

January 10. Acts ii : 1-13.

The occult organization, whose members first began to be called Christians at Antioch, and whose doctrines in later centuries only survived as formulæ, the meaning having been forgotten, at the time described in the Acts held its secret meetings and celebrated its mysteries like other occult bodies. The great feast of the day of Pentecost was one of those occasions on which "they were all together in one place." A long probation must have preceded the attendance of the disciples at this ceremony. The account given of it resembles other narratives that have been divulged from time to time, and appears to describe one of the initiations of the Greater Mysteries. The Master had promised the *Parakletos* (John is the only writer to use the word), and the powers which were to come with the Divine Gift are those we read of in Patanjali. "He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." John xiv : 26. The third book of Patanjali gives a very full account of the powers acquired by the ascetic. The gift of tongues, "the power of understanding the meaning of any sound uttered by any sentient being" (Aphorism 17) is one of these. Paul frequently refers to these gifts. The *Parakletos* is frequently identified with the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, but it may be more correct to understand the Holy Ghost as the "creator of all, as in the ancient systems;" the "Boundless All," "En Soph," the "Shekinah," the "Ancient of Days;" "Sophia," "Divine Wisdom;" "Akasa," the Divine Astral Light; "Kwan-yin," the Goddess of Mercy, and "Divine Voice" of the Chinese,—that is to say, the Universal Aspect of the Divine Fire, while the *Parakletos*, the Comforter or Strengthened, as the word really means, is the individualized aspect of the Holy Fire in each man, the Flame which burns in each consecrated heart. These Flames are the "Sons of Fire," apparently, "because they are the first Beings (in the Secret Doctrine they are called 'Minds'), evolved from Primordial Fire." They are the Agnishwatta Pitris, "and these are the 'fashioners of the Inner Man.'" "The informing Ego can, and often

does, increase the rapidity of the oscillation until the normal Karma is exhausted at an early stage of the body's life-span, and then may occur that mysterious process of one inspiring soul retiring to give place to one greater." This is the losing of life to find it which Jesus speaks of, and it is the natural order of evolution, perfectly regular and simple and occurring to-day, whether recognized by the Churches or not, as it did centuries ago. As men overcome their lower nature the unsuspected marvels of the spiritual life are manifested. The outpouring of the Spirit is from within. The Church to-day is looking for an in-pouring from without.

January 17. Acts ii : 32-47.

The "Man approved of God" (verse 22) has been identified, as we have seen, as a reincarnation of the "Man after My heart (xiii : 22) who shall do all My will." (I. Samuel xiii : 14). If the whole chapter is read from this point of view the force of the quotations from the Psalms will be more apparent. "For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made him (Revised Version) both Lord and Christ, this Saviour whom ye crucified." "When they heard this they were pricked in their hearts," we are told, for the story of David, King of Israel, was still dear to the nation. There were added to them about three thousand souls as a result of this stirring appeal to their traditional patriotism. "To you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." Peter remained Jew first, and Christian secondly. Paul, who was called Saul, and who, many think, was the re-embodiment of King Saul, taught a wider ideal. Verses 42-47 present a strange contrast between the ideals of primitive Christianity and the practice of the present day. The endeavour to establish a colony of "practical occultists" in the middle of a "civilized" community would meet with no more success at present than long ago in Palestine.