

MAX HEINDEL'S MESSAGE

Why Trials Beset



the Occult Student

FROM TIME TO TIME we receive letters from students complaining that since they have taken up the higher teachings, and are trying to live in conformity with them, everything seems to go wrong with their affairs. Some feel a determined opposition in their homes, others suffer in business, and some are even affected in health. Some, according to temperament, are ready to give up, and others grit their teeth in determination to follow Paul's method of "patient persistence in well-doing," despite the trials. But all are unanimous in asking why this marked change in their affairs. Each receives the best help we can give to solve his individual problems, but as we feel that there are many among the students who have been similarly tried, it seems appropriate to state the reason for this condition.

In the first place, the aspiring soul should realize that the adverse conditions happen for good according to a firmly established law of nature whereby God aims to aid him in the quest. Trials are a sign of progress and a cause for great rejoicing.

This is how the law acts: During all our past lives we have made ties and have incurred debts under the Law of Causation. These debts continue to increase so long as we live the usual selfish, haphazard lives, and we may liken each debt to a drop of vinegar. When the turning point comes and we cease to make vinegar, the law of justice requires that we take our medicine. But we are allowed to determine whether we will take it in

large doses and have it over with quickly or whether we prefer to take it in very small sips and string it out over a number of lives. This choice is not made by words but by acts. If we take up the work of self-improvement with enthusiasm, if we cut our vices out by the roots and live the life we profess, the Great Beings whom we know as the Recording Angels give us a stronger dose of vinegar than they would if we merely talked about the beauties of the higher life. They do that to help us toward the day of liberation from our self-made bonds and not to harm or hinder us. In view of these facts we can understand the Christ's exhortation to rejoice when men revile us and accuse us falsely for His sake.

Boys pass a barren tree with indifference, but as soon as the tree bears fruit, they are ready to throw stones and rob it. So it is with men also: while we walk with the crowd and do as they do, we are unmolested, but the moment we do what they know in their hearts to be right, we become a living reproach to them even if we never utter a word of censure, and in order to justify themselves in their own eyes they begin to find fault with us.

In this respect those who are most closely associated with us in the home or in business are more prominent than strangers who have no connection with us. But whatever the form or the source of such trouble, it is a cause for congratulation, for it shows that we are doing something effectively progressive. So let us keep on undismayed and with unflagging zeal. □