

THEOSOPHICAL MANUALS. No. 3.

DEATH—AND AFTER?

BY

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PREFACE.

Few words are needed in sending this little book out into the world. It is the third of a series of Manuals designed to meet the public demand for a simple exposition of Theosophical teachings. Some have complained that our literature is at once too abstruse, too technical, and too expensive for the ordinary reader, and it is our hope that the present series may succeed in supplying what is a very real want. Theosophy is not only for the learned; it is for all. Perhaps among those who in these little books catch their first glimpse of its teachings, there may be a few who will be led by them to penetrate more deeply into its philosophy, its science, and its religion, facing its abstruser problems with the student's zeal and the neophyte's ardour. But these manuals are not written for the eager student, whom no initial difficulties can daunt; they are written for the busy men and women of the work-a-day world, and seek to make plain some of the great truths that render life easier to bear and death easier to face. Written by servants of the Masters who are the Elder Brothers of our race, they can have no other object than to serve our fellow-men.

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WHO does not remember the story of the Christian missionary in Britain, sitting one evening in the vast hall of a Saxon king, surrounded by his thanes, having come thither to preach the gospel of his Master; and as he spoke of life and death and immortality, a bird flew in through an unglazed window, circled the hall in its flight, and flew out once more into the darkness of the night. The Christian priest bade the king see in the flight of the bird within the hall the transitory life of man, and claimed for his faith that it showed the soul, in passing from the hall of life, winging its way not into the darkness of night, but into the sunlit radiance of a more glorious world. Out of the darkness, through the open window of Birth, the life of a man comes to the earth; it dwells for a while before our eyes; into the darkness, through the open window of Death, it vanishes out of our sight. And man has questioned ever of Religion, Whence comes it? Whither goes it? and the answers have varied with the faiths. To-day, many a hundred year since Paulinus talked with Edwin, there are more people in Christendom who question whether man has a spirit to come anywhence or to go anywhither, than, perhaps, in the world's history