature and of the “three outpourings,” and also one to represent involution and evolution.

Mr. Leadbeater tells us that “the past, the present, and the future of man may be examined at first-hand by all who will take the trouble to qualify themselves for the study”; doubtless this seems to be a simple statement to our seeing colleague, but, on the other hand, we know a large number of people who have been trying very hard and who have seen nothing, and we also know of others of whom it is said that they could not by any possible means develop clairvoyance in this life. In this our colleague seems to be somewhat too optimistic about the blind, doubtless because he has met with more myopic folk than ourselves, and for these he specially writes. Being, however, blind ourselves we cannot criticise the seers; we can only be glad that they tell us what they see, and as far as “man invisible” is concerned it must be admitted that there is much in what our colleague says which seems reasonable even to those who walk in outer darkness and the shadow of death.

That this pioneer contribution to the infant science of things invisible is little more than the spelling out of a single word of the mystery as compared to the “glories that shall be revealed,” no one will admit more readily than our colleague; but so far no one else has spelled this particular word of the mystery so distinctly for us, and as most of us will never catch the utterance at all unless it is articulated very clearly, we owe him our thanks and our best regard. May many another work come from his pen.

G. R. S. M. [Mead]

Mr Mead was at one time private secretary to Madame Blavastky, co-editor of the magazine *Lucifer*, founded by her, and an author of note. He became widely known as one of the early scholars in the Theosophical Society. Most of his books are still in print and much respected, particularly the ones in which he presents the teachings of Gnosticism in its many nuances.

