

# Theosophical ARTICLES

BY

**H. P. BLAVATSKY**

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## FOREWORD

H. P. Blavatsky (1831-1891) was the principal founder of the Theosophical Society in 1875, and the major inspiration of the resulting Theosophical Movement. Her best known works are *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret*

*Doctrine* (1888). Of almost equal importance were her voluminous periodical writings, contributed to the *Theosophist*, which she founded in India in 1879, to *Lucifer*, begun in London in 1887, to the *Path*, edited by William Q. Judge in the United States, to some less known Theosophical journals, and a few other nineteenth-century periodicals.

The articles of Madame Blavatsky are an invaluable source of Theosophical teaching and explanation. Practically all of these articles were reprinted in the monthly magazine *Theosophy*, issued in the United States by The Theosophy Company, beginning in 1912. Then, in 1963, to make them more easily accessible to students, the articles were gathered into pamphlets which were made available over a period of years to subscribers to *Theosophy*. These articles make the content of the present three volumes, *The Articles of H. P. Blavatsky*.

The order of the articles in these books is that of their appearance in the pamphlets. The content of the pamphlets was selected according to a scheme of related interests. Some classification of the articles has been possible, but is based chiefly on the Theosophical intentions of the author rather than accommodation to the "fields" of modern learning. She wrote chiefly for Theosophical students, although with universal appeal.

In each volume the articles making its content are listed by title in the order printed, and in this, the first volume, the articles in all three volumes are given alphabetically, for easy location.

While no claim of completeness is made for this assemblage of H.P.B.'s periodical writings, it may be said that all her major articles are included, and some of her notes and comment on letters and contributions to the magazines she edited are also provided. A subject index following the model of the Theosophy Company supplementary *Index to The Secret Doctrine* will be found at the end of the third volume.<sup>[2]</sup>

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Volume 1

### "WHAT IS TRUTH?"

*Truth* is the Voice of Nature and of Time—  
*Truth* is the startling monitor *within us*—  
 Naught is without it, it comes from the stars,  
 The golden sun, and every breeze that blows. . . .  
 —W. Thompson Bacon

. . . Fair Truth's immortal sun  
 Is sometimes hid in clouds; not that her light

Is in itself defective, but obscured  
By my weak prejudice, imperfect faith  
And all the thousand causes which obstruct  
The growth of goodness. . . .  
—Hannah More

WHAT is Truth?" asked Pilate of one who, if the claims of the Christian Church are even approximately correct, must have known it. But He kept silent. And the truth which He did not divulge, remained unrevealed, for his later followers as much as for the Roman Governor. The silence of Jesus, however, on this and other occasions, does not prevent his present followers from acting as though they had received the ultimate and absolute Truth itself; and from ignoring the fact that only such Words of Wisdom had been given to them as contained a share of the truth, itself concealed in parables and dark, though beautiful, sayings.<sup>1</sup>

This policy led gradually to dogmatism and assertion. Dogmatism in churches, dogmatism in science, dogmatism everywhere. The possible truths, hazily perceived in the world of abstraction, like those inferred from observation and experiment in the world of matter, are forced upon the profane multitudes, too busy to think for themselves, under the form of Divine revelation and Scientific authority. But the same question stands open from the days of Socrates and Pilate down to our own age of wholesale negation: is there such a thing as absolute truth in the hands of any one party or man? Reason answers, "there cannot be." There is no room for absolute truth upon any subject whatsoever, in a world as finite and conditioned as man is himself. But there are relative truths, and we have to make the best we can of them.

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<sup>1</sup> Jesus says to the "Twelve" — "Unto you is given the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but *unto them that are without, all things are done in parables,*" etc. (Mark iv. 11.)

In every age there have been Sages who had mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in *our* race, has, or could have given out, the whole and the final truth to another man, for every one of us has to find that (to him) final

knowledge *in* himself. As no two minds can be absolutely alike, each has to receive the supreme illumination *through* itself, according to its capacity, and from no *human* light. The greatest adept living can reveal of the Universal Truth only so much as the mind he is impressing it upon can assimilate, and no more. *Tot homines, quot sententiae*—is an immortal truism. The sun is one, but its beams are numberless; and the effects produced are beneficent or maleficent, according to the nature and constitution of the objects they shine upon. Polarity is universal, but the polariser lies in our own consciousness. In proportion as our consciousness is elevated towards absolute truth, so do we men assimilate it more or less absolutely. But man's consciousness again, is only the sunflower of the earth. Longing for the warm ray, the plant can only turn to the sun, and move round and round in following the course of the unreachable luminary: its roots keep it fast to the soil, and half its life is passed in the shadow. . . .

Still each of us can relatively reach the Sun of Truth even on this earth, and assimilate its warmest and most direct rays, however differentiated they may become after their long journey through the physical particles in space. To achieve this, there are two methods. On the physical plane we may use our mental polariscope: and, analyzing the properties of each ray, choose the purest. On the plane of spirituality, to reach the Sun of Truth we must work in dead earnest for the development of our higher nature. We know that by paralyzing gradually within ourselves the appetites of the lower personality, and thereby deadening the voice of the purely physiological mind—that mind which depends upon, and is inseparable from, its medium or *vehicle*, the organic brain—the animal man in us may make room for the spiritual; and once aroused from its latent state, the highest spiritual senses and perceptions grow in us in proportion, and develop *pari passu* with the “divine man.” This is what the great adepts, the Yogis in the East and the Mystics in the West, have always done and are still doing.

But we also know, that with a few exceptions, no man of the world, no materialist, will ever believe in the existence of such adepts, or even in the possibility of such a spiritual or psychic

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development. “The (ancient) fool hath said in his heart, There is no God”; the

modern says, "There are no adepts on earth, they are figments of your diseased fancy." Knowing this we hasten to reassure our readers of the Thomas Didymus type. We beg them to turn in this magazine to reading more congenial to them; say to the miscellaneous papers on Hylo-Idealism, by various writers.<sup>[3]</sup>

For Lucifer tries to satisfy its readers of whatever "school of thought," and shows itself equally impartial to Theist and Atheist, Mystic and Agnostic, Christian and Gentile. Such articles as our editorials, the Comments on "Light on the Path," etc., etc. — are not intended for Materialists. They are addressed to Theosophists, or readers who know in their hearts that Masters of Wisdom *do* exist: and, though *absolute* truth is not on earth and has to be searched for in higher regions, that there still are, even on this silly, ever-whirling little globe of ours, some things that are not even dreamt of in Western philosophy.

To return to our subject. It thus follows that, though "general *abstract* truth is the most precious of all blessings" for many of us, as it was for Rousseau, we have, meanwhile, to be satisfied with relative truths. In sober fact, we are a poor set of mortals at best, ever in dread before the face of even a relative truth, lest it should devour ourselves and our petty little preconceptions along with us. As for an absolute truth, most of us are as incapable of seeing it as of reaching the moon on a bicycle. Firstly, because absolute truth is as immovable as the mountain of Mahomet, which refused to disturb itself for the prophet, so that he had to go to it himself. And we have to follow his example if we would approach it even at a distance. Secondly, because the kingdom of absolute truth is not of this world, while we are too much of it. And thirdly, because notwithstanding that in the poet's fancy man is

. . . . . the abstract  
Of all perfection, which the workmanship  
Of heaven hath modelled . . . . .

in reality he is a sorry bundle of anomalies and paradoxes, an

empty wind bag inflated with his own importance, with contradictory and easily influenced opinions. He is at once an arrogant and a weak creature,



which, though in constant dread of some authority, terrestrial or celestial, will yet—

. . . . . like an angry ape,  
Play such fantastic tricks before high Heaven  
As make the angels weep.

Now, since truth is a multifaced jewel, the facets of which it is impossible to perceive all at once; and since, again, no two men, however anxious to discern truth, can see even one of those facets alike, what can be done to help them to perceive it? As physical man, limited and trammelled from every side by illusions, cannot reach truth by the light of his terrestrial perceptions, we say—develop in you the *inner* knowledge. From the time when the Delphic oracle said to the enquirer “Man, know thyself,” no greater or more important truth was ever taught. Without such perception, man will remain ever blind to even many a relative, let alone absolute, truth. Man has to *know himself, i.e.,* acquire the *inner* perceptions which never deceive, before he can master any absolute truth. Absolute truth is *the symbol of Eternity*, and no *finite* mind can ever grasp the eternal, hence, no truth in its fulness can ever dawn upon it. To reach the state during which man sees and senses it, we have to paralyze the senses of the external man of clay. This is a difficult task, we may be told, and most people will, at this rate, prefer to remain satisfied with relative truths, no doubt. But to approach even terrestrial truths requires, first of all, *love of truth for its own sake*, for otherwise no recognition of it will follow. And who loves truth in this age for its own sake? How many of us are prepared to search for, accept, and carry it out, in the midst of a society in which anything that would achieve success *has to be built on appearances, not on reality, on self-assertion, not on intrinsic value?* We are fully aware of the difficulties in the way of receiving truth. The fair heavenly maiden descends only on a (to her) congenial soil—the soil of an impartial, unprejudiced mind, illuminated by pure Spiritual Consciousness; and both are truly rare dwellers in civilized lands. In our century of steam and electricity, when man fives at a maddening speed that leaves him barely time for reflection, he allows himself usually to be drifted down from cradle to grave, nailed to the Procrustean bed of custom and conventionality. Now conventionality—pure and simple—is a congenial Lie, as it is in every case a “*simulation* of feelings according to a received standard”

(F. W. Robertson’s definition); and where there is any simulation *there cannot be any truth*. How profound the remark made by Byron, that “truth is a gem that is found at a great depth; whilst on the surface of this world all things are weighed *by the false scales of custom*,” is best known to those who are forced to live in the stifling atmosphere of such social conventionalism, and who, even when willing and anxious to learn, dare not accept the truths they long for, for fear of the ferocious Moloch called Society.

Look around you, reader; study the accounts given by world-known travellers, recall the joint observations of literary thinkers, the data of science and of statistics. Draw the picture of modern society, of modern politics, of modern religion and modern life in general before your mind’s eye. Remember the ways and customs of every cultured race and nation under the sun. Observe the doings and the moral attitude of people in the civilized centres of Europe, America, and even of the far East and the colonies, everywhere where the white man has carried the “benefits” of so-called civilization. And now, having passed in review all this, pause and reflect, and then name, *if you can*, that blessed *Eldorado*, that exceptional spot on the globe, *where Truth is the honoured guest, and Lie and Sham the ostracised outcasts*? You cannot. Nor can any one else, unless he is prepared and determined to add his mite to the mass of falsehood that reigns supreme in every department of national and social life. “Truth!” cried Carlyle, “truth, though the heavens crush me for following her, no falsehood, though a whole celestial Lubberland were the prize of Apostasy.” Noble words, these. But how many think, and how many will *dare* to speak as Carlyle did, in our nineteenth century day? Does not the gigantic appalling majority prefer to a man the “paradise of Do-nothings,” the *pays de Cocagne* of heartless selfishness? It is this majority that recoils terror-stricken before the most shadowy outline of every new and unpopular truth, out of mere cowardly fear, lest Mrs. Harris should denounce, and Mrs. Grundy condemn, its converts to the torture of being rent piecemeal by her murderous tongue.

Selfishness, the first-born of Ignorance, and the fruit of the teaching which asserts that for every newly-born infant a new soul, *separate and distinct* from the Universal Soul, is “created”—this Selfishness is the impassable wall between the *personal* Self and Truth. It is the prolific mother of all human

vices, *Lie* being born out of the necessity for dissembling, and *Hypocrisy* out of the desire

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to mask *Lie*. It is the fungus growing and strengthening with age in every human heart in which it has devoured all better feelings. Selfishness kills every noble impulse in our natures, and is the one deity, fearing no faithlessness or desertion from its votaries. Hence, we see it reign supreme in the world and in so-called fashionable society. As a result, we live, and move, and have our being in this god of darkness under his trinitarian aspect of Sham, Humbug, and Falsehood, called Respectability.

Is this Truth and Fact, or is it slander? Turn whichever way you will, and you find, from the top of the social ladder to the bottom, deceit and hypocrisy at work for dear Self's sake, in every nation as in every individual. But nations, by tacit agreement, have decided that selfish motives in politics shall be called "noble national aspiration, patriotism," etc.; and the citizen views it in his family circle as "domestic virtue." Nevertheless, Selfishness, whether it breeds desire for aggrandizement of territory, or competition in commerce at the expense of one's neighbour, can never be regarded as a virtue. We see smooth-tongued Deceit and Brute Force—the *Jachin* and *Boaz* of every International Temple of Solomon—called Diplomacy, and we call it by its right name. Because the diplomat bows low before these two pillars of national glory and politics, and puts their masonic symbolism "in (cunning) strength shall this my house be established" into daily practice; *i.e.*, gets by deceit what he cannot obtain by force—shall we applaud him? A diplomat's qualification—"dexterity or skill in securing advantages"—for one's own country at the expense of other countries, can hardly be achieved by speaking *truth*, but verily by a wily and deceitful tongue; and, therefore, Lucifer calls such action—a *living*, and an evident Lie.

But it is not in politics alone that custom and selfishness have agreed to call deceit and lie virtue, and to reward him who lies best with public statues. Every class of Society lives on Lie, and would fall to pieces without it. Cultured, God-and-law-fearing aristocracy, being as fond of the forbidden fruit as any plebeian, is forced to lie from morn to noon in order to cover what it is pleased to term its "little peccadillos," but which Truth regards as gross immorality.

Society of the middle classes is honeycombed with false smiles, false talk, and mutual treachery. For the majority religion has become a thin tinsel veil thrown over the corpse of spiritual faith. The master goes to church to deceive his servants; the starving

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curate—preaching what he has ceased to believe in—hoodwinks his bishop; the bishop—his God. *Dailies*, political and social, might adopt with advantage for their motto Georges Dandin's immortal query—“*Lequel de nous deux trompe-t-on ici?*”—Even Science, once the anchor of the salvation of Truth, has ceased to be the temple of *naked* Fact. Almost to a man the Scientists strive now only to force upon their colleagues and the public the acceptance of some personal hobby, of some new-fangled theory, which will shed lustre on their name and fame. A Scientist is as ready to suppress damaging evidence against a current scientific hypothesis in our times, as a missionary in heathen-land, or a preacher at home, to persuade his congregation that modern geology is a lie, and evolution but vanity and vexation of spirit.

Such is the actual state of things in 1888 a.d., and yet we are taken to task by certain papers for seeing this year in more than gloomy colours!

Lie has spread to such extent—supported as it is by custom and conventionalities—that even chronology forces people to lie. The suffixes a.d. and b.c. used after the dates of the year by Jew and Heathen, in European and even Asiatic lands, by the Materialist and the Agnostic as much as by the Christian, at home, are—a *lie* used to sanction another Lie.

Where then is even relative truth to be found? If, so far back as the century of Democritus, she appeared to him under the form of a goddess lying at the very bottom of a well, so deep that it gave but little hope for her release; under the present circumstances we have a certain right to believe her hidden, at least, as far off as the ever invisible *dark* side of the moon. This is why, perhaps, all the votaries of hidden truths are forthwith set down as lunatics. However it may be, in no case and under no threat shall Lucifer be ever forced into pandering to any universally and tacitly recognised, and as universally practised lie, but will hold to fact, pure and simple, trying to proclaim truth whensoever found, and under no cowardly mask. Bigotry and intolerance may be regarded as

orthodox and sound policy, and the encouraging of social prejudices and personal hobbies at the cost of truth, as a wise course to pursue in order to secure success for a publication. Let it be so. The Editors of Lucifer are Theosophists, and their motto is chosen: *Vera pro gratiis*.

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They are quite aware that Lucifer's libations and sacrifices to the goddess Truth do not send a sweet savoury smoke into the noses of the lords of the press, nor does the bright "Son of the Morning" smell sweet in their nostrils. He is ignored when not abused as—*veritas odium paret*. Even his friends are beginning to find fault with him. They cannot see *why it should not be a purely Theosophical magazine*, in other words, why it refuses to be dogmatic and bigoted. Instead of devoting every inch of space to theosophical and occult teachings, it opens its pages "to the publication of the most grotesquely heterogeneous elements and conflicting doctrines." This is the chief accusation, to which we answer—why not? Theosophy is divine knowledge, and knowledge is truth; every *true* fact, every sincere word are thus part and parcel of Theosophy. One who is skilled in divine alchemy, or even approximately blessed with the gift of the perception of truth, will find and extract it from an erroneous as much as from a correct statement. However small the particle of gold lost in a ton of rubbish, it is the noble metal still, and worthy of being dug out even at the price of some extra trouble. As has been said, it is often as useful to know what a thing *is not*, as to learn what it *is*. The average reader can hardly hope to find any fact in a sectarian publication under all its aspects, *pro* and *con*, for either one way or the other its presentation is sure to be biassed, and the scales helped to incline to that side to which its editor's special policy is directed. A Theosophical magazine is thus, perhaps, the only publication where one may hope to find, at any rate, the unbiassed, if still only approximate truth and fact. Naked truth is reflected in Lucifer under its many aspects, for no philosophical or religious views are excluded from its pages. And, as every philosophy and religion, however incomplete, unsatisfactory, and even foolish some may be occasionally, must be based on a truth and fact of some kind, the reader has thus the opportunity of comparing, analysing, and choosing from the several philosophies discussed therein. Lucifer offers as many facets of the One universal jewel as its limited space will permit, and says to its readers: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve: whether the gods that were on the other side

of the flood which submerged man's reasoning powers and divine knowledge, or the gods of the Amorites of *custom* and *social falsehood*, or again, the Lord of (the highest) Self—the bright destroyer of the dark power of illusion?" Surely it is that philosophy that tends to diminish, instead of adding to,

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the sum of human misery, which is the best.

At all events, the choice is there, and for this purpose only have we opened our pages to every kind of contributors. Therefore do you find in them the views of a Christian clergyman who believes in his God and Christ, but rejects the wicked interpretations and the enforced dogmas of his ambitious proud Church, along with the doctrines of the Hylo-Idealist, who denies God, soul, and immortality, and believes in nought save himself. The rankest Materialists will find hospitality in our journal; aye, even those who have not scrupled to fill pages of it with sneers and personal remarks upon ourselves, and abuse of the doctrines of Theosophy, so dear to us. When a journal of *free thought*, conducted by an Atheist, inserts an article by a Mystic or Theosophist in praise of his occult views and the mystery of Parabrahmam, and passes on it only a few casual remarks, then shall we say Lucifer has found a rival. When a Christian periodical or missionary organ accepts an article from the pen of a free-thinker deriding belief in Adam and his rib, and passes criticism on Christianity—its editor's faith—in meek silence, then it will have become worthy of Lucifer, and may be said truly to have reached that degree of tolerance when it may be placed on a level with any Theosophical publication.

But so long as none of these organs do something of the kind, they are all sectarian, bigoted, intolerant, and can never have an idea of truth and justice. They may throw innuendoes against Lucifer and its editors, they cannot affect either. In fact, the editors of that magazine feel proud of such criticism and accusations, as they are witnesses to the absolute absence of bigotry, or arrogance of any kind in theosophy, the result of the divine beauty of the doctrines it preaches. For, as said, Theosophy allows a hearing and a fair chance to all. It deems no views—if sincere—entirely destitute of truth. It respects thinking men, to whatever class of thought they may belong. Ever ready to oppose ideas and views which can only create confusion without benefiting philosophy, it leaves their expounders personally to believe in whatever they

please, and does justice to their ideas when they are good. Indeed, the conclusions or deductions of a philosophic writer may be entirely opposed to our views and the teachings we expound; yet his premises and statements of facts may be quite correct, and other people may profit by the adverse philosophy, even if we ourselves reject it, believing we have something higher and still nearer to the truth. In any case, our

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profession of faith is now made plain, and all that is said in the foregoing pages both justifies and explains our editorial policy.

To sum up the idea, with regard to absolute and relative truth, we can only repeat what we said before. *Outside a certain highly spiritual and elevated state of mind, during which Man is at one with the Universal Mind—he can get nought on earth but relative truth, or truths, from whatsoever philosophy or religion.* Were even the goddess who dwells at the bottom of the well to issue from her place of confinement, she could give man no more than he can assimilate. Meanwhile, every one can sit near that well—the name of which is Knowledge—and gaze into its depths in the hope of seeing Truth's fair image reflected, at least, on the dark waters. This, however, as remarked by Richter, presents a certain danger. Some truth, to be sure, may be occasionally reflected as in a mirror on the spot we gaze upon, and thus reward the patient student. But, adds the German thinker, "I have heard that some philosophers in seeking for Truth, to pay homage to her, have seen their own image in the water and adored it instead."

It is to avoid such a calamity—one that has befallen every founder of a religious or philosophical school—that the editors are studiously careful not to offer the reader only those truths which they find reflected in their own personal brains. They offer the public a wide choice, and refuse to show bigotry and intolerance, which are the chief landmarks on the path of Sectarianism. But, while leaving the widest margin possible for comparison, our opponents cannot hope to find *their faces* reflected on the clear waters of our Lucifer, without remarks or just criticism upon the most prominent features thereof, if in contrast with theosophical views.

This, however, only within the cover of the public magazine, and so far as regards the merely intellectual aspect of philosophical truths. Concerning the

deeper spiritual, and one may almost say religious, beliefs, no true Theosophist ought to degrade these by subjecting them to public discussion, but ought rather to treasure and hide them deep within the sanctuary of his innermost soul. Such beliefs and doctrines should never be rashly given out, as they risk unavoidable profanation by the rough handling of the indifferent and the critical. Nor ought they to be embodied in any publication except as hypotheses offered to the consideration of the thinking portion of the public. Theosophical truths, when they transcend a certain limit of speculation, had better remain concealed from

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public view, for the “evidence of things not seen” is no evidence save to him who sees, hears, and senses it. It is not to be dragged outside the “Holy of Holies,” the temple of the impersonal divine *Ego*, or the indwelling Self. For, while every fact outside *its* perception can, as we have shown, be, at best, only a relative truth, a ray from the absolute truth can reflect itself only in the pure mirror of its own flame—our highest Spiritual Consciousness. And how can the darkness (of illusion) comprehend the Light that shineth in it?

*Lucifer*, February, 1888

## OLD PHILOSOPHERS AND MODERN CRITICS

IN one of the oldest philosophies and religious systems of prehistoric times, we read that at the end of a Mahâ-Pralaya (general dissolution) the great Soul, Param-Atmâ, the Self-Existent, that which can be “apprehended only by the suprasensual,” becomes “*manifest of itself*.”<sup>1</sup>

The Hindûs give this “Existence” various names, one of which is Svayambhû, or Self-Existent. This Svayambhû emanates from itself the creative faculty, or Svâyambhuva—the “Son of the Self-Existent”—and the One becomes Two; this in its turn evolves a third principle with the potentiality of becoming Matter which the orthodox call Virâj, or the Universe.<sup>2</sup> This incomprehensible Trinity became later anthropomorphized into the Trimûrti, known as Brahmâ, Vishnu, Shiva, the symbols of the creative, the preservative, and the destructive powers



in Nature—and at the same time of the transforming or regenerating forces, or rather of the three aspects of the one Universal Force. It is the Tridanda, the triply manifested Unity, which gave rise to the orthodox Aum, which with them is but the abbreviated Trimûrti. It is only under this triple aspect that the profane masses can comprehend the great mystery. When the triple God becomes Shârîra, or puts on a visible form, he typifies all the principles of Matter, all the germs of life, he is the God of the three visages, or triple power, the essence of the Vedic Triad. “Let the Brâhmans know the Sacred Syllable [Aum], the three words of the Sâvitri, and read the Vedas daily.”<sup>3</sup>

After having produced the universe, He whose power is incomprehensible vanished again, absorbed in the Supreme Soul.

. . . Having retired into the primitive darkness, the Great Soul remains within the unknown, and is void of all form. . . .

When having again reunited the subtile elementary principles, it introduces itself into either a vegetable or animal seed, it assumes at each a new form.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Manava Dharma Shastra (Laws of Manu)*, i, 5, 6, 7, 8, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Every student of Theosophy will recognize in these three consecutive emanations the three Logoi of the *Secret Doctrine* and the Theosophical Scheme.

<sup>3</sup> Compare *Manu*, iv. 125.

It is thus that, by an alternative waking and rest, the Immutable Being causes to revive and die eternally all the existing creatures, active and inert.<sup>4</sup>

He who has studied the speculations of Pythagoras on the Monad, which, after emanating the Duad, retires into silence and darkness, and thus creates the Triad, can realize whence came the Philosophy of the great Samian Sage, and after him that of Socrates and Plato. The mystic Decad (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10) is a way of expressing this idea. The One is God; the Two, Matter; the Three, combining Monad and Duad and partaking of the nature of both, is the phenomenal World; the Tetrad, or form of perfection, expresses the emptiness of all; and the Decad, or sum of all, involves the entire Kosmos.

Let us see how the Brâhmanical ideas tally with the pre-Christian Pagan Philosophies and with Christianity itself. It is with the Platonic Philosophy, the most elaborate compend of the abstruse systems of ancient India, that we had better begin.

Although twenty-two and a half centuries have elapsed since the death of Plato, the great minds of the world are still occupied with his writings. He was, in the fullest sense of the word, the world's interpreter. And the greatest Philosopher of the pre-Christian era faithfully mirrored in his works the spiritualism of the Vedic Philosophers, who lived thousands of years before himself, with its metaphysical expression. Vyâsa, Jaimini, Kapila, Patanjali, and many others, will be found to have transmitted their indelible imprint through the intervening centuries, by means of Pythagoras, upon Plato and his school. Thus is warranted the inference that to Plato and the ancient Hindû Sages the same wisdom was alike revealed. And so surviving the shock of time, what can this wisdom be but divine and eternal?

Plato taught of justice as subsisting in the soul and as being the greatest good of its possessor. "Men, in proportion to their intellect, have admitted his transcendent claims"; yet his commentators, almost with one consent, shrink from every passage which implies that his Metaphysics are based on a solid foundation, and not on ideal conceptions.

But Plato could not accept a Philosophy destitute of spiritual aspirations; with him the two were at one. For the old Grecian Sage

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<sup>4</sup> Compare *Manu*, i. 50, and other shlokas.

there was a single object of attainment: real knowledge. He considered those only to be genuine Philosophers, or students of truth, who possess the knowledge of the really-existing, in opposition to mere objects of perception; of the always-existing, in opposition to the transitory; and of that which exists permanently, in opposition to that which waxes, wanes, and is alternately developed and destroyed.

Beyond all finite existences and secondary causes, all laws, ideas, and principles, there is an Intelligence or Mind [*Novç Nous*, the Spirit] the first

principle of all principles, the Supreme Idea on which all other ideas are grounded; the ultimate substance from which all things derive their being and essence, the first and efficient Cause of all the order, and harmony, and beauty, and excellency, and goodness, which pervade the universe—who is called, by way of preeminence and excellence, the Supreme Good, the God (*ὁ Θεός*), “the God over all” (*ὁ ἐπὶ πάντι Θεός*.)<sup>5</sup>

It is not difficult for a Theosophist to recognize in this “God” (a) the Universal Mind in its cosmic aspect; and (b) the Higher Ego in man in its microcosmic. For, as Plato says, He is not the truth nor the intelligence, “but the Father of it”; *i.e.*, the “Father” of the Lower Manas, our personal “brain-mind,” which depends for its manifestations on the organs of sense. Though this eternal essence of things may not be perceptible by our physical senses, it may be apprehended by the mind of those who are not wilfully obtuse.<sup>6</sup> We find Plato stating distinctly that everything visible was created or evolved out of the invisible and eternal Will, and after its fashion. Our Heaven—he says—was produced according to the eternal pattern of the “Ideal World,” contained, like everything else, in the dodecahedron, the geometrical model used by the Deity.<sup>7</sup> With Plato, the Primal Being is an emanation of the Demiurgic Mind (Nous), which contains within itself from eternity the “Idea” of the “to-be-created world,” and this Idea it produces out of itself.<sup>8</sup> The laws of Nature are the established relations of this Idea to the forms of its manifestations. Two thousand years later, we find the great German philosopher Schopenhauer borrowing this conception when stating that:

These forms are time, space and causality. Through time and space the idea varies in its numberless manifestations.

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<sup>5</sup> Cocker, *Christianity and Greek Philosophy*, xi. 377.

<sup>6</sup> This “God” is the Universal Mind, Alaya, the source from which the “God” in each one of us has emanated.

<sup>7</sup> Compare *Timaeus Locrius*, p. 97.

<sup>8</sup> See Movers' *Explanations*, p. 268.

Thus, if Theology has often disfigured ancient Theosophy, Modern Psychology and Modern Science have disfigured Ancient Philosophy. Both borrowed without any acknowledgement from the Ancient Wisdom and reviled and belittled it whenever they could. But, for lack of comprehension of the great philosophical and theosophical principles, the methods of Modern Science, however exact, must end in nullity. In no one branch can it demonstrate the origin and ultimate of things. Instead of tracing the effect from its primal source, its progress is the reverse. Its higher types, it teaches, are all evolved from antecedent lower ones. It starts from the bottom of the cycle, led on step by step in the great labyrinth of Nature, by a thread of Matter. As soon as this breaks, the clue is lost, and it recoils in affright from the Incomprehensible, and confesses itself powerless. Not so did Plato and his disciples. With them, as with us, *the lower types were but the concrete images of the higher abstract types*. The Spirit, which is immortal, has an arithmetical, as the body has a geometrical, beginning. This beginning, as the reflection of the great universal Archæus, is self-moving, and from the centre diffuses itself over the whole body of the microcosm.

Is it the sad perception of this truth, the recognition and the adoption of which by any man of Science would now prove suicidal, that makes so many Scientists and famous scholars confess how powerless is Physical Science, even over the world of Matter?

Almost a century separated Plato from Pythagoras,<sup>9</sup> so that they could not have been acquainted with each other. But both were Initiates, and therefore it is not surprising to find that both teach the same doctrine concerning the Universal Soul. Pythagoras taught his disciples that God is the Universal Mind diffused through all things, and that this Mind by the sole virtue of its universal sameness could be communicated from one object to another, and be made to create all things by the sole will-power of man. With the ancient Greeks, too, Kurios was the God-Mind (Nous). "Now, Koros (Kurios) signifies the pure and unmixed nature of intellect — wisdom," says Plato in the *Cratylus*. Thus we find all the great philosophers, from Pythagoras through Timæus of Locris and Plato down to the Neo-Platonists, deriving the Mind-Soul of man from the Universal Mind-Soul.

## Of myths and symbols, the despair of modern Orientalism, Plato

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<sup>9</sup> Pythagoras was born in 580 and Plato in 430 B.C.

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declares, in the *Gorgias* and *Phædo*, that they were the vehicles of great truths well worth seeking. But commentators are so little *en rapport* with the great Philosopher as to be compelled to acknowledge that they are ignorant where “the doctrinal ends, and the mythical begins.” Plato put to flight the popular superstitions concerning magic and dæmons, and developed the exaggerated notions of the time into rational theories and metaphysical conceptions. Perhaps these would not quite stand the inductive method of reasoning established by Aristotle; nevertheless they are satisfactory in the highest degree to those who apprehend the existence of the higher faculty of insight or intuition, as affording a criterion for ascertaining truth. For there are few myths in any religious system but have an historical as well as a scientific foundation. Myths, as Poccoke ably expresses it,

Are now proved to be fables, just in proportion as we misunderstand them; truths, in proportion as they were once understood. Our ignorance it is which has made a myth of history; and our ignorance is an Hellenic inheritance, much of it the result of Hellenic vanity.<sup>10</sup>

Basing all his doctrines upon the presence of the Supreme Mind, Plato taught that the Nous, Spirit, or Rational Soul of man, being “generated by the Divine Father,” possessed a nature kindred to, or even homogeneous with, the Divinity, and capable of beholding the eternal realities. This faculty of contemplating reality in a direct and immediate manner belongs to God alone; the aspiration for this knowledge constitutes what is really meant by Philosophy—the love of wisdom. The love of truth is inherently the love of good; and predominating over every desire of the soul, purifying it and assimilating it to the divine, thus governing every act of the individual, it raises man to a participation and communion with Divinity, and restores him to the likeness of God. Says Plato in the *Theætetus*:

This flight consists in becoming like God, and this assimilation is the becoming just and holy with wisdom.

The basis of this assimilation is always asserted to be the preexistence of the Spirit or Nous. In the allegory of the chariot and winged steeds, given in the *Phædrus*, he represents the psychical nature as composite or two-fold; the *thumos*, or epithumetic part, formed from the substances of the world of phenomena; and the *thumoeides* (*θυμοειδές*), the essence of which is linked to the eternal

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<sup>10</sup> *India in Greece*, Preface, p. ix.

world. The present earth-life is a fall and a punishment. The Soul dwells in "the grave which we call the body," and in its incorporate state, and previous to the discipline of education, the noëtic or spiritual element is "asleep." Life is thus a dream, rather than a reality. Like the captives in the subterranean cave, described in the *Republic*, our backs being turned to the light, we perceive only the shadows of objects, and think them the actual realities. Is not this the idea of *Mâyâ*, or the illusion of the senses in physical life, which is so marked a feature in the Hindû Philosophy? But these shadows, if we have not given ourselves up absolutely to the sensuous nature, arouse in us the reminiscence of that higher world that we once inhabited.

The interior spirit has some dim and shadowy recollection of its antenatal state of bliss, and some instinctive and proleptic yearnings for its return.

It is the province of the discipline of Philosophy to disenthral the Soul from the bondage of sense, and to raise it into the empyrean of pure thought, to the vision of eternal truth, goodness, and beauty, thus uniting it to Spirit.

The soul cannot come into the form of a man if it has never seen the truth. This is a recollection of those things which our soul formerly saw when journeying with Deity, despising the things which we now say are, and looking up to that which really is. Wherefore the nous, or spirit, of the Philosopher [or student of the higher truth] alone is furnished with wings; because he, to the best of his ability, keeps these things in mind, of which the contemplation renders even Deity itself divine. By making the right use of these things remembered from the former life, by constantly

perfecting himself in the perfect mysteries, a man becomes truly perfect—  
an initiate into the diviner wisdom.

The Philosophy of Plato, we are assured by Porphyry of the Neoplatonic School, was taught and illustrated in the Mysteries.<sup>11</sup> Many have questioned and even denied this; and Lobeck, in his

<sup>11</sup> “The accusations of atheism, the introducing of foreign deities, and corrupting of the Athenian youth, which were made against Socrates, afforded ample justification for Plato to conceal the arcane preaching of his doctrines. Doubtless the peculiar diction or ‘jargon’ of the alchemists was employed for a like purpose. The dungeon, the rack, and the faggot were employed without scruple by Christians of every shade, the Roman Catholics especially, against all who taught even natural science contrary to the theories entertained by the Church. Pope Gregory the Great even inhibited the grammatical use of Latin as heathenish. The offence of Socrates consisted in unfolding to his disciples the arcane doctrine concerning the gods, which was taught in the Mysteries and was a capital crime. He was also charged by Aristophanes with introducing the new god Dinos into the republic as the demiurgos or artificer, and the lord of the solar universe. The Heliocentric system was also a doctrine of the Mysteries; and hence, when Aristarchus, the Pythagorean taught it openly, Cleanthes declared that the Greeks ought to have called him to account and condemned him for blasphemy against the gods.” But Socrates had never been initiated, and hence divulged nothing which had ever been imparted to him.

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*Aglaophomus*, has gone to the extreme of representing the sacred festivals as little more than an empty show to captivate the imagination. As though Athens and Greece would for twenty centuries and more have repaired every fifth year to Eleusis to witness a solemn religious farce! Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo, has exploded such assertions. He declares that the doctrines of the Alexandrian Platonists were the original Esoteric doctrines of the first followers of Plato, and describes Plotinus as a Plato reïncarnated. He also explains the motives of the great Philosopher for veiling the interior sense of what he taught.

Hence we may understand why the sublimer scenes in the Mysteries were always in the night. The life of the interior Spirit is the death of the external nature; and the night of the physical world denotes the day of the spiritual.

Dionysus, the night-sun, is, therefore, worshipped rather than Helios, orb of day. In the Mysteries were symbolized the preëxistent condition of the Spirit and Soul, and the lapse of the latter into earth-life and Hades, the miseries of that life, the purification of the Soul, and its restoration to divine bliss, or reünion with Spirit. Theon, of Smyrna, aptly compares the philosophical discipline to the mystic rites, and his views may be summarized from Taylor as follows:

Philosophy may be called the initiation into the true arcana, and the instruction in the genuine Mysteries. There are five parts of this initiation: I. the previous purification: II. the admission to participation in the arcane rites: III. the epoptic revelation; IV. the investiture or enthroning; V.—the fifth, which is produced from all these, is friendship and interior communion with God, and the enjoyment of that felicity which arises from intimate converse with divine beings. . . . Plato denominates the *epopteia*, or personal view, the perfect contemplation of things which are apprehended intuitively, absolute truths and ideas. He also considers the binding of the head and crowning as analogous to the authority which anyone receives from his instructors, of leading others into the same contemplation. The fifth gradation is the most perfect felicity arising from hence, and, according to Plato, an assimilation to divinity as far as is possible to human beings.<sup>12</sup>

Such is Platonism. "Out of Plato," says Ralph Waldo Emerson, "come all things that are still written and debated among men of

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Taylor, *Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, p. 47.

thought." He absorbed the learning of his time—that of Greece from Philolaus to Socrates; then that of Pythagoras in Italy; then what he could procure from Egypt and the East. He was so broad that all Philosophy, European and Asiatic, was in his doctrines; and to culture and contemplation he added the nature and qualities of the poet.



The followers of Plato generally adhered strictly to his psychological theories. Several, however, like Xenocrates, ventured into bolder speculations. Speusippus, the nephew and successor of the great Philosopher, was the author of the *Numerical Analysis*, a treatise on the Pythagorean Numbers. Some of his speculations are not found in the written *Dialogues*; but as he was a listener to the unwritten lectures of Plato, the judgment of Enfield is doubtless correct, that he did not differ from his Master. Though not named, he was evidently the antagonist whom Aristotle criticized, when professing to cite the argument of Plato against the doctrine of Pythagoras, that all things were in themselves numbers, or rather, inseparable from the idea of numbers. He especially endeavoured to show that the Platonic doctrine of ideas differed essentially from the Pythagorean, in that it presupposed numbers and magnitude to exist apart from things. He also asserted that Plato taught that there could be no *real* knowledge, if the object of that knowledge was not carried beyond or above the sensible.

But Aristotle was no trustworthy witness. He misrepresented Plato, and he almost caricatured the doctrines of Pythagoras. There is a canon of interpretation, which should guide us in our examination of every philosophical opinion: "The human mind has, under the necessary operation of its own laws, been compelled to entertain the same fundamental ideas, and the human heart to cherish the same feelings in all ages." It is certain that Pythagoras awakened the deepest intellectual sympathy of his age, and that his doctrines exerted a powerful influence upon the mind of Plato. His cardinal idea was that there existed a permanent principle of unity beneath the forms, changes, and other phenomena of the universe. Aristotle asserted that he taught that "numbers are the first principles of all entities." Ritter has expressed the opinion that the formula of Pythagoras should be taken symbolically, which is entirely correct. Aristotle goes on to associate these *numbers* with the "forms" and "ideas" of Plato. He even declares that Plato said: "forms are numbers," and that "ideas are substantial existences—real beings." Yet

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Plato did not so teach. He declared that the final cause was the Supreme Goodness—*τὸ ἀγαθόν*.

“Ideas are objects of pure conception for the human reason, and they are attributes of the Divine Reason.”<sup>13</sup> Nor did he ever say that “forms are numbers.” What he did say may be found in the *Timæus*: “God [the Universal Nous or Mind] formed things as they first arose according to forms and numbers.”

It is recognized by Modern Science that all the higher laws of Nature assume the form of quantitative statement. What is this but a fuller elaboration or more explicit affirmation of the Pythagorean doctrine? Numbers were regarded as the best representations of the laws of harmony which pervade the Kosmos. In Chemistry the doctrine of atoms and the laws of combination are actually, and, as it were, arbitrarily defined by numbers. As Mr. W. Archer Butler has expressed it:

The world is, then, through all its departments, a living arithmetic in its development, a realized geometry in its repose.

The key to the Pythagorean dogmas is the *general formula of unity in multiplicity, the One evolving the many and pervading the many. This is the ancient doctrine of emanation in a few words.* Even the apostle Paul accepted it as true. “Ἐξ αὐτοῦ, καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα” — *Out of him and through him and for him all things are*—though the pronoun “him” could hardly have been used with regard to the Universal Mind by an Initiate—a “Master Builder.”

The greatest ancient Philosophers are accused of shallowness and superficiality of knowledge as to those details in exact Science of which the moderns boast so much; and Plato cannot escape the common fate. Yet, once more his modern critics ought to bear in mind, that the Sodalian Oath of the Initiate into the Mysteries prevented his imparting his knowledge to the world, in so many plain words. As Champollion writes:

It was the dream of his [Plato's] life to write a work and record in it, in full, the doctrines taught by the Egyptian hierophants; he often talked of it, but found himself compelled to abstain on account of the solemn oath.

Plato is declared by his various commentators to have been utterly ignorant of the anatomy and functions of the human body; to have known nothing of the uses of the nerves for conveying sensations;

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<sup>13</sup> *History of Philosophy*, by Cousin, I. p. ix.-----

and to have had nothing better to offer than vain speculations concerning physiological questions. He has simply generalized the divisions of the human body, they say, and given nothing reminding us of anatomical facts. As to his own views on the human frame, the Microcosmos being, in his mind, the image in miniature of the Macrocosmos, they are much too transcendental to obtain the least attention from our exact and materialistic sceptics. The idea of this frame being formed out of triangles, like the universe, seems preposterously ridiculous to several of his translators. Alone of the latter, Professor Jowett, in his introduction to the *Timæus*, honestly remarks that the modern Physical Philosopher

hardly allows to his notions the merit of being "the dead men's bones" out of which he has himself risen to a higher knowledge;<sup>14</sup>

forgetting how much the Metaphysics of olden times have helped the "physical" Sciences of the present day. If, instead of quarrelling with the insufficiency and at times the absence of strictly scientific terms and definitions in Plato's works, we analyze them carefully, the *Timæus* alone will be found to contain within its limited space the germs of every new discovery. The circulation of the blood and the law of gravitation are clearly mentioned, though the former fact, it may be, is not so clearly defined as to withstand the reiterated attacks of Modern Science; for, according to Prof. Jowett, the specific discovery that the blood flows out from one side of the heart through the arteries, and returns to the other through the veins, was unknown to him, though Plato was perfectly aware "that blood is a fluid in constant motion."

Plato's method, like that of Geometry, was to descend from universals to particulars. Modern Science vainly seeks a First Cause among the permutations of molecules; but Plato sought and found it amid the majestic sweep of worlds. For him it was enough to know the great scheme of creation and to be able to

trace the mightiest movements of the Universe through their changes to their ultimates. The petty details, the observation and classification of which have so taxed and demonstrated the patience of modern Scientists, occupied but little of the attention of the old Philosophers. Hence, while a fifth-form boy of an English school can prate more learnedly about the little things of Physical Science than Plato himself, yet, on the other hand, the dullest of Plato's disciples could tell more about great cosmic laws and their mutual relations, and could

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<sup>14</sup> Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, ii. 508.

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demonstrate a greater familiarity with and control over the Occult Forces which lie behind them, than the most learned professor in the most distinguished Academy of our day.

This fact, so little appreciated and never dwelt upon by Plato's translators, accounts for the self-laudation in which we moderns indulge at the expense of that Philosopher and his compeers. Their alleged mistakes in Anatomy and Physiology are magnified to an inordinate extent in order to gratify our self-love, until, in acquiring the idea of our own superior learning, we lose sight of the intellectual splendour which adorns the ages of the past; it is as if one should, in fancy, magnify the solar spots until he should believe the bright luminary to be totally eclipsed.

The wholesale accusation that the ancient Philosophers merely generalized, and that they practically systematized nothing, does not prove their "ignorance," and further it is untrue. Every Science having been revealed in the beginning of time by a *divine* Instructor, became thereby sacred, and capable of being imparted only during the Mysteries of Initiation. No initiated Philosopher, therefore—such as Plato—had the right to reveal it. Once postulate this fact, and the alleged "ignorance" of the ancient Sages and of some initiated classic authors, is explained. At any rate, even a correct generalization is more useful than any system of exact Science, which only becomes rounded and completed by virtue of a number of "working hypotheses" and conjectures. The relative practical unprofitableness of most modern scientific research is evinced in the fact that while our Scientists have a name for the most trivial

particle of mineral, plant, animal, and man, the wisest of them are unable to tell us anything definite about the Vital Force which produces the changes in these several kingdoms. It is unnecessary to seek further than the works of our highest scientific authorities themselves for corroboration of this statement.

It requires no little moral courage in a man of eminent professional position to do justice to the acquirements of the Ancients, in the face of a public sentiment which is content with nothing less than their abasement. When we meet with a case of the kind we gladly give the bold and honest scholar his due. Such a scholar is Professor Jowett, Master of Baliol College, and Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford, who, in his translation of Plato's works, speaking of "the physical philosophy of the ancients as a whole," gives them the following credit: 1. "That the nebular-----

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theory was the received belief of the early physicists." Therefore it could not have rested, as Draper asserts,<sup>15</sup> upon the telescopic discovery made by Herschel. 2. "That the development of animals out of frogs who came to land, and of man out of animals, was held by Anaximenes in the sixth century before Christ." Professor Jowett might have added that this theory antedated Anaximenes by many thousands of years, as it was an accepted doctrine among the Chaldeans, who taught it *exoterically*, as on their cylinders and tablets, and *esoterically* in the temples of Ea and Nebo—the God, and prophet or revealer of the Secret Doctrine.<sup>16</sup> But in both cases the statements are *blinds*. That which Anaximenes—the pupil of Anaximander, who was himself the friend and disciple of Thales of Miletus, the chief of the "Seven Sages," and therefore an Initiate as were these two Masters—that which Anaximenes meant by "animals" was something different from the animals of the modern Darwinian theory. Indeed the eagle-headed men, and the animals of various kinds with human heads, may point two ways: to the descent of man from animals, and to the descent of animals from man, as in the Esoteric Doctrine. At all events, even the most important of the present-day theories is thus shown to be not entirely original with Darwin. 3. Professor Jowett goes on to show "that, even by Philolaus and the early Pythagoreans, the earth was held to be a body like the other stars revolving in space." Thus Galileo—studying some Pythagorean fragments, which are shown by Reuchlin to have still existed

in the days of the Florentine mathematician,<sup>17</sup> being, moreover, familiar with the doctrines of the old Philosophers—but reasserted an astronomical doctrine which prevailed in India in the remotest antiquity. 4. The Ancients “thought that there was a sex in plants as well as in animals.” Thus our modern Naturalists had but to follow in the steps of their predecessors. 5. “That musical notes depended on the relative length or tension of the strings from which they were emitted, and were measured by ratios of number.”

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<sup>15</sup> *Conflict between Religion and Science*, p. 240.

<sup>16</sup> “The Wisdom of Nebo, of the God my instructor, all-delightful,” says verse 7 on the first tablet, which gives the description of the generation of the Gods and creation.

<sup>17</sup> Some Kabalistic scholars assert that the original Greek Pythagoric sentences of Sextus, which are now said to be lost, existed at that time in a convent at Florence, and that Galileo was acquainted with these writings. They add, moreover, that a treatise on Astronomy, a manuscript by Archytas, a direct disciple of Pythagoras, in which were noted all the most important doctrines of their school, was in the possession of Galileo. Had some Rufinus got hold of it, he would no doubt have perverted it, as Presbyter Rufinus has perverted the above-mentioned sentences of Sextus, replacing them with a fraudulent version, the authorship of which he sought to ascribe to a certain Bishop Sextus, See Taylor’s Introduction to Iamblichus’ *Life of Pythagoras*, p. xvii

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6. “That mathematical laws pervaded the world and even qualitative differences were supposed to have their origin in number.” 7. “That the annihilation of matter was denied by them, and held to be a transformation only.” “Although one of these discoveries might have been supposed to be a happy guess,” adds Prof. Jowett, “we can hardly attribute them all to mere coincidences.” We should think not; for, from what he says elsewhere, Prof. Jowett gives us a full right to believe that Plato indicates (as he really does) in *Timæus*, his knowledge of the indestructibility of Matter, of the conservation of energy, and the correlation of forces. Says Dr. Jowett:

The latest word of modern philosophy is continuity and development. but to Plato *this is the beginning and foundation of Science.* <sup>18</sup>

In short, the Platonic Philosophy was one of order, system, and proportion; it embraced the evolution of worlds and species, the correlation and conservation of energy, the transmutation of material form, the indestructibility of Matter and of Spirit. The position of the Platonists in the latter respect was far in advance of Modern Science, and bound the arch of their philosophical system with a keystone at once perfect and immovable.

Finally few will deny the enormous influence that Plato's views have exercised on the formation and acceptance of the dogmas of Christianity. But Plato's views were those of the Mysteries. The philosophical doctrines taught therein are the prolific source from which sprang all the old exoteric religions, the *Old* and partially the *New Testament* included, belonging to the most advanced notions of morality, and religious "revelations." While the literal meaning was abandoned to the fanaticism of the unreasoning lower classes of society, the higher classes, the majority of which consisted of Initiates, pursued their studies in the solemn silence of the temples, and also their worship of the One God of Heaven.

The speculations of Plato, in the *Banquet*, on the creation of the primordial men, and the essay on Cosmogony in the *Timæus*, must be taken allegorically, if we accept them at all. It is this hidden Pythagorean meaning in *Timæus*, *Cratylus* and *Parmenides*, and other trilogies and dialogues, that the Neo-Platonists ventured to expound, as far as the theurgical vow of secrecy would allow them.

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<sup>18</sup> Introduction to *Timæus, Dialogues of Plato*, i. 590-----

The Pythagorean doctrine that *God is the Universal Mind diffused through all things*, and the dogma of the soul's immortality, are the leading features in these apparently incongruous teachings. Plato's piety and the great veneration he felt for the Mysteries, are sufficient warrant that he would not allow his indiscretion to get the better of that deep sense of responsibility which is felt by every Adept. "Constantly perfecting himself in perfect Mysteries, a man in them alone becomes truly perfect," says he in the *Phædrus*.<sup>19</sup>

He took no pains to conceal his displeasure that the Mysteries had become less secret than they were in earlier times. Instead of profaning them by putting them within the reach of the multitude, he would have guarded them with jealous care against all but the most earnest and worthy of his disciples.<sup>20</sup> While mentioning the Gods on every page, his "Pantheistic Monism" is unquestionable, for the whole thread of his discourse indicates that by the term "Gods" he means a class of beings far lower in the scale than the One Deity, and but one grade higher than external man. Even Josephus perceived and acknowledged this fact, despite the natural prejudice of his race. In his famous onslaught upon Apion, this historian says:

Those, however, among the Greeks who philosophized in accordance with truth, were not ignorant of anything . . . nor did they fail to perceive the chilling superficialities of the mythical allegories, on which account they justly despised them. . . . By which thing Plato, being moved, says it is not necessary to admit anyone of the other poets into the "Commonwealth," and he dismisses Homer blandly, after having crowned him and pouring unguent upon him, in order that indeed he should not destroy, by his myths, the orthodox belief respecting the *One* [Deity].<sup>21</sup>

Those, therefore, who can discern the true spirit of Plato's Philosophy, will hardly be satisfied with the estimate which Prof. Jowett, in another part of his work, lays before his readers. He tells us that the influence exercised upon posterity by the *Timaeus* is partly due to a misunderstanding of the doctrine of its author by the Neo-Platonists. He would have us believe that the hidden meanings which they found in this Dialogue, are "quite at variance with

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<sup>19</sup> Cory, *Phaedrus*, i. 328.

<sup>20</sup> This assertion is clearly corroborated by Plato himself, who says: "You say that, in my former discourse, I have not sufficiently explained to you the nature of the *First*. I purposely spoke enigmatically, that in case the tablet should have happened with any accident, either by land or sea, a person without some previous knowledge of the subject, might not be able to understand its contents" (Plato, *Ep.* ii. p. 312; Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, p. 304).



<sup>21</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion*, ii. p. 1079.

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the Spirit of Plato." This is equivalent to the assumption that Prof. Jowett understands what this spirit really was; whereas his criticism upon this particular topic rather indicates that he does not penetrate it at all. If, as he tells us, the Christians seem to find in his work their Trinity, the Word, the Church, and the creation of the World, in a Jewish sense, it is because all this *is* there, and therefore it is but natural that they should have found it. The outward building is the same; but the spirit which animated the dead letter of the Philosopher's teaching has fled, and we would seek for it in vain through the arid dogmas of Christian theology. The Sphinx is the same now, as it was four centuries before the Christian era; but the Œdipus is no more. He is slain because he has given to the world that which the world was not ripe enough to receive. He was the embodiment of truth, and he had to die, as every grand truth must, before, like the Phœnix of old, it revives from its own ashes. Every translator of Plato's works has remarked the strange similarity between the Philosophy of the Esoteric and the Christian doctrines, and each of them has tried to interpret it in accordance with his own religious feelings. So Cory, in his *Ancient Fragments*, tries to prove that it is but an outward resemblance; and does his best to lower the Pythagorean Monad in the public estimation and exalt upon its ruins the later anthropomorphic deity. Taylor, advocating the former, acts as unceremoniously with the Mosaic God. Zeller boldly laughs at the pretensions of the Fathers of the Church, who, notwithstanding history and chronology, and whether people will have it or not, insist that Plato and his school have robbed Christianity of its leading features. It is as fortunate for us as it is unfortunate for the Roman Church that such clever sleight-of-hand as that resorted to by Eusebius is rather difficult in our century. It was easier to pervert chronology, "for the sake of making synchronisms," in the days of the Bishop of Cæsarea, than it is now, and while history exists, no one can help people knowing that Plato lived six hundred years before Irenæus took it into his head to establish a *new* doctrine from the ruins of Plato's older Academy.

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This doctrine of the Universal Mind diffused through all things underlies all ancient Philosophies. The tenets of Bodhism, or Wisdom, which can never be

better comprehended than when studying the Pythagorean Philosophy—its faithful reflection—are derived from this source, as are the exoteric Hindû religion and early Christianity.-----

The purifying process of reincarnations—metempsychoses—however grossly anthropomorphized at a later period, must only be regarded as a supplementary doctrine, disfigured by theological sophistry, with the object of getting a firmer hold upon believers through a popular superstition. Neither Gautama Buddha nor Pythagoras, nor yet Plato, intended to teach this purely metaphysical allegory *literally*. None of them addressed himself to the profane, but only to their own followers and disciples, who knew too much of the symbolical element used even during public instruction to fail to understand the meaning of their respective Masters. Thus they were aware that the words metempsychosis and transmigration meant simply reincarnation from one human body to another, when this teaching concerned a *human being*; and that every allusion of this or another sage, like Pythagoras, to having been in a previous birth a beast, or of transmigrating after death into an animal, was allegorical and related to the spiritual states of the human soul. It is not in the dead letter of the mystic sacred literature that scholars may hope to find the true solution of its metaphysical subtleties. The latter weary the power of thought by the inconceivable profundity of their ratiocination; and the student is never farther from truth than when he believes himself nearest its discovery. The mastery of every doctrine of the perplexing Buddhist and Brâhmanical systems can be attained only by proceeding strictly according to the Pythagorean and Platonic method; from universals down to particulars. The key to them lies in the refined and mystical tenets of the spiritual influx of divine life. "Whoever is unacquainted with my law," says Buddha, "and dies in that state, must return to the earth till he becomes a perfect Samanean. To achieve this object, he must destroy within himself the trinity of Mâyâ. He must extinguish his passions, unite and identify himself with the law [the teaching of the Secret Doctrine], and comprehend the religion of annihilation," *i.e.*, the laws of Matter, and those of Karma and Reincarnation.

Plato acknowledges man to be the toy of the element of necessity—which is Karma under another name—in appearing in this world of matter. Man is

influenced by external causes, and these causes are *daimonia*, like that of Socrates. Happy is the man physically pure, for if his external soul (astral body, the image of the body) is pure, it will strengthen the second (the lower Manas), or the soul which is termed by him the higher mortal soul, which,  
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though liable to err from its own motives, will always side with reason against the animal proclivities of the body. In other words, the ray of our Higher Ego, the lower Manas, has its higher light, the reason or rational powers of the Nous, to help it in the struggle with Kâmic desires. The lusts of man arise in consequence of his perishable material body, so do other diseases, says Plato; but though he regards crimes as involuntary sometimes, for they result, like bodily disease, from external causes, Plato clearly makes a wide distinction between these causes. The Karmic fatalism which he concedes to humanity does not preclude the possibility of avoiding them, for though pain, fear, anger, and other feelings are given to men by necessity,

If they conquered these they would live righteously, and if they were conquered by them, unrighteously.<sup>22</sup>

The dual man—*i.e.*, one from whom the divine immortal Spirit has departed, leaving but the animal form and the sidereal, Plato's higher *mortal* soul—is left merely to his instincts, for he has been conquered by all the evils entailed on matter,<sup>23</sup> hence, he becomes a docile tool in the hands of the Invisibles—beings of sublimated matter, hovering in our atmosphere, and ever ready to inspire those who are deservedly deserted by their immortal counsellor, the Divine Spirit, called by Plato "genius."<sup>24</sup> According to this great Philosopher and initiate, one

Who lived well during his appointed time would return to the habitation of his star, and there have a blessed and suitable existence. But if he failed in attaining this in the second generation he would pass into a woman [become helpless and weak as a woman], and should he not cease from evil in that condition he would be changed into some brute, which resembled him in his evil ways, and would not cease from his toils and transformations [*i.e.*, rebirths or transmigrations], until he followed the original principle of sameness and likeness within him, and overcame, by

the help of reason, the latter secretions of turbulent and irrational elements [elementary dæmons] composed of fire and air, and water and earth, and returned to the form of his first and better nature.<sup>25</sup>

These are the teachings of the Secret Doctrine, of the Occult Philosophy. The possibility of man losing, through depravity, his

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<sup>22</sup> *Timæus*. See Prof. Jowett's work.

<sup>23</sup> This is the teaching of Esoteric Philosophy and this tenet was faintly outlined in *Isis Unveiled*. With Plato the triple man alone is perfect, *i.e.*, one whose Body, Soul, and Spirit are in close affinity.

<sup>24</sup> And by Theosophists the Higher Ego or Buddhi-Manas.

<sup>25</sup> Plato's *Timæus*.

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Higher Ego was taught in antiquity, and is still taught in the centres of Eastern Occultism. And the above shows quite plainly that Plato believed in Reincarnation and in Karma just as we do, though his utterances in respect to the subject were in a mythical form.

There was not a Philosopher of any notoriety who did not hold to this doctrine of metempsychosis, as taught by the Brâhmans, Buddhists, and later by the Pythagoreans, in its Esoteric sense, whether he expressed it more or less intelligibly. Origen and Clemens Alexandrinus, Synesius and Chalcidius, all believed in it; and the Gnostics, who are unhesitatingly proclaimed by history as a body of the most refined, learned, and enlightened men,<sup>26</sup> were all believers in metempsychosis. Socrates entertained opinions identical with those of Pythagoras; and, as the penalty of his divine Philosophy, was put to a violent death. The rabble has been the same in all ages. These men taught that men have two souls, of separate and quite different natures: the one perishable—the Astral Soul, or the inner, fluidic body—which must not be confused with the Astral *Body* or “double”; the other incorruptible and immortal—the Augoeides, or portion of the Divine Spirit—Atmâ-Buddhi; that the mortal or Astral Soul perishes at each gradual change at the threshold of every new sphere, becoming with every transmigration more purified. The Astral Man, intangible and invisible as he may be to our mortal, earthly senses, is still constituted of matter, though sublimated.

Now, if the latter means anything at all, it means that the above teaching about the “two souls” is exactly that of the Esoteric, and of many exoteric, Theosophists. The two souls are the dual Manas: the lower, personal “Astral Soul,” and the Higher Ego. The former — a Ray of the latter falling into Matter, that is to say animating man and making of him a thinking, rational being on this plane—having assimilated its most spiritual elements in the divine essence of the reïncarnating Ego, perishes in its personal, material form at each gradual change, as Kâma Rûpa, at the threshold of every new sphere, or Devachan, followed by a new reincarnation. It perishes, because it fades out in time, all but its intangible, evanescent photography on the astral waves, burnt out by the fierce light which ever changes but never dies; while the incorruptible and the immortal “Spiritual Soul,” that which we call Buddhi-Manas and the individual Self, becomes more purified with every new incarnation.

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<sup>26</sup> See Gibbons’ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

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Laden with all IT could save from the personal Soul, it carries it into Devachan, to reward it with ages of peace and bliss. This is no *new* teaching, no “fresh development,” as some of our opponents have tried to prove; and even in *Isis Unveiled*, the earliest, hence the most cautious of all the modern works on Theosophy, the fact is distinctly stated (Vol. i, p. 432 and elsewhere). The Secret Doctrine does not concede immortality to all men alike. It declares with Porphyry that only

Through the highest purity and chastity we shall approach nearer to [our] God, and receive, in the contemplation of Him, the true knowledge and insight.

If the human soul has neglected during its life-time to receive its illumination from its Divine Spirit, our personal God, then it becomes difficult for the gross and sensual man to survive his physical death for a great length of time. No more than the misshapen monster can live long after its physical birth, can the soul, once that it has become *too* material, exist after its birth into the spiritual world. The viability of the astral form is so feeble, that the particles cannot cohere firmly when once it is slipped out of the unyielding capsule of the external body. Its particles, gradually obeying the disorganizing attraction of

universal space, finally fly asunder beyond the possibility of reëgregation. Upon the occurrence of such a catastrophe, the personal individual ceases to exist; his glorious Augoeides, the immortal Self, has left him for Devachan, whither the Kama Rûpa cannot follow. During the intermediary period between bodily death and the disintegration of the astral form, the latter, bound by magnetic attraction to its ghastly corpse, prowls about, and sucks vitality from susceptible victims. The man having shut out of himself every ray of the divine light, is lost in darkness, and, therefore, clings to the earth and the earthy.

No Astral Soul, even that of a pure, good and virtuous man, is immortal in the strictest sense; "from elements it was formed—to elements it must return." Only, while the soul of the wicked vanishes, and is absorbed without redemption—*i.e.*, the dead man has impressed nothing of himself on the Spirit-Ego—that of every other person, even moderately pure, simply changes its ethereal particles for still more ethereal ones. While there remains in it a spark of the Divine, the personal Ego cannot die *entirely*, as his most spiritual thoughts and aspirations, his "good deeds," the efflorescence of his "I-am-ship," so to speak, is now at one with his

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immortal Parent. Says Proclus:

After death the soul [the spirit] continueth to linger in the aërial body [astral form], till it is entirely purified from all angry and voluptuous passions . . . then doth it put off by a second dying the aërial body as it did the earthly one. Whereupon, the ancients say that there is a celestial body always joined with the soul, which is immortal, luminous, and star-like.

Between Pantheism and Fetichism, we have been repeatedly told, there is but an insignificant step. Plato was a Monotheist, it is asserted. In one sense, he was that, most assuredly; but his Monotheism never led him to the worship of one *personal* God, but to that of a Universal Principle and to the fundamental idea that the absolutely immutable or unchangeable Existence alone, really *is*, all the finite existences and change being only appearance, *i.e.*, Mâyâ.<sup>27</sup> His *Being* was noumenal, not phenomenal. If Heracleitus postulates a World-Consciousness, or Universal Mind; and Parmenides an unchangeable *Being*, in the identity of the universal and

individual thought; and the Pythagoreans, along with Philolaus, discover true Knowledge (which is *Wisdom* or Deity) in our consciousness of the unchangeable relations between number and measure—an idea disfigured later by the Sophists—it is Plato who expresses this idea the most intelligibly. While the vague definition of some philosophers about the *Ever-Becoming* is but too apt to lead one inclined to argumentation into hopeless Materialism, the divine *Being* of some others suggests as unphilosophical an anthropomorphism. Instead of separating the two, Plato shows us the logical necessity of accepting both, viewed from an Esoteric aspect. That which he calls the “Unchangeable Existence” or “Being” is named *Be-ness* in Esoteric Philosophy. It is Sat, which becomes at stated periods the cause of the *Becoming*, which latter cannot, therefore, be regarded as *existing*, but only as something ever tending—in its cyclic progress toward the One Absolute Existence—to exist, in the “Good,” and at one with Absoluteness. The “Divine Causality” cannot be a personal, therefore finite and conditioned, Godhead, any more with Plato than with the Vedântins, as he treats his subject teleologically, and in his search for final causes often goes *beyond* the Universal Mind, even when viewed as a noumenon. Modern commentators have attempted on different occasions to prove fallacious the Neo-Platonic claim of a secret meaning underlying Plato’s teachings. They deny the presence of “any definite

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<sup>27</sup> *Sophistes*, p. 249.

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trace of a secret doctrine” in his *Dialogues*;

Not even the passages brought forward out of the insidious Platonic letters (VII, p. 341e, II, p. 314c) containing any evidence.<sup>28</sup>

As, however, no one would deny that Plato had been initiated into the Mysteries, there is an end to the other denials. There are hundreds of expressions and hints in the *Dialogues* which no modern translator or commentator—save one, Thomas Taylor—has ever correctly understood. The presence, moreover, of the Pythagorean number-doctrine and the sacred numerals in Plato’s lectures settles the question conclusively.

He who has studied Pythagoras and his speculations on the Monad, which, after having emanated the Duad, retires into silence and darkness, and thus creates the Triad, can realize whence came the Philosophy of the great Samian Sage, and after him that of Socrates and Plato.

Speusippus seems to have taught that the psychical or thumetic soul was immortal as well as the Spirit or rational soul, and every Theosophist will understand his reasons for it. Unless a personality is entirely annihilated, which is extremely rare, the “thumetic soul,” our lower Manas, is in one sense and portion of itself *immortal*—*i.e.* the portion that follows the Ego into Devachan. He also—like Philolaus and Aristotle, in his disquisitions upon the soul—makes of Ether an element; so that there were five principal elements to correspond with the five regular figures in Geometry. This became also a doctrine of the Alexandrian school.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, there was much in the doctrines of the Philaletheans which did not appear in the works of the older Platonists, but was doubtless taught in substance by the Philosopher himself, though, with his usual reticence, he did not commit it to writing, as being too arcane for promiscuous publication. Speusippus and Xenocrates after him, held, like their great Master, that the Anima Mundi, or World-Soul, was not the Deity, but a manifestation. Those Philosophers never conceived of the One as an animate Nature.<sup>30</sup> The original One did not *exist*, as we understand the term. Not till he had united with the many—emanated existence (the Monad and Duad)—was a Being produced. The *τίμιον*, honoured—the something manifested—dwells in the center

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<sup>28</sup> *Vide* Hermann, I, pp. 544, 744, note 755.

<sup>29</sup> *Theo. Arith.*, p. 62; on *Pythag. Numbers*.

<sup>30</sup> Plato: *Parmenid.*, 141 E.

as in the circumference, but it is only the reflection of the Deity, the World-Soul.<sup>31</sup> In this doctrine we find all the spirit of Esoteric *Bodhism*, or Secret Wisdom.

Though some have considered Speusippus as inferior to Aristotle, the world is nevertheless indebted to him for defining and expounding many things that



Plato had left obscure in his doctrine of the Sensible and Ideal. His maxim was "The Immaterial is known by means of scientific thought, the Material by scientific perception."<sup>32</sup>

Xenocrates expounded many of the unwritten theories and teachings of his master. He, too, held the Pythagorean doctrine, with its system of numerals and mathematics, in the highest estimation. Recognizing but three degrees of knowledge—*Thought*, *Perception*, and *Envisagement* (or knowledge by *Intuition*), he made Thought busy itself with all that which is beyond the heavens; Perception with things in the heavens; Intuition with the heavens themselves. The source of these three qualities is found in the Hindû *Mânava Dharma Shâstra*, speaking of the formation (creation, in vulgar parlance) of man. Brahmâ—who is Mahat, or the Universal Soul—draws from its own essence the Spirit, *the immortal breath which perisheth not in the human being*, while to the (lower) soul of that being, Brahmâ gives the Ahânkara, consciousness of the Ego. Then is added to it "the intellect formed of the *three qualities*."

These three qualities are Intelligence, Conscience and Will; answering to the Thought, Perception and Envisagement (Intuition) of Xenocrates, who seems to have been less reticent than Plato and Speusippus in his exposition of soul. After his master's death Xenocrates travelled with Aristotle, and then became ambassador to Philip of Macedonia. But twenty-five years later he is found taking charge of the Old Academy, and becoming its President as successor of Speusippus, who had occupied the post for over a quarter of a century, and devoting his life to the most abstruse philosophical subjects. He is thought more dogmatic than Plato, and therefore must have been more dangerous to the schools which opposed him. His three degrees of knowledge, or three divisions of Philosophy, the separation and connection of the three modes of cognition and comprehension, are more definitely worked out than by Speusippus. With him, Science is referred to "that essence which is the object of pure thought, and is not included in the phenomenal

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<sup>31</sup> See Stobæus' *Ecl.*, i. 862.

world”—which is in direct opposition to the Aristotelian-Baconian ideas; sensuous perception is referred to that which passes into the world of phenomena; and conception, to that essence “which is at once the object of sensuous perception and, mathematically, of pure reason—the essence of heaven and the stars.” All his admiration notwithstanding, Aristotle never did justice to the Philosophy of his friend and co-disciple. This is evident from his works. Whenever he is referring to the three modes of apprehension as explained by Xenocrates, he abstains from any mention of the method by which the latter proves that scientific perception partakes of truth. The reason for this becomes apparent when we find the following in a biography of Xenocrates:

It is probable that what was peculiar to the Aristotelian logic did not remain unnoticed by him (Xenocrates); for it can hardly be doubted that the division of the existent into the absolutely existent and the relatively existent, attributed to Xenocrates, was opposed to the Aristotelian table of categories.

This shows that Aristotle was no better than certain of our modern Scientists, who suppress facts and truth in order that these may not clash with their own private hobbies and “working hypotheses.”

The relation of numbers to Ideas was developed by Xenocrates further than by Speusippus, and he surpassed Plato in his definition of the doctrine of Invisible Magnitudes. Reducing them to their ideal primary elements, he demonstrated that every figure and form originated out of the smallest indivisible fine. That Xenocrates held the same theories as Plato in relation to the human soul (supposed to be a number) is evident, though Aristotle contradicts this, like every other teaching of this philosopher.<sup>33</sup> This is conclusive evidence that many of Plato’s doctrines were delivered orally, even were it shown that Xenocrates and not Plato was the first to originate the theory of indivisible magnitudes. He derives the Soul from the first Duad, and calls it a self-moving number.<sup>34</sup> Theophrastus remarks that he entered into and elaborated this Soul-theory more than any other Platonist. For he regarded

intuition and *innate* ideas, δόξα, in a higher sense than any, and made mathematics mediate between knowledge and sensuous perception.<sup>35</sup> Hence he built upon this Soul-theory the cosmological doctrine, and proved the necessary

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<sup>33</sup> *Metaph.*, 407, a. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Appendix to *Timaeus*.

<sup>35</sup> Aristot., *De Interp.*, p. 297.

existence in every part of universal Space of a successive and progressive series of animated and thinking though spiritual beings.<sup>36</sup> The Human Soul with him is a compound of the most spiritual properties of the Monad and the Duad, possessing the highest principles of both. Thus he calls *Unity* and *Duality* (*Monas* and *Duas*) Deities, showing the former as a male Existence, ruling in Heaven as “Father Spirit” and an *uneven* number; and the latter, as a female Existence, Mother Soul, the Mother of the Gods (Aditi?), for she is the Soul of the Universe.<sup>37</sup> But if like Plato and Prodicus, he refers to the Elements as to Divine Powers, and calls them Gods, neither himself nor others connected any anthropomorphic idea with the appellation. Krische remarks that he called them Gods only that these elementary powers should not be confounded with the dæmons of the nether world<sup>38</sup> (the Elementary Spirits). As the Soul of the World permeates the whole Cosmos, even beasts must have in them something divine.<sup>39</sup> This, also, is the doctrine of Buddhists and Hermetists, and Manu endows with a living soul even the plants and the tiniest blade of grass—an absolutely Esoteric doctrine.

The dæmons, according to this theory, are intermediate beings between the divine perfection and human sinfulness,<sup>40</sup> and he divides them into classes, each subdivided into many others. But he states expressly that the individual or personal soul is the leading guardian dæmon of every man, and that no dæmon has more power over us than our own. Thus the Daimonion of Socrates is the God or Divine Entity which inspired him all his life. It depends on man either to open or close his perceptions to the Divine voice. Like Speusippus, he ascribed immortality to the psychical body, or irrational soul. But some Hermetic philosophers have taught that the soul has a separate continued

existence only so long as in its passage through the spheres any material or earthly particles remain incorporated in it; and that when absolutely purified, the latter are annihilated, and the quintessence of the soul alone becomes blended with its divine Spirit, the Rational, and the two are thenceforth one.

It is difficult to fail to see in the above teachings a direct echo of the far older Indian doctrines, now embodied in the so-called "Theosophical" teachings, concerning the dual Manas. The World-Soul,

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<sup>36</sup> Stob., *Ecl.*, i. 62.

<sup>37</sup> Stob: *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Krische: *Forsch.*, p. 322, etc.

<sup>39</sup> Clem: *Stro. Alex.*, v. 590.

<sup>40</sup> Plutarch: *De Isid.*, ch. 25, p. 360.

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that which is called by the Esoteric Yogâchâryas "Father-Mother,"<sup>41</sup> Xenocrates referred to as a male-female Principle, the male element of which, the Father, he designated as the last Zeus, the last divine activity, just as the students of the Secret Doctrine designate it the third and last Logos, Brahmâ or Mahat. To this World-Soul is entrusted dominion over all that which is subject to change and motion. The divine essence, he said, infused its own Fire, or Soul, into the Sun and Moon and all the Planets, in a pure form, in the shape of Olympic Gods. As a sublunary power the World-Soul dwells in the Elements, producing Daimonical (spiritual) powers and beings, who are a connecting link between Gods and men, being related to them "as the isosceles triangle is to the equilateral and the scalene."<sup>42</sup>

Zeller states that Xenocrates forbade the eating of animal food, not because he saw in beasts something akin to man, as he ascribed to them a dim consciousness of God, but

For the opposite reason, lest the irrationality of animal souls might thereby obtain a certain influence over us.<sup>43</sup>

But we believe that it was rather because, like Pythagoras, he had had the Hindû Sages for his Masters and Models. Cicero depicts Xenocrates as utterly

despising everything except the highest virtue;<sup>44</sup> and describes the stainlessness and severe austerity of his character.

To free ourselves from the subjection of sensuous existence, to conquer the Titanic elements in our terrestrial nature through the Divine, is our problem.<sup>45</sup>

Zeller makes him say:

Purity, even in the secret longings of our heart, is the greatest duty, and only Philosophy and Initiation into the Mysteries help toward the attainment of this object.<sup>46</sup>

This must be so, since we find men like Cicero and Panætius, and before them, Aristotle and Theophrastus his disciple, expressed the highest regard for Xenocrates. His writings—treatises on Science, on Metaphysics, Cosmology and Philosophy—must have been legion. He wrote on Physics and the Gods; on the Existent, the One

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<sup>41</sup> See *The Secret Doctrine*, Stanzas, Vol. I.

<sup>42</sup> Cicero. *De Natura Deorum*, i. 13. Strob., or Plut., *De Orac. Defect.*, p. 416, c.

<sup>43</sup> *Plato und die Alte Akademie*.

<sup>44</sup> *Tusc.*, v. 18, 51.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. p. 559.

<sup>46</sup> *Plato und die Alte Akademie*.

and the Indefinite; on Affections and Memory; on Happiness and Virtue; four books on Royalty, and numberless treatises on the State; on the Power of Law; on Geometry, Arithmetic, and finally on Astrology. Dozens of renowned classical writers mention and quote from him.

Crantor, another philosopher associated with the earliest days of Plato's Academy, conceived the human soul as formed out of the primary substance of all things, the Monad or the *One*, and the Duad or the *Two*. Plutarch speaks at length of this Philosopher, who, like his Master, believed in souls being distributed in earthly bodies as an exile and punishment.

Herakleides, though some critics do not believe him to have strictly adhered to Plato's primal philosophy,<sup>47</sup> taught the same ethics. Zeller presents him to

us as imparting, like Hicetas and Ecphantus, the Pythagorean doctrine of the diurnal rotation of the earth and the immobility of the fixed stars, but adds that he was ignorant of the annual revolution of the earth around the sun, and of the heliocentric system.<sup>48</sup> But we have good evidence that the latter system was taught in the Mysteries, and that Socrates died for “atheism,” *i.e.*, for divulging this sacred knowledge. Herakleides adopted fully the Pythagorean and Platonic views of the human soul, its faculties and its capabilities. He describes it as a luminous, highly ethereal essence. He affirms that souls inhabit the milky way before descending into “generation” or sublunary existence. His dæmons, or spirits, are airy and vapourous bodies.

In the *Epinomis* is fully stated the doctrine of the Pythagorean numbers in relation to created things. As a true Platonist, its author maintains that wisdom can only be attained by a thorough enquiry into the Occult nature of the creation; it alone assures us an existence of bliss after death. The immortality of the soul is greatly speculated upon in this treatise; but its author adds that we can attain to this knowledge only through a complete comprehension of numbers; for the man unable to distinguish the straight line from the curved will never have wisdom enough to secure a mathematical demonstration of the invisible, *i.e.*, we must assure ourselves of the objective existence of our soul before we learn that we are in possession of a divine and immortal Spirit. Iamblichus says the same

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<sup>47</sup> Ed. Zeller: *Philos. der Griechen*.

<sup>48</sup> *Plato und die Alte Akadamie*.

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thing; adding, moreover, that it is a secret belonging to the highest Initiation. The Divine Power, he says, always felt indignant with those “who rendered manifest the composition of the *icostagonus*,” *viz.*, who delivered the method of inscribing in a sphere the dodecahedron.

The idea that “numbers” possessing the greatest virtue produce always what is good and never what is evil, refers to justice, equanimity of temper, and everything that is harmonious. When the author speaks of every star as an individual soul, he only means what the Hindû Initiates and Hermetists taught

before and after him, viz., that every star is an independent planet, which, like our earth, has a soul of its own, every atom of Matter being impregnated with the divine influx of the Soul of the World. It breathes and lives; it feels and suffers as well as enjoys life in its way. What naturalist is prepared to dispute it on good evidence? Therefore, we must consider the celestial bodies as the images of Gods; as partaking of the divine powers in their substance; and though they are not immortal in their soul-entity, their agency in the economy of the universe is entitled to divine honours, such as we pay to minor Gods. The idea is plain, and one must be malevolent indeed to misrepresent it. If the author of *Epinomis* places these fiery Gods higher than the animals, plants, and even mankind, all of which, as earthly creatures, are assigned by him a lower place, who can prove him wholly wrong? One must needs go deep indeed into the profundity of the abstract metaphysics of the old Philosophies, who would understand that their various embodiments of their conceptions are, after all, based upon an identical apprehension of the nature of the First Cause, its attributes and method.

When the author of *Epinomis*, along with so many other Philosophers, locates between the highest and the lowest Gods three classes of Daimons, and peoples the Universe with hosts of sublimated Beings, he is more rational than the modern Materialist. The latter, making between the two extremes—the unknown and the invisible, hence, according to his logic, the *non-existent*, and the objective and the sensuous—one vast hiatus of being and the playground of blind forces, may seek to explain his attitude on the grounds of “scientific Agnosticism”; yet he will never succeed in proving that the latter is consistent with logic, or even with simple common sense.

*Lucifer*, July, August, 1892

## WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?

THIS question has been so often asked, and misconception so widely prevails, that the editors of a journal devoted to an exposition of the world’s Theosophy would be remiss were its first number issued without coming to a full understanding with their readers. But our heading involves two further

queries: What is the Theosophical Society; and what are the Theosophists? To each an answer will be given.

According to lexicographers, the term *theosophia* is composed of two Greek words—*theos*, “god,” and *sophos*, “wise.” So far, correct. But the explanations that follow are far from giving a clear idea of Theosophy. Webster defines it most originally as “a supposed intercourse with God and superior spirits, and consequent attainment of superhuman knowledge, by *physical processes*, as by the theurgic operations of some ancient Platonists, or by the *chemical processes* of the German fire-philosophers.”

This, to say the least, is a poor and flippant explanation. To attribute such ideas to men like Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Jamblichus, Porphyry, Proclus—shows either intentional misrepresentation, or Mr. Webster’s ignorance of the philosophy and motives of the greatest geniuses of the later Alexandrian School. To impute to those whom their contemporaries as well as posterity styled “theo-didaktoi,” god-taught—a purpose to develop their psychological, spiritual perceptions by “physical processes,” is to describe them as materialists. As to the concluding fling at the fire-philosophers, it rebounds from them to fall home among our most eminent modern men of science; those, in whose mouths the Rev. James Martineau places the following boast: “matter is all we want; give us atoms alone, and we will explain the universe.”

Vaughan offers a far better, more philosophical definition. “A Theosophist,” he says—“is one who gives you a theory of God or the works of God, which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis.” In this view every great thinker and philosopher, especially every founder of a new religion, school of philosophy, or sect, is necessarily a Theosophist. Hence, Theosophy and Theosophists have existed ever since the first glimmering of nascent thought

made man seek instinctively for the means of expressing his own independent opinions.



There were Theosophists before the Christian era, notwithstanding that the Christian writers ascribe the development of the Eclectic theosophical system to the early part of the third century of their Era. Diogenes Laertius traces Theosophy to an epoch antedating the dynasty of the Ptolemies; and names as its founder an Egyptian Hierophant called Pot-Amun, the name being Coptic and signifying a priest consecrated to Amun, the god of Wisdom. But history shows it revived by Ammonius Saccas, the founder of the Neo-Platonic School. He and his disciples called themselves "Philalethians"—lovers of the truth; while others termed them the "Analogists," on account of their method of interpreting all sacred legends, symbolical myths and mysteries, by a rule of analogy or correspondence, so that events which had occurred in the external world were regarded as expressing operations and experiences of the human soul. It was the aim and purpose of Ammonius to reconcile all sects, peoples and nations under one common faith—a belief in one Supreme Eternal, Unknown, and Unnamed Power, governing the Universe by immutable and eternal laws. His object was to prove a primitive system of Theosophy, which at the beginning was essentially alike in all countries; to induce all men to lay aside their strifes and quarrels, and unite in purpose and thought as the children of one common mother; to purify the ancient religions, by degrees corrupted and obscured, from all dross of human element, by uniting and expounding them upon pure philosophical principles. Hence, the Buddhistic, Vedantic and Magian, or Zoroastrian, systems were taught in the Eclectic Theosophical School along with all the philosophies of Greece. Hence also, the pre-eminently Buddhistic and Indian feature among the ancient Theosophists and Alexandria, of due reverence for parents and aged persons; a fraternal affection for the whole human race; and a compassionate feeling for even the dumb animals. While seeking to establish a system of moral discipline which enforced upon people the duty to live according to the laws of their respective countries; to exalt their minds by the research and contemplation of the one Absolute Truth; his chief object in order, as he believed, to achieve all others, was to extract from the various religious teachings, as from a many-chorded instrument, one full and harmonious melody, which would find response in every truth-loving heart.

known in every ancient country having claims to civilization. This "Wisdom" all the old writings show us as an emanation of the divine Principle; and the clear comprehension of it is typified in such names as the Indian Buddh, the Babylonian Nebo, the Thoth of Memphis, the Hermes of Greece; in the appellations, also, of some goddesses—Metis, Neitha, Athena, the Gnostic *Sophia*, and finally—the Vedas, from the word "to know." Under this designation, all the ancient philosophers of the East and West, the Hierophants of old Egypt, the Rishis of Aryavart, the Theodidaktoi of Greece, included all knowledge of things occult and essentially divine. The *Mercavah* of the Hebrew Rabbis, the secular and popular series, were thus designated as only the vehicle, the outward shell which contained the higher esoteric knowledge. The Magi of Zoroaster received instruction and were initiated in the caves and secret lodges of Bactria; the Egyptian and Grecian hierophants had their *aporrheta*, or secret discourses, during which the *Mysta* became an *Epopta*—a Seer.

The central idea of the Eclectic Theosophy was that of a single Supreme Essence, Unknown and *Unknowable*—for—"How could one know the knower?" as enquires *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. Their system was characterized by three distinct features: the theory of the above-named Essence; the doctrine of the human soul—an emanation from the latter, hence of the same nature; and its theurgy. It is this last science which has led the Neo-Platonists to be so misrepresented in our era of materialistic science. Theurgy being essentially the art of applying the divine powers of man to the subordination of the blind forces of nature, its votaries were first termed magicians—a corruption of the word "Magh," signifying a wise, or learned man, and—derided. Skeptics of a century ago would have been as wide of the mark if they had laughed at the idea of a phonograph or telegraph. The ridiculed and the "infidels" of one generation generally become the wise men and saints of the next.

As regards the Divine essence and the nature of the soul and spirit, modern Theosophy believes now as ancient Theosophy did. The popular *Diu* of the Aryan nations was identical with the *Iao* of the Chaldeans, and even with the Jupiter of the less learned and philosophical among the Romans; and it was just as identical with the *Jahve* of the Samaritans, the *Tiu* or "Tiusco" of the Northmen, the

Duod of the Britains, and the Zeus of the Thracians. As to the Absolute Essence, the One and all—whether we accept the Greek Pythagorean, the Chaldean Kabalistic, or the Aryan philosophy in regard to it, it will lead to one and the same result. The Primeval Monad of the Pythagorean system, which retires into darkness and is itself Darkness (for human intellect) was made the basis of all things; and we can find the idea in all its integrity in the philosophical systems of Leibnitz and Spinoza. Therefore, whether a Theosophist agrees with the Kabala which, speaking of En-Soph propounds the query: “Who, then, can comprehend It since It is formless, and Non-existent?”—or, remembering that magnificent hymn from the Rig-Veda (Hymn 129th, Book 10th)—enquires:

“Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?

Whether his will created or was mute.

He knows it—or perchance *even He knows not;*”

or again, accepts the Vedantic conception of Brahma, who in the *Upanishads* is represented as “without life, without mind, pure,” *unconscious*, for—Brahma is “Absolute Consciousness”; or, even finally, siding with the Svabhâvikas of Nepaul, maintains that nothing exists but “Svabhâvât” (substance or nature) which exists by *itself* without any creator; any one of the above conceptions can lead but to pure and absolute Theosophy—that Theosophy which prompted such men as Hegel, Fichte and Spinoza to take up the labors of the old Grecian philosophers and speculate upon the One Substance—the Deity, the *Divine All* proceeding from the Divine Wisdom—incomprehensible, unknown and *unnamed*—by any ancient or modern religious philosophy, with the exception of Christianity and Mohammedanism. Every Theosophist, then, holding to a theory of the Deity “which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis,” may accept any of the above definitions or belong to any of these religions, and yet remain strictly within the boundaries of Theosophy. For the latter is belief in the Deity as the all, the source of all existence, the infinite that cannot be either comprehended or known, the universe alone revealing *It*, or, as some prefer it, *Him*, thus giving a sex to that, to anthropomorphize which is *blasphemy*. True, Theosophy shrinks from brutal materialization; it prefers believing that, from eternity retired within itself, the Spirit of the Deity neither wills nor creates; but that, from the infinite effulgency

everywhere going forth from the Great Centre, that which produces all visible and invisible things, is but a Ray containing in itself the generative and conceptive power, which, in its turn, produces

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that which the Greeks called *Macrocosm*, the Kabalists *Tikkun* or Adam Kadmon—the archetypal man, and the Aryans *Purusha*, the manifested Brahm, or the Divine Male. Theosophy believes also in the *Anastasis* or continued existence, and in transmigration (evolution) or a series of changes in the soul<sup>1</sup> which can be defended and explained on strict philosophical principles; and only by making a distinction between *Paramâtma* (transcendental, supreme soul) and *Jivâtma* (animal, or conscious soul) of the Vedantins.

To fully define Theosophy, we must consider it under all its aspects. The interior world has not been hidden from all by impenetrable darkness. By that higher intuition acquired by *Theosophia*—or God-knowledge, which carried the mind from the world of form into that of formless spirit, man has been sometimes enabled in every age and every country to perceive things in the interior or invisible world. Hence, the “Samadhi,” or *Dyan Yog Samadhi*, of the Hindu ascetics; the “Daimonion-photi,” or spiritual illumination of the Neo-Platonists; the “sidereal confabulation of soul,” of the Rosicrucians or Fire-philosophers; and, even the ecstatic trance of mystics and of the modern mesmerists and spiritualists, are identical in nature, though various as to manifestation. The search after man’s diviner “self,” so often and so erroneously interpreted as individual communion with a personal God, was the object of every mystic, and belief in its possibility seems to have been coeval with the genesis of humanity, each people giving it another name. Thus Plato and Plotinus call “Noëtic work” that which the Yogin and the Shrotriya term *Vidya*. “By reflection, self-knowledge and intellectual discipline, the soul can be raised to the vision of eternal truth, goodness, and beauty—that is, to the *Vision of God*—this is the *epopteia*,” said the Greeks. “To unite one’s soul to the Universal Soul,” says Porphyry, “requires but a perfectly pure mind. Through self-contemplation, perfect chastity, and purity of body, we may approach nearer to It, and receive, in that state, true knowledge and wonderful insight.” And Swami Dayanand Saraswati, who has read neither Porphyry nor other Greek authors, but who is a thorough Vedic scholar, says in

his *Veda Bháshya* (opasna prakaru ank. 9) —“To obtain Diksh (highest initiation) and *Yog*, one has to practise according to

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<sup>1</sup> In a series of articles entitled “The World’s Great Theosophists,” we intend showing that from Pythagoras, who got his wisdom in India, down to our best known modern philosophers and theosophists—David Hume, and Shelley, the English poet—the Spiritists of France included—many believed and yet believe in metempsychosis or reincarnation of the soul; however unelaborated the system of the Spiritists may fairly be regarded.

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the rules . . . The soul in human body can perform the greatest wonders by knowing the Universal Spirit (or God) and acquainting itself with the properties and qualities (occult) of all the things in the universe. A human being (a *Dikshit* or initiate) can thus *acquire a power of seeing and hearing at great distances*” Finally, Alfred R. Wallace, F.R.S., a spiritualist and yet a confessedly great naturalist, says, with brave candour: “It is ‘spirit’ that alone feels, and perceives, and thinks—that acquires knowledge, and reasons and aspires . . . there not unfrequently occur individuals so constituted that the spirit can perceive independently of the corporeal organs of sense, or can perhaps, wholly or partially, quit the body for a time and return to it again . . . the spirit . . . communicates with spirit easier than with matter.” We can now see how, after thousands of years have intervened between the age of Gymnosophists<sup>2</sup> and our own highly civilized era, notwithstanding, or, perhaps, just because of such an enlightenment which pours its radiant light upon the psychological as well as upon the physical realms of nature, over twenty millions of people today believe, under a different form, in those same spiritual powers that were believed in by the Yogins and the Pythagoreans, nearly 3,000 years ago. Thus, while the Aryan mystic claimed for himself the power of solving all the problems of life and death, when he had once obtained the power of acting independently of his body, through the *Atman*—“self,” or “soul”; and the old Greeks went in search of *Atmu*—the Hidden one, or the God-Soul of man, with the symbolical mirror of the Thesmophorian mysteries;—so the spiritualists of today believe in the faculty of the spirits, or the souls of the disembodied persons, to communicate visibly and tangibly with those they loved on earth. And all these, Aryan Yogins, Greek philosophers, and modern spiritualists,

affirm that possibility on the ground that the embodied soul and its never embodied spirit—the real *self*, are not separated from either the Universal Soul or other spirits by space, but merely by the differentiation of their qualities; as in the boundless expanse of the universe there can be no limitation. And that when this difference is once removed—according to the Greeks and Aryans by abstract contemplation, producing the temporary liberation of the imprisoned Soul; and according to spiritualists, through mediumship—such a union between embodied and disembodied spirits becomes possible. Thus was it that Patanjali's

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<sup>2</sup> The reality of the Yog-power was affirmed by many Greek and Roman writers, who call the Yogins Indian Gymnosophists; by Strabo, Lucan, Plutarch, Cicero (*Tusculum*), Pliny (vii, 2), etc.

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Yogis and, following in their steps, Plotinus, Porphyry and other Neo-Platonists, maintained that in their hours of ecstasy, they had been united to, or rather become as one with God, several times during the course of their lives. This idea, erroneous as it may seem in its application to the Universal Spirit, was, and is, claimed by too many great philosophers to be put aside as entirely chimerical. In the case of the Theodidaktoi, the only controvertible point, the dark spot on this philosophy of extreme mysticism, was its claim to include that which is simply ecstatic illumination, under the head of sensuous perception. In the case of the Yogins, who maintained their ability to see Iswara “face to face,” this claim was successfully overthrown by the stern logic of Kapila. As to the similar assumption made for their Greek followers, for a long array of Christian ecstasies, and, finally, for the last two claimants to “God-seeing” within these last hundred years—Jacob Böhme and Swedenborg—this pretension would and *should* have been philosophically and logically questioned, if a few of our great men of science who are spiritualists had had more interest in the philosophy than in the mere phenomenalism of spiritualism.

The Alexandrian Theosophists were divided into neophytes, initiates, and masters, or hierophants; and their rules were copied from the ancient Mysteries of Orpheus, who, according to Herodotus, brought them from India. Ammonius obligated his disciples by oath not to divulge his *higher* doctrines,

except to those who were proved thoroughly worthy and initiated, and who had learned to regard the gods, the angels, and the demons of other peoples, according to the esoteric *hyponia*, or under-meaning. "The gods exist, but they are not what the *hoi polloi*, the uneducated multitude, suppose them to be," says Epicurus. "He is not an atheist who denies the existence of the gods whom the multitude worship, but he is such who fastens on these gods the opinions of the multitude." In his turn, Aristotle declares that of the "Divine Essence pervading the whole world of nature, what are styled the *gods* are simply the first principles."

Plotinus, the pupil of the "God-taught" Ammonius, tells us that the secret *gnosis* or the knowledge of Theosophy, has three degrees — opinion, science, and *illumination*. "The means or instrument of the first is sense, or perception; of the second, dialectics; of the third, intuition. To the last, reason is subordinate; it is *absolute knowledge*, founded on the identification of the mind with the object known."

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Theosophy is the exact science of psychology, so to say; it stands in relation to natural, uncultivated mediumship, as the knowledge of a Tyndall stands to that of a school-boy in physics. It develops in man a direct beholding; that which Schelling denominates "a realization of the identity of subject and object in the individual"; so that under the influence and knowledge of *hyponia* man thinks divine thoughts, views all things as they really are, and, finally, "becomes recipient of the Soul of the World," to use one of the finest expressions of Emerson. "I, the imperfect, adore my own perfect" — he says in his superb Essay on the *Oversoul*. Besides this psychological, or soul-state, Theosophy cultivated every branch of sciences and arts. It was thoroughly familiar with what is now commonly known as mesmerism. Practical theurgy or "ceremonial magic," so often resorted to in their exorcisms by the Roman Catholic clergy—was discarded by the theosophists. It is but Jamblichus alone who, transcending the other Eclectics, added to Theosophy the doctrine of Theurgy. When ignorant of the true meaning of the esoteric divine symbols of nature, man is apt to miscalculate the powers of his soul, and, instead of communing spiritually and mentally with the higher, celestial beings, the good spirits (the gods of the theurgists of the Platonic school), he will unconsciously call forth the evil, dark

powers which lurk around humanity—the undying, grim creations of human crimes and vices—and thus fall from *theurgia* (white magic) into *göetia* (or black magic, sorcery). Yet, neither white, nor black magic are what popular superstition understands by the terms. The possibility of “raising spirits” according to the key of Solomon, is the height of superstition and ignorance. Purity of deed and thought can alone raise us to an intercourse “with the gods” and attain for us the goal we desire. Alchemy, believed by so many to have been a spiritual philosophy as well as physical science, belonged to the teachings of the theosophical school.

It is a noticeable fact that neither Zoroaster, Buddha, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Confucius, Socrates, nor Ammonius Saccas, committed anything to writing. The reason for it is obvious. Theosophy is a double-edged weapon and unfit for the ignorant or the selfish. Like every ancient philosophy it has its votaries among the moderns; but, until late in our own days, its disciples were few in numbers, and of the most various sects and opinions. “Entirely speculative, and founding no school, they have still exercised a silent influence upon philosophy; and no doubt, when the time arrives, many ideas thus

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silently propounded may yet give new directions to human thought” — remarks Mr. Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie IX<sup>o</sup> . . . himself a mystic and a Theosophist, in his large and valuable work, *The Royal Masonic Cyclopædia* (articles *Theosophical Society of New York* and *Theosophy*, p. 731).<sup>3</sup> Since the days of the fire-philosophers, they had never formed themselves into societies, for, tracked like wild beasts by the Christian clergy, to be known as a Theosophist often amounted, hardly a century ago, to a death-warrant. The statistics show that, during a period of 150 years, no less than 90,000 men and women were burned in Europe for alleged witchcraft. In Great Britain only, from A.D. 1640 to 1660, but twenty years, 3,000 persons were put to death for compact with the “Devil.” It was but late in the present century—in 1875—that some progressed mystics and spiritualists, unsatisfied with the theories and explanations of Spiritualism, started by its votaries, and finding that they were far from covering the whole ground of the wide range of phenomena, formed at New York, America, an association which is now widely known as the Theosophical Society. And now, having explained what is Theosophy, we will, in a separate article, explain what



is the nature of our Society, which is also called the “Universal Brotherhood of Humanity.”

*Theosophist*, October, 1879

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<sup>3</sup> *The Royal Masonic Cyclopædia of History, Rites, Symbolism, and Biography*. Edited by Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie IX<sup>o</sup> (Cryptonymous), Hon. Member of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, No. 2, Scotland. New York, J. W. Bouton, 706 Broadway, 1877

## WHAT ARE THE THEOSOPHISTS ?

ARE they what they claim to be—students of natural law, of ancient and modern philosophy, and even of exact science? Are they Deists, Atheists, Socialists, Materialists, or Idealists; or are they but a schism of modern Spiritualism,—mere visionaries? Are they entitled to any consideration, as capable of discussing philosophy and promoting real science; or should they be treated with the compassionate toleration which one gives to “harmless enthusiasts”? The Theosophical Society has been variously charged with a belief in “miracles,” and “miracle-working”; with a secret political object—like the Carbonari; with being spies of an autocratic Czar; with preaching socialistic and nihilistic doctrines; and, *mirabile dictu*, with having a covert understanding with the French Jesuits, to disrupt modern Spiritualism for a pecuniary consideration! With equal violence they have been denounced as dreamers, by the American Positivists; as fetish-worshippers, by some of the New York press; as revivalists of “mouldy superstitions,” by the Spiritualists; as infidel emissaries of Satan, by the Christian Church; as the very types of “gobe-

*mouche*," by Professor W. B. Carpenter, F.R.S.; and, finally, and most absurdly, some Hindu opponents, with a view to lessening their influence, have flatly charged them with the employment of *demons* to perform certain phenomena. Out of all this pother of opinions, one fact stands conspicuous—the Society, its members, and their views, are deemed of enough importance to be discussed and denounced: *Men slander only those whom they hate—or fear.*

But, if the Society has had its enemies and traducers, it has also had its friends and advocates. For every word of censure, there has been a word of praise. Beginning with a party of about a dozen earnest men and women, a month later its members had so increased as to necessitate the hiring of a public hall for its meetings; within two years, it had working branches in European countries. Still later, it found itself in alliance with the Indian Arya Samaj, headed by the learned Pandit Dayanand Saraswati Swami, and the Ceylonese Buddhists, WHAT ARE THE THEOSOPHISTS ? p. 49 under the erudite H. Sumangala, High Priest of Adam's Peak and President of the Widyodaya College, Colombo.

He who would seriously attempt to fathom the psychological sciences, must come to the sacred land of ancient Aryâvarta. None is older than she in esoteric wisdom and civilization, however fallen may be her poor shadow—modern India. Holding this country, as we do, for the fruitful hot-bed whence proceeded all subsequent philosophical systems, to this source of all psychology and philosophy a portion of our Society has come to learn its ancient wisdom and ask for the impartation of its weird secrets. Philology has made too much progress to require at this late day a demonstration of this fact of the primogenitive nationality of Aryâvart. The unproved and prejudiced hypothesis of modern Chronology is not worthy of a moment's thought, and it will vanish in time like so many other unproved hypotheses. The line of philosophical heredity, from Kapila through Epicurus to James Mill; from Patanjali through Plotinus to Jacob Böhme, can be traced like the course of a river through a landscape. One of the objects of the Society's organization was to examine the too transcendent views of the Spiritualists in regard to the powers of disembodied spirits; and, having told them what, in our opinion at least, a portion of their phenomena are *not*, it will become incumbent upon us now to show what they are. So apparent is it that it is in the East, and especially

in India, that the key to the alleged “supernatural” phenomena of the Spiritualists must be sought, that it has recently been conceded in the *Allahabad Pioneer* (Aug. 11th, 1879), an Anglo-Indian daily journal which has not the reputation of saying what it does not mean. Blaming the men of science who “intent upon physical discovery, for some generations have been too prone to neglect super-physical investigation,” it mentions “the new wave of doubt” (spiritualism) which has “latterly disturbed this conviction.” To a large number of persons including many of high culture and intelligence, it adds, “the supernatural has again asserted itself as a fit subject of inquiry and research. And there are plausible hypotheses in favour of the idea that among the ‘sages’ of the East . . . there may be found in a higher degree than among the more modernised inhabitants of the West traces of those personal peculiarities, whatever they may be, which are required as a condition precedent to the occurrence of supernatural phenomena.” And then, unaware that the cause he pleads is one of the chief aims and objects of our Society, the editorial writer remarks

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that it is “the only direction in which, it seems to us, the efforts of the Theosophists in India might possibly be useful. The leading members of the Theosophical Society in India are known to be very advanced students of occult phenomena, already, and we cannot but hope that their professions of interest in Oriental philosophy . . . may cover a reserved intention of carrying out explorations of the kind we indicate.”

While, as observed, one of our objects, it yet is but one of many; the most important of which is to revive the work of Ammonius Saccas, and make various nations remember that they are the children “of one mother.” As to the transcendental side of the ancient Theosophy, it is also high time that the Theosophical Society should explain. With how much, then, of this nature-searching, God-seeking science of the ancient Aryan and Greek mystics, and of the powers of modern spiritual mediumship, does the Society agree? Our answer is: with it all. But if asked what it believes in, the reply will be: “*As a body—Nothing.*” The Society, as a body, has no creed, as creeds are but the shells around spiritual knowledge; and Theosophy in its fruition is spiritual knowledge itself—the very essence of philosophical and theistic enquiry.

Visible representative of Universal Theosophy, it can be no more sectarian than a Geographical Society, which represents universal geographical exploration without caring whether the explorers be of one creed or another. The religion of the Society is an algebraical equation, in which so long as the sign = of equality is not omitted, each member is allowed to substitute quantities of his own, which better accord with climatic and other exigencies of his native land, with the idiosyncrasies of his people, or even with his own. Having no accepted creed, our Society is very ready to give and take, to learn and teach, by practical experimentation, as opposed to mere passive and credulous acceptance of enforced dogma. It is willing to accept every result claimed by any of the foregoing schools or systems, that can be logically and experimentally demonstrated. Conversely, it can take nothing on mere faith, no matter by whom the demand may be made.

But, when we come to consider ourselves individually, it is quite another thing. The Society's members represent the most varied nationalities and races, and were born and educated in the most dissimilar creeds and social conditions. Some of them believe in one thing, others in another. Some incline towards the ancient *magic*, or secret wisdom that was taught in the sanctuaries, which was

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the very opposite of supernaturalism or diabolism; others in modern spiritualism, or intercourse with the spirits of the dead; still others in mesmerism or animal magnetism, or only an occult dynamic force in nature. A certain number have scarcely yet acquired any definite belief, but are in a state of attentive expectancy; and there are even those who call themselves materialists, in a certain sense. Of atheists and bigoted sectarians of any religion, there are none in the Society; for the very fact of a man's joining it proves that he is in search of the final truth as to the ultimate essence of things. If there be such a thing as a speculative atheist, which philosophers may deny, he would have to reject both cause and effect, whether in this world of matter, or in that of spirit. There may be members who, like the poet Shelley, have let their imagination soar from cause to prior cause *ad infinitum*, as each in its turn became logically transformed into a result necessitating a prior cause, until they have thinned the Eternal into a mere mist. But even they are not atheist in the

speculative sense, whether they identify the material forces of the universe with the functions with which the theists endow their God, or otherwise; for once that they cannot free themselves from the conception of the abstract ideal of power, cause, necessity, and effect, they can be considered as atheists only in respect to a personal God, and not to the Universal Soul of the Pantheist. On the other hand the bigoted sectarian, fenced in, as he is, with a creed upon every paling of which is written the warning "No Thoroughfare," can neither come out of his enclosure to join the Theosophical Society, nor, if he could, has it room for one whose very religion forbids examination. The very root idea of the Society is free and fearless investigation.

As a body, the Theosophical Society holds that all original thinkers and investigators of the hidden side of nature whether materialists—those who find in matter "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life," or spiritualists—that is, those who discover in spirit the source of all energy and of matter as well, were and are, properly, Theosophists. For to be one, one need not necessarily recognize the existence of any special God or a deity. One need but worship the spirit of living nature, and try to identify oneself with it. To revere that *Presence*, the invisible Cause, which is yet ever manifesting itself in its incessant results; the intangible, omnipotent, and omnipresent Proteus: indivisible in its Essence, and eluding form, yet appearing under all and every form; who is here and there, and everywhere and nowhere; is All, and Nothing; ubiquitous yet one;

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the Essence filling, binding, bounding, containing everything, contained in all. It will, we think, be seen now, that whether classed as Theists, Pantheists or Atheists, such men are near kinsmen to the rest. Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought—Godward—he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth with "an inspiration of his own" to solve the universal problems.

With every man that is earnestly searching in his own way after a knowledge of the Divine Principle, of man's relations to it, and nature's manifestations of it, Theosophy is allied. It is likewise the ally of honest science, as distinguished

from much that passes for *exact*, physical science, so long as the latter does not poach on the domains of psychology and metaphysics.

And it is also the ally of every honest religion—to wit, a religion willing to be judged by the same tests as it applies to the others. Those books, which contain the most self-evident truth, are to it inspired (not revealed). But all books it regards, on account of the human element contained in them, as inferior to the Book of Nature; to read which and comprehend it correctly, the innate powers of the soul must be highly developed. Ideal laws can be perceived by the intuitive faculty alone; they are beyond the domain of argument and dialectics, and no one can understand or rightly appreciate them through the explanations of another mind, even though this mind be claiming a direct revelation. And, as this Society, which allows the widest sweep in the realms of the pure ideal, is no less firm in the sphere of facts, its deference to modern science and its just representatives is sincere. Despite all their lack of a higher spiritual intuition, the world's debt to the representatives of modern physical science is immense; hence, the Society endorses heartily the noble and indignant protest of that gifted and eloquent preacher, the Rev. O. B. Frothingham, against those who try to undervalue the services of our great naturalists. "Talk of Science as being irreligious, atheistic," he exclaimed in a recent lecture, delivered at New York, "Science is creating a new idea of God. It is due to Science that we have any conception at all of a *living* God. If we do not become atheists one of these days under the maddening effect of Protestantism, it will be due to Science, because it is disabusing us of hideous illusions that tease and embarrass us, and putting us in the way of knowing how to reason about the things we see. . . ."

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And it is also due to the unremitting labors of such Orientalists as Sir W. Jones, Max Müller, Burnouf, Colebrooke, Haug, St. Hilaire, and so many others, that the Society, as a body, feels equal respect and veneration for Vedic, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, and other old religions of the world; and, a like brotherly feeling toward its Hindu, Sinhalese, Parsi, Jain, Hebrew, and Christian members as individual students of "self," of nature, and of the divine in nature.

Born in the United States of America, the Society was constituted on the model of its Mother Land. The latter, omitting the name of God from its constitution lest it should afford a pretext one day to make a state religion, gives

absolute equality to all religions in its laws. All support and each is in turn protected by the State. The Society, modelled upon this constitution, may fairly be termed a "Republic of Conscience."

We have now, we think, made clear why our members, as individuals, are free to stay outside or inside any creed they please, provided they do not pretend that none but themselves shall enjoy the privilege of conscience, and try to force their opinions upon the others. In this respect the Rules of the Society are very strict: It tries to act upon the wisdom of the old Buddhistic axiom, "Honour thine own faith, and do not slander that of others"; echoed back in our present century, in the "Declaration of Principles" of the Brahmo Samaj, which so nobly states that: "no sect shall be vilified, ridiculed, or hated." In Section VI of the Revised Rules of the Theosophical Society, recently adopted in General Council, at Bombay, is this mandate:

It is not lawful for any officer of the Parent Society to express, by word or act, any hostility to, or preference for, any one section (sectarian division, or group within the Society) more than another. All must be regarded and treated as equally the objects of the Society's solicitude and exertions. All have an equal right to have the essential features of their religious belief laid before the tribunal of an impartial world.

In their individual capacity, members may, when attacked, occasionally break this Rule, but, nevertheless, as officers they are restrained, and the Rule is strictly enforced during the meetings. For, above all human sects stands Theosophy in its abstract sense; Theosophy which is too wide for any of them to contain but which easily contains them.

In conclusion, we may state that, broader and far more universal  
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in its views than any existing mere scientific Society, it has *plus* science its belief in every possibility, and determined will to penetrate into those unknown spiritual regions which exact science pretends that its votaries have no business to explore. And, it has one quality more than any religion in that it makes no difference between Gentile, Jew, or Christian. It is in this spirit that the Society has been established upon the footing of a Universal Brotherhood.

Unconcerned about politics; hostile to the insane dreams of Socialism and of Communism, which it abhors—as both are but disguised conspiracies of brutal force and sluggishness against honest labour; the Society cares but little about the outward human management of the material world. The whole of its aspirations are directed towards the occult truths of the visible and invisible worlds. Whether the physical man be under the rule of an empire or a republic, concerns only the man of matter. His body may be enslaved; as to his soul, he has the right to give to his rulers the proud answer of Socrates to his judges. They have no sway over the *inner* man.

Such, then, is the Theosophical Society, and such its principles, its multifarious aims, and its objects. Need we wonder at the past misconceptions of the general public, and the easy hold the enemy has been able to find to lower it in the public estimation. The true student has ever been a recluse, a man of silence and meditation. With the busy world his habits and tastes are so little in common that, while he is studying, his enemies and slanderers have undisturbed opportunities. But time cures all and lies are but ephemera. Truth alone is eternal.

About a few of the Fellows of the Society who have made great scientific discoveries, and some others to whom the psychologist and the biologist are indebted for the new light thrown upon the darker problems of the inner man, we will speak later on. Our object now was but to prove to the reader that Theosophy is neither “a new fangled doctrine,” a political cabal, nor one of those societies of enthusiasts which are born today but to die tomorrow. That not all of its members can think alike, is proved by the Society having organized into two great Divisions—the Eastern and the Western—and the latter being divided into numerous sections, according to races and religious views. One man’s thought, infinitely various as are its manifestations, is not all-embracing. Denied ubiquity, it must necessarily speculate but in one direction; and once

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boundaries of exact human knowledge, it has to err and wander, for the ramifications of the one Central and absolute Truth are infinite. Hence, we occasionally find even the greater philosophers losing themselves in the labyrinths of speculations, thereby provoking the criticism of posterity. But as all work for one and the same object, namely, the disenthralment of human



thought, the elimination of superstitions, and the discovery of truth, all are equally welcome. The attainment of these objects, all agree, can best be secured by convincing the reason and warming the enthusiasm of the generation of fresh young minds, that are just ripening into maturity, and making ready to take the place of their prejudiced and conservative fathers. And, as each—the great ones as well as small—have trodden the royal road to knowledge, we listen to all, and take both small and great into our fellowship. For no honest searcher comes back empty-handed, and even he who has enjoyed the least share of popular favor can lay at least his mite upon the one altar of Truth.

*Theosophist*, October, 1879

### IS THEOSOPHY A RELIGION?

“Religion is the best armour that man can have,  
but it is the worst cloak.” —Bunyan

IT is no exaggeration to say that there never was—during the present century, at any rate—a movement, social or religious, so terribly, nay, so absurdly misunderstood, or more blundered about than Theosophy—whether regarded theoretically as a code of ethics, or practically, in its objective expression, *i.e.*, the Society known by that name.

Year after year, and day after day had our officers and members to interrupt people speaking of the theosophical movement by putting in more or less emphatic protests against theosophy being referred to as a “religion,” and the Theosophical Society as a kind of church or religious body. Still worse, it is as often spoken of as a “new sect”! Is it a stubborn prejudice, an error, or both? The latter, most likely. The most narrow-minded and even notoriously unfair people are still in need of a plausible pretext, of a peg on which to hang their little uncharitable remarks and innocently-uttered slanders. And what peg is more solid for that purpose, more convenient than an “ism” or a “sect.” The great majority would be very sorry to be disabused and finally forced to accept

the fact that theosophy is neither. The name suits them, and they pretend to be unaware of its falseness. But there are others, also, many more or less friendly people, who labour sincerely under the same delusion. To these, we say: Surely the world has been hitherto sufficiently cursed with the intellectual extinguishers known as dogmatic creeds, without having inflicted upon it a new form of faith! Too many already wear their faith, truly, as Shakespeare puts it, "but as the fashion of his hat," ever changing "with the next block." Moreover, the very *raison d'être* of the Theosophical Society was, from its beginning, to utter a loud protest and lead an open warfare against dogma or any belief based upon blind faith.

It may sound odd and paradoxical, but it is true to say that, hitherto, the most apt workers in practical theosophy, its most devoted members were those recruited from the ranks of agnostics and even

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of materialists. No genuine, no sincere searcher after truth can ever be found among the *blind* believers in the "Divine Word," let the latter be claimed to come from Allah, Brahma or Jehovah, or their respective Kuran, Purana and Bible. For:

Faith is not *reason's* labour, but repose.

He who believes his own religion on faith, will regard that of every other man as a lie, and hate it on that same faith. Moreover, unless it fetters reason and entirely blinds our perceptions of anything outside our own particular faith, the latter is no faith at all, but a temporary belief, the delusion we labour under, at some particular time of life. Moreover, "faith without principles is but a flattering phrase for willful positiveness or fanatical bodily sensations," in Coleridge's clever definition.

What, then, is Theosophy, and how may it be defined in its latest presentation in this closing portion of the XIXth century?

Theosophy, we say, is not *a* Religion.

Yet there are, as everyone knows, certain beliefs, philosophical, religious and scientific, which have become so closely associated in recent years with the word "Theosophy" that they have come to be taken by the general public for theosophy itself. Moreover, we shall be told these beliefs have been put forward, explained and defended by those very Founders who have declared that Theosophy is *not* a Religion. What is then the explanation of this *apparent* contradiction? How can a certain body of beliefs and teachings, an elaborate doctrine, in fact, be labelled "Theosophy" and be tacitly accepted as "Theosophical" by nine-tenths of the members of the T.S., if Theosophy is not a Religion?—we are asked.

To explain this is the purpose of the present protest.

It is perhaps necessary, first of all, to say, that the assertion that "Theosophy is not a Religion," by no means excludes the fact that "Theosophy is Religion" itself. A Religion in the true and only correct sense, is a bond uniting men together—not a particular set of dogmas and beliefs. Now Religion, *per se*, in its widest meaning is that which binds not only *all* men, but also *all* beings and all *things* in the entire Universe into one grand whole. This is our theosophical definition of religion; but the same definition changes again with every creed and country, and no two Christians even regard it alike. We find this in more than one eminent author. Thus Carlyle defined

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the Protestant Religion in his day, with a remarkable prophetic eye to this ever-growing feeling in our present day, as:

For the most part a wise, prudential feeling, grounded on mere calculation; a matter, as all others now are, of expediency and utility; whereby some smaller *quantum* of earthly enjoyment may be exchanged for a far larger *quantum* of celestial enjoyment. Thus religion, too, is profit, a working for wages; not reverence, but vulgar hope or fear.

In her turn Mrs. Stowe, whether consciously or otherwise, seemed to have had Roman Catholicism rather than Protestantism in her mind, when saying of her heroine that:

Religion she looked upon in the light of a ticket (with the correct number of indulgences bought and paid for), which, being once purchased and snugly laid away in a pocket-book, is to be produced at the celestial gate, and thus secure admission to heaven....

But to Theosophists (the genuine Theosophists are here meant) who accept no mediation by proxy, no salvation through innocent bloodshed, nor would they think of “working for wages” in the *One Universal* religion, the only definition they could subscribe to and accept in full is one given by Miller. How truly and theosophically he

describes it, by showing that

. . . true Religion  
Is always mild, propitious and humble;  
Plays not *the tyrant*, plants *no faith in blood*,  
Nor bears destruction on her chariot wheels;  
But stoops to polish, succour and redress,

*And builds her grandeur on the public good.*

The above is a correct definition of what true theosophy *is*, or ought to be. (Among the creeds Buddhism alone is such a true heart-binding and men-binding philosophy, because it is not a dogmatic religion.) In this respect, as it is the duty and task of every genuine theosophist to accept and carry out these principles, Theosophy *is* Religion, and the Society its one Universal Church; the temple of Solomon’s wisdom,\* in building which “there was neither hammer,

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\* Whose 700 wives and 300 concubines, by the bye, are merely the personations of man’s attributes, feelings, passions and his various occult powers: the Kabalistic numbers 7 and 3 showing it plainly. Solomon himself, moreover, being, simply, the emblem of Sol—the “Solar Initiate” or the Christ-Sun, is a variant of the Indian “Vikarttana” (the Sun) shorn of his beams by Viswakarma, his Hierophant-Initiator, who thus shears the *Chrestos-candidate* for initiation of his golden radiance and crowns him with a dark, blackened auréole—the “crown of thorns.” (See the “Secret Doctrine” for full explanation.) Solomon was never a living man. As described in *Kings*, his life and works are an allegory on the trials and glory of Initiation.

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nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building” (I Kings,

vi.); for this “temple” is made by no human hand, nor built in any locality on earth—but, verily, is raised only in the inner sanctuary of man’s heart wherein reigns alone the awakened soul.

Thus Theosophy is not *a* Religion, we say, but Religion itself, the one bond of unity, which is so universal and all-embracing that no man, as no speck—from gods and mortals down to animals, the blade of grass and atom—can be outside of its light. Therefore, any organization or body of that name must necessarily be a universal BROTHERHOOD.

Were it otherwise, Theosophy would be but a word added to hundreds other such words as high sounding as they are pretentious and empty. Viewed as a philosophy, Theosophy in its practical work is the alembic of the Mediæval alchemist. It transmutes the apparently base metal of every ritualistic and dogmatic creed (Christianity included) into the gold of fact and truth, and thus truly produces a universal panacea for the ills of mankind. This is why, when applying for admission into the Theosophical Society, no one is asked what religion he belongs to, nor what his deistic views may be. These views are his own personal property and have nought to do with the Society. Because Theosophy can be practiced by Christian or Heathen, Jew or Gentile, by Agnostic or Materialist, or even an Atheist, provided that none of these is a bigoted fanatic, who refuses to recognize as his brother any man or woman outside his own special creed or belief. Count Leo N. Tolstoy does not believe in the Bible, the Church, or the divinity of Christ; and yet no Christian surpasses him in the practical bearing out of the principles alleged to have been preached on the Mount. And these principles are those of Theosophy; not because they were uttered by the Christian Christ, but because they are universal ethics, and were preached by Buddha and Confucius, Krishna, and all the great Sages, thousands of years before the Sermon on the Mount was written. Hence, once that we live up to such theosophy, it becomes a universal *panacea* indeed, for it heals the wounds inflicted by the gross asperities of the Church “isms” on the sensitive soul of every naturally religious man. How many of these, forcibly thrust out by the reactive impulse of disappointment from the narrow area of blind belief into the ranks of arid disbelief, have been brought back to hopeful aspiration by simply joining our Brotherhood—yea, imperfect as it is.

If, as an offset to this, we are reminded that several prominent members have left the Society disappointed in theosophy as they had been in other associations, this cannot dismay us in the least. For with a *very, very few* exceptions, in the early stage of the T.S.'s activities when some left because they did not find mysticism practiced in the General Body as *they* understood it, or because "the leaders lacked Spirituality," were "untheosophical, hence, untrue to the rules," you see, the majority left because most of them were either half-hearted or too self-opinionated—a church and infallible dogma in themselves. Some broke away, again under very shallow pretexts indeed, such, for instance, as "because Christianity (to say Churchianity, or *sham* Christianity, would be more just) was too roughly handled in our magazines"—just as if other fanatical religions were ever treated any better or upheld! Thus, all those who left have done well to leave, and have never been regretted.

Furthermore, there is this also to be added: the number of those who left can hardly be compared with the number of those who found everything they had hoped for in Theosophy. Its doctrines, if seriously studied, call forth, by stimulating one's reasoning powers and awakening the *inner* in the animal man, every hitherto dormant power for good in us, and also the perception of the true and the real, as opposed to the false and the unreal. Tearing off with no uncertain hand the thick veil of dead-letter with which every old religious scriptures were cloaked, scientific Theosophy, learned in the cunning symbolism of the ages, reveals to the scoffer at old wisdom the origin of the world's faiths and sciences. It opens new vistas beyond the old horizons of crystallized, motionless and despotic faiths; and turning blind belief into a reasoned knowledge founded on mathematical laws—the only *exact* science—it demonstrates to him under profounder and more philosophical aspects the existence of that which, repelled by the grossness of its dead-letter form, he had long since abandoned as a nursery tale. It gives a clear and well-defined object, an ideal to live for, to every sincere man or woman belonging to whatever station in Society and of whatever culture and degree of intellect. Practical Theosophy is not *one* Science, but embraces every science in life, moral and physical. It may, in short, be justly regarded as the universal "coach," a tutor of world-wide knowledge and experience, and of an erudition which not only assists and guides his pupils toward a successful examination for every

scientific or moral service in earthly life, but fits them for *the lives*

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to come, if those pupils will only study the universe and its mysteries *within themselves*, instead of studying them through the spectacles of orthodox science and religions.

And let no reader misunderstand these statements. It is Theosophy *per se*, not any individual member of the Society or even Theosophist, on whose behalf such a universal omniscience is claimed. The two—Theosophy and the Theosophical Society—as a vessel and the *olla podrida* it contains, must not be confounded. One is, as an ideal, *divine* Wisdom, perfection itself; the other a poor, imperfect thing, trying to run *under*, if not *within*, its shadow on Earth. No man is perfect; why, then, should any member of the T.S. be expected to be a paragon of every human virtue? And why should the whole organization be criticized and blamed for the faults, whether real or imaginary, of some of its “Fellows,” or even its Leaders? Never was the Society, as a concrete body, free from blame or sin—*errare humanum est*—nor were any of its members. Hence, it is rather those members—most of whom will not be led by theosophy, that ought to be blamed. Theosophy is the soul of its Society; the latter the gross and imperfect body of the former. Hence, those modern Solomons who *will* sit in the Judgment Seat and talk of that they know nothing about, are invited before they slander theosophy or any theosophists to first get acquainted with both, instead of ignorantly calling one a “farrago of insane beliefs” and the other a “sect of impostors and lunatics.”

Regardless of this, Theosophy is spoken of by friends and foes as a religion when not a *sect*. Let us see how the special beliefs which have become associated with the word have come to stand in that position, and how it is that they have so good a right to it that none of the leaders of the Society have ever thought of disavowing their doctrines.

We have said that we believed in the absolute unity of nature. Unity implies the possibility for a unit on one plane, to come into contact with another unit on or from another plane. We believe in it.

The just published "Secret Doctrine" will show what were the ideas of all antiquity with regard to the *primeval instructors* of primitive man and his three earlier races. The genesis of that Wisdom-Religion, in which all theosophists believe, dates from that period. So-called "Occultism," or rather Esoteric Science, has to be traced in its origin to those Beings who, led by Karma, have incarnated

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in our humanity, and thus struck the key-note of that secret Science which countless generations of subsequent adepts have expanded since then in every age, while they checked its doctrines by personal observation and experience. The bulk of this knowledge—which no man is able to possess in its fullness—constitutes that which we now call Theosophy or "divine knowledge." Beings from other and higher worlds may have it entire; we can have it only approximately.

Thus, unity of everything in the universe implies and justifies our belief in the existence of a knowledge at once scientific, philosophical and religious, showing the necessity and actuality of the connection of man and all things in the universe with each other; which knowledge, therefore, becomes essentially Religion, and must be called in its integrity and universality by the distinctive name of Wisdom-Religion.

It is from this Wisdom-Religion that all the various individual "Religions" (erroneously so called) have sprung, forming in their turn offshoots and branches, and also all the minor creeds, based upon and always originated through some personal experience in psychology. Every such religion, or religious offshoot, be it considered orthodox or heretical, wise or foolish, started originally as a clear and unadulterated stream from the Mother-Source. The fact that each became in time polluted with purely human speculations and even inventions, due to interested motives, does not prevent any from having been pure in its early beginnings. There are those creeds—we shall not call them religions—which have now been overlaid with the human element out of all recognition; others just showing signs of early decay; not one that escaped the hand of time. But each and all are of divine, because natural and true origin; aye—Mazdeism, Brahmanism, Buddhism as much as Christianity. It is the



dogmas and human element in the latter which led directly to modern Spiritualism.

Of course, there will be an outcry from both sides, if we say that modern Spiritualism *per se*, cleansed of the unhealthy speculations which were based on the dicta of two little girls and their very unreliable "Spirits"—is, nevertheless, far more true and philosophical than any church dogma. *Carnalised* Spiritualism is now reaping its Karma. Its primitive *innovators*, the said "two little girls" from Rochester, the Mecca of modern Spiritualism, have grown up and

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turned into old women since the first raps produced by them have opened wide ajar the gates between this and the other world. It is on their "innocent" testimony that the elaborate scheme of a sidereal Summer-land, with its active astral population of "Spirits," ever on the wing between their "Silent Land" and our very loud-mouthed, gossiping earth—has been started and worked out. And now the two female Mahommeds of Modern Spiritualism have turned self-apostates and play false to the "philosophy" they have created, and have gone over to the enemy. They expose and denounce *practical* Spiritualism as the humbug of the ages. Spiritualists—(save a handful of fair exceptions)—have rejoiced and sided with *our* enemies and slanderers, when these, *who had never been Theosophists*, played us false and showed the cloven foot denouncing the Founders of the Theosophical Society as frauds and impostors. Shall the Theosophists laugh in their turn now that the original "revealers" of Spiritualism have become its "revilers"? Never! for the phenomena of Spiritualism are facts, and the treachery of the "Fox girls" only makes us feel new pity for all mediums, and confirms, before the whole world, our constant declaration that no medium can be relied upon. No true theosophist will ever laugh, or far less rejoice, at the discomfiture even of an opponent. The reason for it is simple:—

*Because we know that beings from other, higher worlds do confabulate with some elect mortals now as ever; though now far more rarely than in the days of old, as mankind becomes with every civilized generation worse in every respect.*

Theosophy—owing, in truth, to the *levée in arms* of all the Spiritualists of Europe and America at the first words uttered against the idea that every communicating *intelligence* is necessarily the Spirit of some ex-mortal from this earth—has not said its last word about Spiritualism and “Spirits.” It may one day. Meanwhile, an humble servant of theosophy, the Editor, declares once more her belief in Beings, grander, wiser, nobler than any *personal* God, who are beyond any “Spirits of the dead,” Saints, or winged Angels, who, nevertheless, *do* condescend in all and every age to occasionally overshadow rare sensitives—often entirely unconnected with Church, Spiritualism or even Theosophy. And believing in high and holy Spiritual Beings, she must also believe in the existence of their opposites—lower “spirits,” good, bad and indifferent. Therefore does she believe in spiritualism and its phenomena, some of which are so repugnant to her.

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This, as a casual remark and a digression, just to show that Theosophy includes Spiritualism—as it should be, not as it is—among its sciences, based on knowledge and the experience of countless ages. There is not a religion worthy of the name which has been started otherwise than in consequence of such *visits* from Beings on the higher planes.

Thus were born all prehistoric, as well as all the historic religions, Mazdeism and Brahmanism, Buddhism and Christianity, Judaism, Gnosticism and Mahomedanism; in short every more or less successful “ism.” All are true at the bottom, and all are false on their surface. The Revealer, the artist who impressed a portion of the Truth on the brain of the Seer, was in every instance a true artist, who gave out genuine truths; but the instrument proved also, in every instance, to be *only a man*. Invite Rubenstein and ask him to play a sonata of Beethoven on a piano left to *self-tuning*, one-half of the keys of which are in chronic paralysis, while the wires hang loose; then see whether, the genius of the artist notwithstanding, you will be able to recognize the sonata. The moral of the *fabula* is that a man—let him be the greatest of mediums or natural Seers—is but a man; and man left to his own devices and speculations *must* be out of tune with absolute truth, while even picking up some of its crumbs. For Man is but a *fallen* Angel, a god within, but having an animal brain in his head,

more subject to cold and wine fumes while in company with other men on Earth, than to the faultless reception of divine revelations.

Hence the multi-coloured dogmas of the churches. Hence also the thousand and one “philosophies” so-called (some contradictory, theosophical theories included); and the variegated “Sciences” and schemes, Spiritual, Mental, Christian and Secular; Sectarianism and bigotry, and especially the personal vanity and self-opinionatedness of almost every “Innovator” since the mediæval ages. These have all darkened and hidden the very existence of truth—the common root of all. Will our critics imagine that we exclude theosophical teachings from this nomenclature? Not at all. And though the esoteric doctrines which our Society has been and is expounding, are not *mental* or *spiritual* impressions from some “unknown, *from above*,” but the fruit of teachings given to us by living men, still, except that which was dictated and written out by those Masters of Wisdom themselves, these doctrines may be in many cases as incomplete and faulty as any of our foes would desire it. The “Secret Doctrine” — a

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work which gives out all that can be given out during this century, is an attempt to lay bare *in part* the common foundation and inheritance of all—great and small religious and philosophical schemes. It was found indispensable to tear away all this mass of concreted misconceptions and prejudice which now hides the parent trunk of (a) all the great world-religions; (b) of the smaller sects; and (c) of Theosophy as it stands now—however veiled the great Truth, by ourselves and our limited knowledge. The crust of error is thick, laid on by whatever hand; and because we *personally* have tried to remove some of it, the effort became the standing reproach against all theosophical writers and even the Society. Few among our friends and readers have failed to characterize our attempt to expose error in the *Theosophist* and *Lucifer* as “very uncharitable attacks on Christianity,” “untheosophical assaults,” etc., etc. Yet these are necessary, nay, indispensable, if we wish to plough up at least *approximate* truths. We have to lay things bare, and are ready to suffer for it—as usual. It is vain to promise to *give* truth, and then leave it mingled with error out of mere faint-heartedness. That the result of such policy could only muddy the stream of facts is shown plainly. After twelve years of incessant

labour and struggle with enemies from the four quarters of the globe, notwithstanding our four theosophical monthly journals—the *Theosophist*, *Path*, *Lucifer*, and the French *Lotus*—our wish-washy, tame protests in them, our timid declarations, our “masterly policy of inactivity,” and playing at hide-and-seek in the shadow of dreary metaphysics, have only led to Theosophy being seriously regarded as a religious sect. For the hundredth time we are told—“What good is Theosophy doing?” and “See what good the Churches are doing!”

Nevertheless, it is an averred fact that mankind is not a whit better in morality, and in some respects ten times worse now, than it ever was in the days of Paganism. Moreover, for the last half century, from that period when Freethought and Science got the best of the Churches—Christianity is yearly losing far more adherents among the cultured classes than it gains proselytes in the lower *strata*, the scum of Heathendom. On the other hand, Theosophy has brought back from Materialism and blank despair to belief (based on logic and evidence) in man’s *divine* Self, and the immortality of the latter, more than one of those whom the Church has lost through dogma, exaction of faith and tyranny. And, if it is proven that Theosophy saves one man only in a thousand of those the Church has lost, is not

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the former a far higher factor for good than all the missionaries put together?

Theosophy, as repeatedly declared in print and *viva voce* by its members and officers, proceeds on diametrically opposite lines to those which are trodden by the Church; and Theosophy rejects the methods of Science, since her inductive methods can only lead to crass materialism. Yet, *de facto*, Theosophy claims to be both “Religion” and “Science,” for theosophy is the essence of both. It is for the sake and love of the two divine abstractions—*i.e.*, theosophical religion and science, that its Society has become the volunteer *scavenger* of both orthodox religion and modern science; as also the relentless Nemesis of those who have degraded the two noble truths to their own ends and purposes, and then divorced each violently from the other, though the two are and *must be one*. To prove this is also one of our objects in the present paper.

The modern Materialist insists on an impassable chasm between the two, pointing out that the “Conflict between Religion and Science” has ended in the triumph of the latter and the defeat of the first. The modern Theosophist refuses to see, on the contrary, any such chasm at all. If it is claimed by both Church and Science that each of them pursues the truth and *nothing but the truth*, then either one of them is mistaken, and accepts falsehood for truth, or both. Any other impediment to their reconciliation must be set down as purely *fictitious*. Truth is one, even if sought for or pursued at two different ends. Therefore, Theosophy claims to reconcile the two foes. It premises by saying that the *true* spiritual and primitive Christian religion is, as much as the other great and still older philosophies that preceded it—*the light of Truth*—“the life and the light of men.”

But so is the *true* light of Science. Therefore, darkened as the former is now by dogmas examined through glasses smoked with the superstitions artificially produced by the Churches, this light can hardly penetrate and meet its sister ray in a science, equally as cobwebbed by paradoxes and the materialistic sophistries of the age. The teachings of the two are incompatible, and cannot agree so long as both Religious philosophy and the Science of physical and external (in philosophy, *false*) nature, insist upon the infallibility of their respective “will-o’-the wisps.” The two lights, having their beams of equal length in the matter of false deductions, can but extinguish each other and produce still worse darkness. Yet, they can-----

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be reconciled on the condition that both shall clean their houses, one from the human dross of the ages, the other from the hideous excrescence of modern materialism and atheism. And as both decline, the most meritorious and best thing to do is precisely what Theosophy alone can and *will* do: *i.e.*, point out to the innocents caught by the glue of the two waylayers—verily two dragons of old, one devouring the intellects, the other the souls of men—that their supposed chasm is but an optical delusion; that, far from being one, it is but an immense garbage mound respectively erected by the two foes, as a fortification against mutual attacks.

Thus, if theosophy does no more than point out and seriously draw the attention of the world to the fact that the *supposed* disagreement between

religion and science is conditioned, on the one hand by the intelligent materialists rightly kicking against absurd human dogmas, and on the other by blind fanatics and interested churchmen who, instead of defending the souls of mankind, fight simply tooth and nail for their personal bread and butter and authority — why, even then, theosophy will prove itself the saviour of mankind.

And now we have shown, it is hoped, what real Theosophy is, and what are its adherents. One is divine Science and a code of Ethics so sublime that no theosophist is capable of doing it justice; the others weak but sincere men. Why, then, should Theosophy ever be judged by the personal shortcomings of any leader or member of our 150 branches? One may work for it to the best of his ability, yet never raise himself to the height of his call and aspiration. This is his or her misfortune, never the fault of Theosophy, or even of the body at large. Its Founders claim no other merit than that of having set the first theosophical wheel rolling. If judged at all they must be judged by the work they have done, not by what friends may think or enemies say of them. There is no room for *personalities* in a work like ours; and all must be ready, as the Founders are, if needs be, for the car of Jaggennath to crush them *individually* for *the good of all*. It is only in the days of the dim Future, when death will have laid his cold hand on the luckless Founders and stopped thereby their activity, that their respective merits and demerits, their good and bad acts and deeds, and their theosophical work will have to be weighed on the Balance of Posterity. Then only, after the two scales with their contrasted loads have been brought to an equipoise, and the character of the net result left over has become evident to all in its full and intrinsic value, then only shall the nature of the verdict

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passed be determined with anything like justice. At present, except in India, those results are too scattered over the face of the earth, too much limited to a handful of individuals to be easily judged. Now, these results can hardly be perceived, much less heard of amid the din and clamour made by our teeming enemies, and their ready imitators—the indifferent. Yet however small, if once proved good, even now every man who has at heart the moral progress of humanity, owes his thankfulness to Theosophy for those results. And as Theosophy was revived and brought before the world, *viâ* its unworthy servants, the “Founders,” if their work was useful, it alone must be their

vindicator, regardless of the present state of their balance in the petty cash accounts of Karma, wherein social “respectabilities” are entered up.

*Lucifer*, November, 1888

### “LET EVERY MAN PROVE HIS OWN WORK”

SUCH is the title of a letter received by the Editors of *Lucifer*. It is of so serious a nature that it seems well to make it the subject of this month’s editorial. Considering the truths uttered in its few lines, its importance and the bearing it has upon the much obscured subject of Theosophy, and its visible agent or vehicle—the Society of that name—the letter is certainly worthy of the most considerate answer.

*Fiat justitia, ruat cælum!*

Justice will be done to both sides in the dispute; namely, Theosophists and the members of the Theosophical Society<sup>[3]</sup> on the one hand, and the followers of the *Divine Word* (or Christos), and the so-called Christians, on the other.

We reproduce the letter:

*To the Editors of Lucifer*

What a grand chance is now open in this country, to the exponents of a noble and advanced religion (if such this Theosophy be<sup>[4]</sup>) for proving its strength, righteousness and verity to the Western world, by throwing a penetrating and illuminating ray of its declared light upon the terribly harrowing and perplexing practical problems of our age.

Surely one of the purest and least self-incrusted duties of man, is to alleviate the sufferings of his fellow man? From what I read, and from what I daily come into immediate contact with, I can hardly think it would be possible to over-rate in contemplation, the intense privation and agonizing suffering that is—aye, say it—at *this moment* being endured by a vast pro portion

of our brothers and sisters, arising in a large measure from their not absolutely having the means for procuring the *bare necessities of existence*.

Surely a high and Heaven-born religion—a religion professing to receive its advanced knowledge and Light from “those more learned in the Science of Life,” should be able to tell us something of how to deal with such life, in its primitive condition of helpless submission to the surrounding circumstances of—civilization!

If one of our main duties is that of exercising disinterested love towards the Brotherhood, surely “those more learned” ones, whether in the flesh, or out of it, can and will, if appealed to by the votaries, aid them in discovering ways and means for such an end, and in organising some great fraternal scheme for dealing *rightly* with questions which are so appalling in their complexity, and which must and do press with such irresistible force upon all those who are earnest in their endeavours to carry out the will of Christ in a Christian land?

L. F. Ff.

October 25, 1887.

This honest-spoken and sincere letter contains two statements; an implied accusation against “Theosophy” (*i.e.*, the Society of that name), and a virtual admission that Christianity—or, again, rather its ritualistic and dogmatic religions—deserve the same and even a sterner rebuke. For if “Theosophy,” represented by its professors, merits on external appearance the reproach that so far it has failed to transfer divine wisdom from the region of the metaphysical into that of practical work, “Christianity,” that is, merely professing Christians, churchmen and laymen, lie under a like accusation, evidently. “Theosophy” has, certainly, failed to discover *infallible* ways and means of bringing all its votaries to exercise “disinterested love” in their Brotherhood; it has not yet been able to relieve suffering in mankind at large; but neither has Christianity. And not even the writer of the above letter, nor anyone else, can show sufficient excuse for the Christians in this respect. Thus the admission that “those who are earnest in their endeavours to carry out the will of Christ in a Christian land” *need the help of* “those more learned,” whether (pagan adepts) “in flesh, or (spirits?) out of it” is very suggestive, for it contains the defence and the *raison d’être* of the Theosophical Society. Tacit though it is, once that it comes from the pen of a sincere Christian, one who longs to learn



some practical means to relieve the sufferings of the starving multitudes—this admission becomes the greatest and most complete justification for the existence of the Theosophical Brotherhood; a full confession of the absolute

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necessity for such a body independent of, and untrammelled by, any enchaining dogmas, and it points out at the same time the signal failure of Christianity to accomplish the desired results.

Truly said Coleridge that “good works may exist *without* saving (?) principles, therefore cannot contain in themselves the principles of salvation; but saving principles never did, never can exist without good works.” Theosophists admit the definition, and disagree with the Christians only as to the nature of these “saving principles.” The Church (or churches) maintain that the only saving principle is belief in Jesus, or the carnalized Christ of the soul-killing dogma; theosophy, undogmatic and unsectarian, answers, it is not so. The only *saving* principle dwells in man himself, and has never dwelt outside of his immortal divine self, *i.e.*, it is the true Christos, as it is the true Buddha, the divine inward light which proceeds from the eternal unmanifesting unknown all. And this light *can only be made known by its works*—*faith* in it having to remain ever blind in all, save in the man himself who feels that light within his soul.

Therefore, the tacit admission of the author of the above letter covers another point of great importance. The writer seems to have felt that which many, among those who strive to help the suffering, have felt and expressed. The creeds of the churches fail to supply the *intellectual* light, and the true wisdom which are needed to make the practical philanthropy carried out, by the true and earnest followers of Christ, a *reality*. The “practical” people either go on “doing good” unintelligently, and thus often do harm instead; or, appalled by the awful problem before them, and failing to find in their “churches” any clue, or a hope of solution, they retire from the battlefield and let themselves be drifted blindly by the current in which they happen to be born.

Of late it has become the fashion for friends, as well as for foes, to reproach the Theosophical Society with doing no practical work, but losing itself in the clouds of metaphysics. Metaphysicians, we are told, by those who like to repeat

stale arguments, have been learning their lesson for the last few thousand years; and it is now high time that they should begin to do some practical work. Agreed; but considering that the Christian churches count nearly nineteen centuries of existence, and that the Theosophical Society and Brotherhood is a body hardly twelve years old; considering again that the Christian churches roll in fabulous wealth, and number

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their adherents by hundreds of millions, whereas the Theosophical Brotherhood is but a few thousand strong, and that it has no fund, or funds, at its disposal, but that 98 per cent of its members are as poor and as uninfluential as the aristocracy of the Christian church is rich and powerful; taking all this into consideration, there would be much to say if the theosophists would only choose to press the matter upon the public notice. Meanwhile, as the bitterest critics of the "leaders" of the Theosophical Society are by no means only outsiders, but as there are members of that society who always find a pretext to be dissatisfied, we ask: Can works of charity that will be known among men be accomplished without money? Certainly not. And yet, notwithstanding all this, none of its (European) members, except a few devoted officers in charge of societies, will do *practical* work; but some of them, those especially who have never lifted a finger to relieve suffering, and help their outside, poorer brothers, are those who talk the most loudly, and are the bitterest in their denunciations of the *unspirituality* and the unfitness of the "leaders of theosophy." By this they remove themselves into the outer ring of critics, like those spectators at the play who laugh at an actor passably representing Hamlet, while they themselves could not walk on the stage with a letter on a salver. While in India, comparatively poor theosophists have opened gratuitous dispensaries for the sick, hospitals, schools, and everything they could think of, asking no returns from the poor, as the missionaries do, no abandonment of one's forefathers' religion, as a heavy price for favours received, have the English theosophists, as a rule, done a single thing for those suffering multitudes, whose pitiful cry rings throughout the whole Heavens as a protest against the actual state of things in Christendom?

We take this opportunity of saying, in reply to others as much as to our correspondent, that, up till now, the energies of the Society have been chiefly

occupied in organising, extending, and solidifying the Society itself, which has taxed its time, energies and resources to such an extent as to leave it far less powerful for practical charity than we would have wished. But, even so, compared with the influence and the funds at the disposal of the Society, its work in practical charity, if less widely known, will certainly bear favourable comparison with that of professing Christians, with their enormous resources in money, workers, and opportunities of all kinds. It must not be forgotten that practical charity is not one of the *declared*

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objects of the Society. It goes without saying, and needs no “declaration,” that every member of the Society must be practically philanthropic if he be a theosophist at all; and our declared work is, in reality, more important and more efficacious than work in the everyday plane which bears more evident and immediate fruit, for the direct effect of an appreciation of theosophy is to make those charitable who were not so before. Theosophy creates the charity which afterwards, and of its own accord, makes itself manifest in works.

Theosophy is correctly — though in this particular case, it is rather ironically — termed “a high, Heaven-born religion.” It is argued that since it professes to receive its advanced knowledge and light from “those more learned in the Science of Life,” the latter ought and *must*, if applied to by their votaries (the theosophists), aid them in discovering ways and means, in organising some great fraternal scheme, etc.

The scheme was planned, and the rules and laws to guide such a practical brotherhood, have been given by those “more learned in the Science of (practical daily, *altruistic*) life”; aye verily “more learned” in it than any other men since the days of Gautama Buddha and the Gnostic Essenes. The “scheme” dates back to the year when the Theosophical Society was founded. Let anyone read its wise and noble laws embodied to this day in the Statutes of the Fraternity, and judge for himself whether, if carried out rigorously and applied to practical life, the “scheme” would not have proved the most beneficent to mankind in general, and especially to our poorer brethren of “the starving multitudes.” Theosophy teaches the spirit of “nonseparateness,” the evanescence and illusion of human creeds and dogma, hence, inculcates *universal love and charity for all mankind without distinction of race,*

*colour, caste or creed*"; is it not therefore the fittest to alleviate the sufferings of mankind? No true theosophist would refuse admission into a hospital, or any charitable establishment, to any man, woman or child, under the pretext that he is *not* a theosophist, as a Roman Catholic would when dealing with a Protestant, and *vice versa*. No true theosophist of the original rules would fail to put into practice the parable of the "Good Samaritan," or proffer help only to entice the unwary who, he hopes, will become a pervert from his god and the gods of his forefathers. None would slander his brother, none let a needy man go unhelped, none offer fine talk instead of practical love and charity.

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Is it then the fault of Theosophy, any more than it is the fault of the Christ-teachings, if the majority of the members of the Theosophical Society, often changing their philosophical and religious views upon entering our Body, have yet remained practically the same as they were when professing *lip* Christianity? Our laws and rules are the same as given to us from the beginning; it is the general members of the Society who have allowed them to become virtually *obsolete*. Those few who are ever ready to sacrifice their time and labour to work for the poor, and who do, unrecognised and unthanked for it, good work wherever they can, are often too poor themselves to put their larger schemes of charity into objective practical form, however willing they may be.

"The fault I find with the Theosophical Society," said one of the most eminent surgeons in London to one of the editors, quite recently, "is that I cannot discover that any of its members really lead the Christ-life." This seemed a very serious accusation from a man who is not only in the front rank of his profession, and valued for his kindly nature, by his patients, and by society, and well known as a quiet doer of many good deeds. The only possible answer to be made was that the Christ-life is undeniably the ideal of every one worthy in any sense of the name of a Theosophist, and that if it is not lived it is because there are none strong enough to carry it out. Only a few days later the same complaint was put in a more graphic form by a celebrated lady-artist.

"You Theosophists don't do enough good for me," she said pithily. And in her case also there is the right to speak, given by the fact that she leads two lives—one, a butterfly existence in society, and the other a serious one, which

makes little noise, but has much purpose. Those who regard life as a great vocation, like the two critics of the Theosophical movement whom we have just quoted, have a right to demand of such a movement more than mere words. They themselves endeavour very quietly to lead the "Christ-life," and they cannot understand a number of people uniting in the effort towards this life without practical results being apparent. Another critic of the same character who has the best possible right to criticise, being a thoroughly practical philanthropist and charitable to the last degree, has said of the Theosophists that their much talking and writing seems to resolve itself into mere intellectual luxury, productive of no direct good to the world.

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The point of difference between the Theosophists (when we use this term we mean, not members of the Society, but people who are really using the organization as a method of learning more of the true wisdom-religion which exists as a vital and eternal fact behind all such efforts) and the practical philanthropists, religious or secular, is a very serious one, and the answer, that probably none of them are strong enough yet to lead the "Christ-life," is only a portion of the truth. The situation can be put very plainly, in so many words. The religious philanthropist holds a position of his own, which cannot in any way concern or affect the Theosophist. He does not do good merely for the sake of doing good, but also as a means towards his own salvation. This is the outcome of the selfish and personal side of man's nature, which has so coloured and affected a grand religion that its devotees are little better than the idol-worshippers who ask their deity of clay to bring them luck in business, and the payment of debts. The religious philanthropist who hopes to gain salvation by good works has simply, to quote a well-worn yet ever fresh witticism, exchanged worldliness for other-worldliness.

The secular philanthropist is really at heart a socialist, and nothing else; he hopes to make men happy and good by bettering their physical position. No serious student of human nature can believe in this theory for a moment. There is no doubt that it is a very agreeable one, because if it is accepted there is immediate, straightforward work to undertake. "The poor ye have always with you." The causation which produced human nature itself produced poverty, misery, pain, degradation, at the same time that it produced wealth, and

comfort, and joy and glory. Life-long philanthropists, who have started on their work with a joyous youthful conviction that it is possible to “do good,” have, though never relaxing the habit of charity, confessed to the present writer that, as a matter of fact, misery cannot be relieved. It is a vital element in human nature, and is as necessary to some lives as pleasure is to others.

It is a strange thing to observe how practical philanthropists will eventually, after long and bitter experience, arrive at a conclusion which, to an occultist, is from the first a working hypothesis. This is, that misery is not only endurable, but agreeable to many who endure it. A noble woman, whose life has been given to the rescue of the lowest class of wretched girls, those who seem to be driven to vice by want, said, only a few days since, that with many of these outcasts it is not possible to raise them to any apparently happier lot. And

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this she distinctly stated (and she can speak with authority, having spent her life literally among them, and studied them thoroughly), is not so much from any love of vice, but from love of that very state which the wealthy classes call misery. They prefer the savage life of a bare-foot, half-clad creature, with no roof at night and no food by day, to any comforts which can be offered them. By comforts, we do not mean the workhouse or the reformatory, but the comforts of a quiet home; and we can give chapter and verse, so to speak, to show that this is the case, not merely with the children of outcasts, who might be supposed to have a savage heredity, but with the children of gentle, cultivated, and Christian people.

Our great towns hide in their slums thousands of beings whose history would form an inexplicable enigma, a perfectly baffling moral picture, could they be written out clearly, so as to be intelligible. But they are only known to the devoted workers among the outcast classes, to whom they become a sad and terrible puzzle, not to be solved, and therefore, better not discussed. Those who have no clue to the science of life are compelled to dismiss such difficulties in this manner, otherwise they would fall, crushed beneath the thought of them. The social question as it is called, the great deep waters of misery, the deadly apathy of those who have power and possessions—these things are hardly to be faced by a generous soul who has not reached to the great idea of evolution, and who has not guessed at the marvelous mystery of human development.

The Theosophist is placed in a different position from any of these persons, because he has heard of the vast scope of life with which all mystic and occult writers and teachers deal, and he has been brought very near to the great mystery. Indeed, none, though they may have enrolled themselves as Fellows of the Society, can be called in any serious sense Theosophists, until they have begun to consciously taste in their own persons, this same mystery; which is, indeed, a law inexorable, by which man lifts himself by degrees from the state of a beast to the glory of a God. The rapidity with which this is done is different with every living soul; and the wretches who hug the primitive taskmaster, *misery*, choose to go slowly through a tread-mill course which may give them innumerable lives of physical sensation —whether pleasant or painful, well-beloved because tangible to the very lowest senses. The Theosophist who desires to enter upon occultism takes some of Nature's privileges into his own hands, by that very wish, and soon discovers that experiences come to him with

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double-quick rapidity. His business is then to recognise that he is under a—to him—new and swifter law of development, and to snatch at the lessons that come to him.

But, in recognising this, he also makes another discovery. He sees that it takes a very wise man to do good works without danger of doing incalculable harm. A highly developed adept in life may grasp the nettle, and by his great intuitive powers, know whom to relieve from pain and whom to leave in the mire that is their best teacher. The poor and wretched themselves will tell anyone who is able to win their confidence what disastrous mistakes are made by those who come from a different class and endeavour to help them. Kindness and gentle treatment will sometimes bring out the worst qualities of a man or woman who has led a fairly presentable life when kept down by pain and despair. May the Master of Mercy forgive us for saying such words of any human creatures, all of whom are a part of ourselves, according to the law of human brotherhood which no disowning of it can destroy. But the words are true. None of us know the darkness which lurks in the depths of our own natures until some strange and unfamiliar experience rouses the whole being into action. So with these others who seem more miserable than ourselves.

As soon as he begins to understand what a friend and teacher pain can be, the Theosophist stands appalled before the mysterious problem of human life, and though he may long to do good works, equally dreads to do them wrongly until he has himself acquired greater power and knowledge. The ignorant doing of good works may be vitally injurious, as all but those who are blind in their love of benevolence are compelled to acknowledge. In this sense the answer made as to lack of Christ-like lives among Theosophists, that there are probably none strong enough to live such, is perfectly correct and covers the whole question. For it is not the spirit of self-sacrifice, or of devotion, or of desire to help that is lacking, but the strength to acquire knowledge and power and intuition, so that the deeds done shall really be worthy of the "Buddha-Christ" spirit. Therefore it is that Theosophists cannot pose as a body of philanthropists, though secretly they may adventure on the path of good works. They profess to be a body of learners merely, pledged to help each other and all the rest of humanity, so far as in them lies, to a better understanding of the mystery of life, and to a better knowledge of the peace which lies beyond it.

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But as it is an inexorable law, that the ground must be tilled if the harvest is to be reaped, so Theosophists are obliged to work in the world unceasingly, and very often in doing this to make serious mistakes, as do all workers who are not embodied Redeemers. Their efforts may not come under the title of good works, and they may be condemned as a school of idle talkers, yet they are an outcome and fruition of this particular moment of time, when the ideas which they hold are greeted by the crowd with interest; and therefore their work is good, as the lotus-flower is good when it opens in the midday sun.

None know more keenly and definitely than they that good works are necessary; only these cannot be rightly accomplished without knowledge. Schemes for Universal Brotherhood, and the redemption of mankind, might be given out plentifully by the great adepts of life, and would be mere dead-letter utterances while individuals remain ignorant, and unable to grasp the great meaning of their teachers. To Theosophists we say, let us carry out the rules given us for our society before we ask for any further schemes or laws. To the public and our critics we say, try to understand the value of good works before you demand them of others, or enter upon them rashly yourselves. Yet it is an



absolute fact that without good works the spirit of brotherhood would die in the world; and this can never be. Therefore is the double activity of learning and doing most necessary; we have to do good, and we have to do it *rightly*, with knowledge.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is well known that the first rule of the society is to carry out the object of forming the nucleus of a universal brotherhood. The practical working of this rule was explained by those who laid it down, to the following effect:—

He who does not practise altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own—is no theosophist.

*Lucifer*, November, 1887

## WHAT OF PHENOMENA?

*To the Editors of Lucifer:*

“I avail myself of your invitation to correspondents, in order to ask a question.

“How is it that we hear nothing now of the signs and wonders with which Neo-theosophy was ushered in? Is the ‘age of miracles’ past in the Society?”

“Yours respectfully”

“O”

“Occult phenomena,” is what our correspondent apparently refers to. They failed to produce the desired effect, but they were, in no sense of the word, “miracles.” It was supposed that intelligent people, especially men of science, would, at least, have recognized the existence of a new and deeply interesting field of enquiry and research when they witnessed physical effects produced at will, for which they were not able to account. It was supposed that theologians would have welcomed the proof, of which they stand so sadly in need in these agnostic days, that the soul and the spirit are not mere creations of their fancy,

due to ignorance of the physical constitution of man, but entities quite as real as the body, and much more important. These expectations were not realized. The phenomena were misunderstood and misrepresented, both as regards their nature and their purpose.

In the light which experience has now thrown upon the matter the explanation of this unfortunate circumstance is not far to seek. Neither science nor religion acknowledges the existence of the Occult, as the term is understood and employed in theosophy; in the sense, that is to say, of a super-material, but not super-natural, region, governed by law; nor do they recognize the existence of latent powers and possibilities in man. Any interference with the every-day routine of the material world is attributed, by religion, to the arbitrary will of a good or an evil autocrat, inhabiting a supernatural region inaccessible to man, and subject to no law, either in his actions or constitution, and for a knowledge of whose ideas and wishes mortals are entirely dependent upon inspired communications delivered through an accredited messenger. The power of working so-called miracles has always been deemed the proper and sufficient credentials of a messenger from heaven, and the mental habit of regarding any occult power in that light is still so strong that

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any exercise of that power is supposed to be “miraculous,” or to claim to be so. It is needless to say that this way of regarding extraordinary occurrences is in direct opposition to the scientific spirit of the age, nor is it the position practically occupied by the more intelligent portion of mankind at present. When people see wonders, nowadays, the sentiment excited in their minds is no longer veneration and awe, but curiosity.

It was in the hope of arousing and utilizing this spirit of curiosity that occult phenomena were shown. It was believed that this manipulation of forces of nature which lie below the surface—that surface of things which modern science scratches and pecks at so industriously and so proudly—would have led to enquiry into the nature and the laws of those forces, unknown to science, but perfectly known to occultism. That the phenomena did excite curiosity in the minds of those who witnessed them, is certainly true, but it was, unfortunately, for the most part of an idle kind. The greater number of the witnesses developed an insatiable appetite for phenomena for their own sake,

without any thought of studying the philosophy or the science of whose truth and power the phenomena were merely trivial and, so to say, accidental illustrations. In but a few cases the curiosity which was awakened gave birth to the serious desire to study the philosophy and the science themselves and for their own sake.

Experience has taught the leaders of the movement that the vast majority of professing Christians are absolutely precluded by their mental condition and attitude—the result of centuries of superstitious teaching—from calmly examining the phenomena in their aspect of natural occurrences governed by law. The Roman Catholic Church, true to its traditions, excuses itself from the examination of any occult phenomena on the plea that they are necessarily the work of the Devil, whenever they occur outside of its own pale, since it has a lawful monopoly of the legitimate miracle business. The Protestant Church denies the personal intervention of the Evil One on the material plane; but, never having gone into the miracle business itself, it is apparently a little doubtful whether it would know a *bona-fide* miracle if it saw one, but, being just as unable as its elder sister to conceive the extension of the reign of law beyond the limits of matter and force, as known to us in our present state of consciousness, it excuses itself from the study of occult phenomena on the plea that they lie within the province of science rather than of religion.

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Now science has its miracles as well as the Church of Rome. But, as it is altogether dependent upon its instrument-maker for the production of these miracles, and, as it claims to be in possession of the last known word in regard to the laws of nature, it was hardly to be expected that it would take very kindly to “miracles,” in whose production apparatus has no part, and which claim to be instances of the operation of forces and laws of which it has no knowledge. Modern science, moreover, labours under disabilities with respect to the investigation of the Occult quite as embarrassing as those of Religion; for, while Religion cannot grasp the idea of natural law as applied to the supersensuous Universe, Science does not allow the existence of any supersensuous universe at all to which the reign of law could be extended; nor can it conceive the possibility of any other state of consciousness than our present terrestrial one. It was, therefore, hardly to be expected that science would undertake the task

it was called upon to perform with much earnestness and enthusiasm; and, indeed, it seems to have felt that it was not expected to treat the phenomena of occultism less cavalierly than it had treated divine miracles. So it calmly proceeded at once to pooh-pooh the phenomena; and, when obliged to express some kind of opinion, it did not hesitate, without examination, and on hearsay reports, to attribute them to fraudulent contrivances—wires, trapdoors, and so forth.

It was bad enough for the leaders of the movement, when they endeavoured to call the attention of the world to the great and unknown field for scientific and religious enquiry which lies on the borderland between matter and spirit, to find themselves set down as agents of his Satanic Majesty, or as superior adepts in the charlatan line; but the unkindest cut of all, perhaps, came from a class of people whose own experiences, rightly understood, ought certainly to have taught them better: the occult phenomena were claimed by the Spiritualists as the work of their dear departed ones, but the leaders in Theosophy were declared to be somewhat less even than mediums in disguise.

Never were the phenomena presented in any other character than that of instances of a power *over perfectly natural though unrecognized forces*, and incidentally over matter, possessed by certain individuals who have attained to a larger and higher knowledge of the Universe than has been reached by scientists and theologians, or can ever be reached by them, by the roads they are now respectively pursuing. Yet this power is latent in all men, and could, in time, be

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wielded by anyone who would cultivate the knowledge and conform to the conditions necessary for its development. Nevertheless, except in a few isolated and honourable instances, never was it received in any other character than as would-be miracles, or as works of the Devil, or as vulgar tricks, or as amusing gape-seed, or as the performances of those dangerous “spooks” that masquerade in séance rooms, and feed on the vital energies of mediums and sitters. And, from all sides, theosophy and theosophists were attacked with a rancour and bitterness, with an absolute disregard alike of fact and logic, and with malice, hatred and uncharitableness that would be utterly inconceivable, did not religious history teach us what mean and unreasoning animals ignorant

men become when their cherished prejudices are touched; and did not the history of scientific research teach us, in its turn, how very like an ignorant man a learned man can behave, when the truth of his theories is called in question.

An occultist can produce phenomena, but he cannot supply the world with brains, nor with the intelligence and good faith necessary to understand and appreciate them. Therefore, it is hardly to be wondered at, that *word* came to abandon phenomena and let the ideas of Theosophy stand on their own intrinsic merits.

*Lucifer*, February, 1888

### OUR THREE OBJECTS

All the performances of the human heart at which we look with praise or wonder are instances of the resistless force of Perseverance. It is by this that the quarry becomes a pyramid, and that distant countries are united by canals. . . . Operations incessantly continued, in time surmount the greatest difficulties, and mountains are levelled and oceans bounded by the slender force of human beings. —Johnson

So it is, and must be always, my dear boys. If the Angel Gabriel were to come down from heaven and head a successful rise against the most abominable and unrighteous vested interest which the poor old world groans under, he would most certainly lose his character for many years, probably for centuries, not only with upholders of the said vested interest, but with the respectable mass of people he had delivered. —  
Hughes

*Post nubila Phæbus.* — After the clouds, sunshine. With this, *Lucifer* enters upon its fifth volume; and having borne her share of the battle of personalities which has been raging throughout the last volume, the editor feels as though she has earned the right to a period of peace. In deciding to enjoy that, at all costs, hereafter, she is moved as much by a feeling of contempt for the narrow-mindedness, ignorance and bigotry of her adversaries as by a feeling of fatigue

with such wearisome inanities. So far, then, as she can manage to control her indignation and not too placid temperament, she will henceforth treat with disdain the calumnious misrepresentations of which she seems to be the chronic victim.

The beginning of a volume is the fittest time for a retrospect; and to such we now invite the reader's attention.

If the outside public know Theosophy only as one half sees a dim shape through the dust of battle, the members of our Society at least ought to keep in mind what it is doing on the lines of its declared objects. It is to be feared that they overlook this, amid the din of this sensational discussion of its principles, and the calumnies levelled at its officers. While the narrower-minded of the Secularists, Christians and Spiritualists vie with each other in attempts to cover with opprobrium one of the leaders of Theosophy, and to belittle its claims to public regard, the Theosophical Society is moving on in dignity towards the goal it set up for itself at the beginning.

Silently, but irresistibly, it is widening its circle of usefulness and endearing its name to various nations. While its traducers are busy at their ignoble work, it is creating the facts for its future historiographer.

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It is not in polemical pamphlets or sensational newspaper articles that its permanent record will be made, but in the visible realization of its original scheme of making a nucleus of universal brotherhood, reviving Oriental literature and philosophies, and aiding in the study of occult problems in physical and psychological science. The Society is barely fourteen years old, yet how much has it not accomplished! And how much that involves work of the highest quality. Our opponents may not be inclined to do us justice, but our vindication is sure to come later on. Meanwhile, let the plain facts be put on record without varnish or exaggeration. Classifying them under the appropriate headings, they are as follows:

## I. BROTHERHOOD

When we arrived in India, in February, 1879, there was no unity between the races and sects of the Peninsula, no sense of a common public interest, no

disposition to find the mutual relation between the several sects of ancient Hinduism, or that between them and the creeds of Islam, Jainism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. Between the Brahmanical Hindus of India and their kinsmen, the modern Sinhalese Buddhists, there had been no religious intercourse since some remote epoch. And again, between the several castes of the Sinhalese—for, true to their archaic Hindu parentage, the Sinhalese do still cling to caste despite the letter and spirit of their Buddhist religion—there was a complete disunity, no intermarriages, no spirit of patriotic homogeneity, but a rancorous sectarian and caste ill-feeling. As for any international reciprocity, in either social or religious affairs, between the Sinhalese and the Northern Buddhistic nations, such a thing had never existed. Each was absolutely ignorant of and indifferent about the other's views, wants or aspirations. Finally, between the races of Asia and those of Europe and America there was the most complete absence of sympathy as to religious and philosophical questions. The labours of the Orientalists from Sir William Jones and Burnouf down to Prof. Max Müller, had created among the learned a philosophical interest, but among the masses not even that. If to the above we add that all the Oriental religions, without exception, were being asphyxiated to death by poisonous gas of Western official science, through the medium of the educational agencies of European administrations and Missionary propagandists, and that the Native graduates and undergraduates of India, Ceylon and Japan had largely turned agnostics and

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revilers of the old religions, it will be seen how difficult a task it must have been to bring something like harmony out of this chaos, and make a tolerant if not a friendly feeling spring up and banish these hatreds, evil suspicions, ill feelings, and mutual ignorance.

Ten years have passed and what do we see? Taking the points *seriatim* we find—that throughout India unity and brotherhood have replaced the old disunity, one hundred and twenty-five Branches of our Society have sprung up in India alone, each a nucleus of our idea of fraternity, a centre of religious and social unity. Their membership embraces representatives of all the better castes and all Hindu sects, and a majority are of that class of hereditary savants and

philosophers, the Brahmans, to pervert whom to Christianity has been the futile struggle of the Missionary and the self-appointed task of that high-class forlorn hope, the Oxford and Cambridge Missions. The President of our Society, Col. Olcott, has traversed the whole of India several times, upon invitation, addressing vast crowds upon theosophic themes and sowing the seed from which, in time, will be garnered the full harvest of our evangel of brotherhood and mutual dependence. The growth of this kindly feeling has been proven in a variety of ways: first, in the unprecedented gathering of races, castes, and sects in the annual Conventions of the Theosophical Society; second, in the rapid growth of a theosophical literature advocating our altruistic views, in the founding of various journals and magazines in several languages, and in the rapid cessation of sectarian controversies; third, in the sudden birth and phenomenally rapid growth of the patriotic movement which is centralized in the organization called the Indian National Congress. This remarkable political body was planned by certain of our Anglo-Indian and Hindu members after the model and on the lines of the Theosophical Society, and has from the first been directed by our own colleagues; men among the most influential in the Indian Empire. At the same time, there is no connection whatever, barring that through the personalities of individuals, between the Congress and its mother body, our Society. It would never have come into existence, in all probability, if Col. Olcott had suffered himself to be tempted into the side paths of human brotherhood, politics, social reforms, etc., as many have wanted him to do. We aroused the dormant spirit and warmed the Aryan blood of the Hindus, and one vent the new life made for itself was this Congress. All this is simple history and passes unchallenged.

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Crossing over to Ceylon, behold the miracles our Society has wrought, upon the evidence of many addresses, reports, and other official documents heretofore brought under the notice of our readers and the general public. The castemen affiliating; the sectarian ill-feeling almost obliterated; sixteen Branches of the Society formed in the Island, the entire Sinhalese community, one may almost say, looking to us for counsel, example and leadership; a committee of Buddhists going over to India with Col. Olcott to plant a cocoanut—ancient symbol of affection and good-will—in the compound of the Hindu Temple in Tinnevely, and Kandyan nobles, until now holding aloof



from the low-country people with the haughty disdain of their feudal traditions, becoming Presidents of our Branches, and even travelling as Buddhist lecturers.

Ceylon was the *foyer* from which the religion of Gautama streamed out to Cambodia, Siam, and Burma; what then, could be more appropriate than that there should be borne from this Holy Land a message of Brotherhood to Japan! How this message was taken, how delivered by our President, and with what magnificent results, is too well known to the whole Western World to need reiteration of the story in the present connection. Suffice it to say, it ranks among the most dramatic events in history, and is the all sufficient, unanswerable and crowning proof of the vital reality of our scheme to beget the feeling of Universal Brotherhood among all peoples, races, kindreds, castes, and colours.

One evidence of the practical good sense shown in our management is the creation of the "Buddhist Flag" as a conventional symbol of the religion apart from all sectarian questions. Until now the Buddhists have had no such symbol as the cross affords to the Christians, and consequently have lacked that essential sign of their common relation to each other, which is the crystallizing point, so to say, of the fraternal force our Society is trying to evoke. The Buddhist flag effectually supplies this want. It is made in the usual proportions of national Ensigns, as to length and width, and composed of six vertical bars of colours in the following order: Sapphire blue, golden yellow, crimson, white, scarlet and a bar combining all the other colours. This is no arbitrary selection of hues, but the application to this present purpose of the tints described in the old Pali and Sanskrit works as visible in the *psychosphere* or aura, around Buddha's person and conventionally depicted as chromatic vibrations around his images in Ceylon and other countries. *Esoterically,*

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they are very suggestive in their combination. The new flag was first hoisted on our Colombo Headquarters, then adopted with acclaim throughout Ceylon; and being introduced by Colonel Olcott into Japan, spread throughout that Empire even within the brief term of his recent visit.

Calumny cannot obliterate or even belittle the least of these facts. They have passed through the fog of today's hatred into the sunshine which lights up all events for the eye of the historian.

## II. ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY, LITERATURE, ETC.

No one unacquainted with India and the Hindus can form a conception of the state of feeling among the younger generation of college and school-bred Hindus towards their ancestral religion, that prevailed at the time of our advent there, ten years ago. The materialistic and agnostic attitude of mind towards religion in the abstract, which prevails in Western Universities, had been conveyed to the Indian colleges and schools by their graduates, the European Professors who occupied the several chairs in the latter institutions of learning. The text books fed this spirit, and the educated Hindus, as a class, were thoroughly sceptical in religious matters, and only followed the rites and observances of the national cult from considerations of social necessity. As for the Missionary colleges and schools, their effect was only to create doubt and prejudice against Hinduism and all religions, without in the least winning regard for Christianity or making converts. The cure for all this was, of course, to attack the citadel of scepticism, scientific sciolism, and prove the scientific basis of religion in general and of Hinduism in particular. This task was undertaken from the first and pursued to the point of victory; a result evident to every traveller who enquires into the present state of Indian opinion. The change has been noted by Sir Richard Temple, Sir Edwin Arnold, Mr. Caine, M.P., Lady Jersey, Sir Monier Williams, the Primate of India, the Bishops and Archdeacons of all the Presidencies, the organs of the several Missionary societies, the Principals and Professors of their colleges, the correspondents of European journals, a host of Indian authors and editors, congresses of Sanskrit pandits, and has been admitted in terms of fervent gratitude in multitudes of addresses read to Col. Olcott in the course of his extended journeys. Without exaggeration or danger of contradiction, it may be affirmed that the labours of the Theosophical Society in India have infused a fresh and vigorous life

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into Hindu Philosophy; revived the Hindu Religion; won back the allegiance of the graduate class to the ancestral beliefs; created an enthusiasm for Sanskrit Literature that shows itself in the republication of old Encyclopædias,

scriptures and commentaries, the foundation of many Sanskrit schools, the patronage of Sanskrit by Native Princes, and in other ways. Moreover, through its various literary and corporate agencies, the Society has disseminated throughout the whole world a knowledge of and taste for Aryan Philosophy.

The reflex action of this work is seen in the popular demand for theosophical literature, and novels and magazine tales embodying Oriental ideas. Another important effect is the modification by Eastern Philosophy of the views of the Spiritualists, which has fairly begun, with respect to the source of some of the intelligence behind mediumistic phenomena. Still another is the adhesion of Mrs. Annie Besant—brought about by the study of Esoteric Doctrine—from the Secularist party, an event fraught with most important consequences, both to our Society, to Secularism and the general public. Sanskrit names never previously heard in the West have become familiar to the reading public, and works like the *Bhagavad-Gita* are now to be found in the bookshops of Europe, America and Australasia.

Ceylon has seen a revival of Buddhism, the circulation of religious books by tens of thousands, the translation of the *Buddhist Catechism* into many languages of the East, West and North, the founding of theosophical High Schools at Colombo, Kandy and Ratna-pura, the opening of nearly fifty schools for Buddhist children under the supervision of our Society, the granting of a national Buddhist Holiday by the Government, and of other important privileges, the establishment of a vernacular semi-weekly Buddhist journal in Colombo, and one in English, both composed, printed and published from the Society's own printing-office. And it has also seen us bring from Japan seven clever young Buddhist priests to learn Pali under the venerated High Priest Sumangala, so as to be able to expound to their own countrymen the Buddhistic canon as it exists in the Southern Church twenty-five centuries after the nirvana of Buddha.

Thus, it is not to be doubted or denied that, within its first fourteen years of existence, the Theosophical Society has succeeded to an extent beyond all expectation in realizing the first two of its three

declared objects. It has proved that neither race, nor creed, neither colour, nor

old antipathies are irremovable obstacles to the spread of the idea of altruism and human brotherhood, Utopian dream as it may have been considered by theorists who view man as a mere physical problem, ignoring the inner, greater, higher self.

### III. OCCULTISM

Though but a minority of our members are mystically inclined, yet, in point of fact, the key to all our successes as above enumerated is in our recognition of the fact of the Higher Self—colourless, cosmopolitan, unsectarian, sexless, unworldly, altruistic—and the doing of our work on that basis. To the Secularist, the Agnostic, the Sciolistic Scientist, such results would have been unattainable, nay, would have been unthinkable. Peace Societies are Utopian, because no amount of argument based upon exoteric considerations of social morals or expediency, can turn the hearts of the rulers of nations away from selfish war and schemes of conquest.

Social differentiations, the result of physical evolutions and material environment, breed race hatreds and sectarian and social antipathies that are insurmountable if attacked from the outside. But, since human nature is ever identical, all men are alike open to influences which centre upon the human "heart," and appeal to the human intuition; and as there is but one Absolute Truth, and this is the soul and life of all human creeds, it is possible to effect a reciprocal alliance for the research of and dissemination of that basic Truth. We know that a comprehensive term for that Eternal Verity is the "Secret Doctrine"; we have preached it, have won a hearing, have, to some extent, swept away the old barriers, formed our fraternal nucleus, and, by reviving the Aryan Literature, caused its precious religious, philosophical and scientific teachings to spread among the most distant nations.

If we have not opened regular schools of adeptship in the Society, we have at least brought forward a certain body of proof that adepts exist and that adeptship is a logical necessity in the natural order of human development. We have thus helped the West to a worthier ideal of man's potentialities than it before possessed. The study of Eastern psychology has given the West a clue to certain mysteries previously baffling as, for example, in the department of mesmerism and hypnotism, and in that of the supposed posthumous relations

of the disincarnate entity with the living. It has also furnished a theory  
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of the nature and relations of Force and Matter capable of practical verification by whomsoever may learn and follow out the experimental methods of the Oriental Schools of Occult science. Our own experience leads us to say that this science and its complementary philosophy throw light upon some of the deepest problems of man and nature: in science, bridging the "Impassable Chasm," in philosophy, making it possible to formulate a consistent theory of the origin and destiny of the heavenly orbs and their progeny of kingdoms and various planes. Where Mr. Crookes stops in his quest after the meta-elements, and finds himself at a loss to trace the missing atoms in his hypothetical series of seven, Adwaita Philosophy steps in with its perfected theory of evolution of differentiated out of undifferentiated matter, Prakriti out of Mulaprakriti—the "rootless root."

With the present publication of the "Key to Theosophy," a new work that explains clearly and in plain language what our Esoteric Theosophy believes in and what it disbelieves and *positively rejects*, there will remain no more pretexts for flinging at our heads fantastic accusations. Now the "correspondents" of Spiritualistic and other *Weeklies*, as well as those who afflict respectable daily papers with denunciations of the *alleged* "dogmas of the Theosophists" that never had any existence outside our traducers' heads, will have to prove what they father upon us, by showing chapter and verse for it in our Theosophical publications, and especially in the "Key to Theosophy."

They can plead ignorance no longer; and if they would still denounce, they must do so on the authority of what is stated therein, as everyone has now an easy opportunity offered him of learning our philosophy.

To close, our Society has done more within its fourteen years of life to familiarize Western thinkers with great Aryan thought and discovery than any other agency within the past nineteen centuries. What it is likely to do in the future cannot be forecast; but experience warrants the hope that it may be very much, and that it will enlarge its already wide field of useful activity.

*Lucifer*, September, 1889

## PHILOSOPHERS AND PHILOSOPHICULES

We shall in vain interpret their words by the notions of our philosophy and the doctrines in our schools.—Locke

Knowledge of the lowest kind is *un-unified* knowledge; Science is *partially unified* knowledge; Philosophy is *completely unified* knowledge.—Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*.

NEW accusations are brought by captious censors against our Society in general and Theosophy, especially. We will summarize them as we proceed along, and notice the “freshest” denunciation.

We are accused of being illogical in the “Constitution and Rules” of the Theosophical Society; and contradictory in the practical application thereof. The accusations are framed in this wise:

In the published “Constitution and Rules” great stress is laid upon the absolutely non-sectarian character of the Society. It is constantly insisted upon that it has no creed, no philosophy, no religion, no dogmas, and even no special views of its own to advocate, still less to impose on its members. And yet—

“Why, bless us! is it not as undeniable a fact that certain very definite views of a philosophic and, strictly speaking, of a religious character are held by the Founders and most prominent members of the Society?”

“Verily so,” we answer. “But where is the alleged *contradiction* in this? Neither the Founders, nor the ‘most prominent members,’ nor yet the majority thereof, constitute *the* Society, but only a certain portion of it, which, moreover, having no creed as a body, yet allows its members to believe as and what they please.” In answer to this, we are told:

“Very true; yet these doctrines are collectively called ‘Theosophy.’ What is your explanation of this?”

We reply: "To call them so is a 'collective' mistake; one of those loose applications of terms to things that ought to be more carefully defined; and the neglect of members to do so is now bearing its fruits. In fact it is an oversight as harmful as that which followed

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the confusion of the two terms 'buddhism' and 'bodhism,' leading the Wisdom philosophy to be mistaken for the religion of Buddha."

But it is still urged that when these doctrines are examined it becomes very clear that all the work which the Society as a body has done in the East and the West depended upon them. This is obviously true in the case of the doctrine of the underlying unity of all religions and the existence, as claimed by Theosophists, of a common source called the Wisdom-religion of the secret teaching, from which, according to the same claims, all existing forms of religion are directly or indirectly derived. Admitting this, we are pressed to explain, how can the T.S. as a body be said to have no special views or doctrines to inculcate, no creed and no dogmas, when these are "the back-bone of the Society, its very heart and soul"?

To this we can only answer that it is still another error. That these teachings are most undeniably the "back-bone of the Theosophical Societies" *in the West*, but not at all in the East, where such Branch Societies number almost five to one in the West. Were these special doctrines the "heart and soul" of the whole body, then Theosophy and its T.S. would have died out in India and Ceylon since 1885—and this is surely not the case. For, not only have they been virtually abandoned at Adyar since that year, as there was no one to teach them, but while some Brahmin Theosophists were very much opposed to that teaching being made public, others—the more orthodox—positively opposed them as being inimical to their exoteric systems.

These are self-evident facts. And yet if answered that it is not so; that the T.S. as a body teaches no special religion but tolerates and virtually accepts all religions by never interfering with, or even inquiring after the religious views of its members, our cavillers and even friendly opponents, do not feel satisfied. On the contrary: ten to one they will non-plus you with the following extraordinary objection:

“How can this be, since belief in ‘Esoteric Buddhism’ is a *sine qua non* for acceptance as a Fellow of your Society?”

It is vain to protest any longer; useless, to assure our opponents that belief in *Buddhism*, whether esoteric or exoteric, is no more expected by, nor obligatory in, our Society than reverence for the monkey-god Hanuman, him of the singed tail, or belief in Mahomet and his canonized mare. It is unprofitable to try and explain that since there are in the T.S. as many Brahmins, Mussulmans, Parsis,

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Jews and Christians as there are Buddhists, and more, all cannot be expected to become followers of Buddha, nor even of Buddhism, howsoever esoteric. Nor can they be made to realize that the Occult doctrines—a few fundamental teachings of which are broadly outlined in Mr. Sinnett’s “Esoteric Buddhism” — are not the *whole* of Theosophy, nor even the whole of the secret doctrines of the East, but a very small portion of these: Occultism itself being but one of the Sciences of Theosophy, or the WISDOM-Religion, and by no means the whole of Theosophy.

So firmly rooted seem these ideas, however, in the mind of the average Britisher, that it is like telling him that there are Russians who are neither Nihilists nor Panslavists, and that every Frenchman does not make his daily meal of frogs; he will simply refuse to believe you. Prejudice against Theosophy seems to have become part of the national feeling. For almost three years the writer of the present—helped in this by a host of Theosophists—has tried in vain to sweep away from the public brain some of the most fantastic cobwebs with which it is garnished; and now she is on the eve of giving up the attempt in despair! While half of the English people will persist in confusing Theosophy with “esoteric *bud-ism*,” the remainder will keep on pronouncing the world-honoured title of Buddha as they do—*butter*.

It is they also who have started the proposition now generally adopted by the flippant press that “Theosophy is not a philosophy, but a religion,” and “a new sect.”



Theosophy is certainly not a philosophy, simply because it includes every philosophy as every science and religion. But before we prove it once more, it may be pertinent to ask how many of our critics are thoroughly posted about, say, even the true definition of the term coined by Pythagoras, that they should so flippantly deny it to a system of which they seem to know still less than they do about philosophy? Have they acquainted themselves with its best and latest definitions, or even with the views upon it, now regarded as antiquated, of Sir W. Hamilton? The answer would seem to be in the negative, since they fail to see that every such definition shows Theosophy to be the very synthesis of Philosophy in its widest abstract sense, as in its special qualifications. Let us try to give once more a clear and concise definition of Theosophy, and show it to be the very root and essence of all sciences and systems.

Theosophy is “divine” or “god-wisdom.” Therefore, it must be

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the life-blood of that system (philosophy) which is defined as “the science of things divine and human and the causes in which they are contained” (*Sir W. Hamilton*), Theosophy alone possessing the keys to those “causes.” Bearing in mind simply its most elementary division, we find that philosophy is the love of, and search after wisdom, “the knowledge of phenomena as explained by, and resolved into, causes and reasons, powers and laws.” (*Encyclopedia.*) When applied to god or gods, it became in every country *theology*; when to material nature, it was called *physics* and *natural history*; concerned with man, it appeared as *anthropology* and *psychology*; and when raised to the higher regions it becomes known as *metaphysics*. Such is philosophy — “the science of effects by their causes” — the very spirit of the doctrine of *Karma*, the most important teaching under various names of every religious philosophy, and a theosophical tenet that belongs to no one religion but explains them all. Philosophy is also called “the science of things possible, inasmuch as they are possible.” This applies directly to theosophical doctrines, inasmuch as they reject *miracle*; but it can hardly apply to theology or any dogmatic religion, every one of which *enforces belief in things impossible*; nor to the modern philosophical systems of the materialists who reject even the “possible,” whenever the latter contradicts their assertions.

Theosophy claims to explain and to reconcile religion with science. We find G. H. Lewes (*History of Philosophy*, vol. I., Prolegomena, p. xviii.) stating that "Philosophy, detaching its widest conceptions from both (Theology and Science), furnishes a doctrine which contains an *explanation of the world and human destiny*." "The office of Philosophy is the systematisation of the conceptions furnished by Science. . . . Science furnishes the knowledge, and Philosophy the doctrine" (*loc. cit.*). The latter can become complete only on condition of having that "knowledge" and that "doctrine" passed through the sieve of Divine Wisdom, or Theosophy.

Ueberweg (*History of Philosophy*) defines Philosophy as "the Science of Principles," which, as all our members know, is the claim of Theosophy in its branch-sciences of Alchemy, Astrology, and the occult sciences generally.

Hegel regards it as "the contemplation of the self-development of the Absolute," or in other words as "the representation of the Idea" (*Darstellung der Idee*).

The whole of the Secret Doctrine—of which the work bearing that  
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name is but an atom—is such a contemplation and record, as far as finite language and limited thought can record the processes of the infinite.

Thus it becomes evident that Theosophy cannot be a "religion," still less "a sect," but it is indeed the quintessence of the highest *philosophy* in all and every one of its aspects. Having shown that it falls under, and answers fully, every description of philosophy, we may add to the above a few more of Sir W. Hamilton's definitions, and prove our statement by showing the pursuit of the same in Theosophical literature. This is a task easy enough, indeed. For, does not "Theosophy" include "the science of things evidently deduced from first principles," as well as "the sciences of truths sensible and abstract"? Does it not preach "the applications of reason to its legitimate objects," and make it one of its "legitimate objects"—to inquire into "the science of the original form of the Ego, or mental self," as also to teach the secret of "the absolute indifference of the ideal and real"? All of which proves that according to every definition—old or new—of philosophy, he who studies Theosophy, studies *the highest transcendental philosophy*.

We need not go out of our way to notice at any length such foolish statements about Theosophy and Theosophists as are found almost daily in the public press. Such definitions and epithets as “new fangled religion” and “ism,” “the system *invented* by the high priestess of Theosophy,” and other remarks as silly, may be left to their own fate. They have been and in most cases will be left unnoticed.

Our age is regarded as being pre-eminently critical: an age which analyses closely, and whose public refuses to accept anything offered for its consideration before it has fully scrutinized the subject. Such is the boast of our century; but such is not quite the opinion of the impartial observer. At all events it is an opinion highly exaggerated since this boasted analytical scrutiny is applied only to that which interferes in no way with national, social, or personal prejudices. On the other hand everything that is malevolent, destructive to reputation, wicked and slanderous, is received with open embrace, accepted joyfully, and made the subject of everlasting public gossip, without any scrutiny or the slightest hesitation, but verily on a blind faith of the most elastic kind. We challenge contradiction on this point. Neither unpopular characters nor their work are judged in our day on their intrinsic value, but merely on their author’s personality and the prejudiced opinion thereon of the

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masses. In many journals no literary work of a Theosophist can ever hope to be reviewed on its own merits, apart from the gossip about its author. Such papers, oblivious of the rule first laid down by Aristotle, who says that criticism is “a standard of judging well,” refuse point blank to accept any Theosophical book apart from its writer. As a first result, the former is judged by the distorted reflection of the latter created by slander repeated in the daily papers. The personality of the writer hangs like a dark shadow between the opinion of the modern journalist and unvarnished truth; and as a final result there are few editors in all Europe and America who know anything of our Society’s tenets.

How can then Theosophy or even the T.S. be correctly judged? It is nothing new to say that the true critic ought to know something at least of the subject he undertakes to analyse. Nor is it very risky to add that not one of our press Thersites knows in the remotest way what he is talking about—this, from the large fish to the smallest fry;\* but whenever the word “Theosophy” is printed

and catches the reader's eye, there it will be generally found preceded and followed by abusive epithets and invective against the personalities of certain Theosophists. The modern editor of the Grundy pandering kind, is like Byron's hero, "*He knew not what to say, and so he swore*"—at that which passeth his comprehension. All such swearing is invariably based upon old gossip, and stale denunciations of those who stand in the moon-struck minds as the "inventors" of Theosophy. Had South Sea islanders a daily press of their own, they would be as sure to accuse the missionaries of having invented Christianity in order to bring to grief their native fetishism.

How long, O radiant gods of truth, how long shall this terrible mental cecity of the nineteenth century *Philosophists* last? How much longer are they to be told that Theosophy is no national property, no religion, but only the universal code of science and the most transcendental ethics that was ever known; that it lies at the root of every moral philosophy and religion; and that neither Theosophy *per se*, nor yet its humble unworthy vehicle, the Theosophical Society, has anything whatever to do with any personality or personalities! To identify it with these is to show oneself sadly defective in logic and even common sense. To reject the teaching and its

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\* From Jupiter Tonans of the *Saturday Review* down to the scurrilous editor of the *Mirror*. The first may be as claimed one of the greatest authorities living on *fencing*, and the other as great at "muscular" thought reading, yet both are equally ignorant of Theosophy and as blind to its real object and purposes as two owls are to daylight.

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philosophy under the pretext that its leaders, or rather one of its Founders, lies under various accusations (so far unproven) is silly, illogical and absurd. It is, in truth, as ridiculous as it would have been in the days of the Alexandrian school of Neo-Platonism, which was in its essence *Theosophy*, to reject its teachings, because it came to Plato from Socrates, and because the sage of Athens, besides his pug-nose and bald head, was accused of "blasphemy and of corrupting the youth."

Aye, kind and generous critics, who call yourselves Christians, and boast of the civilisation and progress of your age; you have only to be scratched skin

deep to find in you the same cruel and prejudiced “barbarian” as of old. Were an opportunity offered you to sit in public and legal judgment on a Theosophist, who of you would rise in your nineteenth century of Christianity higher than one of the Athenian *dikastery* with its 500 jurors who condemned Socrates to death? Which of you would scorn to become a Meletus or an Anytus, and have Theosophy and all its adherents condemned on the evidence of false witness to a like ignominious death? The hatred manifested in your daily attacks upon the Theosophists is a warrant to us for this. Did Haywood have you in his mind’s eye when he wrote of Society’s censure:—

O! that the too censorious world would learn  
This wholesome rule, and with each other bear;  
But man, as if a foe to his own species,  
Takes pleasure to report his neighbour’s faults,  
Judging with rigour every small offence,  
And prides himself in scandal. . . .

Many optimistic writers would fain make of this mercantile century of ours an age of philosophy and call it its *renaissance*. We fail to find outside of our Society any attempt at philosophical revival, unless the word “philosophy” is made to lose its original meaning. For wherever we turn we find a cold sneer at true philosophy. A sceptic can never aspire to that title. He who is capable of imagining the universe with its handmaiden Nature fortuitous, and hatched like the black hen of the fable, out of a self-created egg hanging in space, has neither the power of thinking nor the spiritual faculty of perceiving abstract truths; which power and faculty are the first requisites of a philosophical mind. We see the entire realm of modern Science honeycombed with such materialists, who yet claim to be regarded as philosophers. They either believe in naught as do the

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Secularists, or doubt according to the manner of the Agnostics. Remembering the two wise aphorisms by Bacon, the modern-day materialist is thus condemned out of the mouth of the Founder of his own inductive method, as contrasted with the deductive philosophy of Plato, accepted in Theosophy. For does not Bacon tell us that “Philosophy *when superficially studied* excites doubt;

when thoroughly explored it dispels it;" and again, "a *little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism*; but depth of philosophy bringeth man's mind about to religion"?

The logical deduction of the above is, undeniably, that none of our present Darwinians and materialists and their admirers, our critics, could have studied philosophy otherwise than very "superficially." Hence while Theosophists have a legitimate right to the title of *philosophers*—true "lovers of Wisdom"—their critics and slanderers are at best philosophicules—the progeny of modern PHILOSOPHISM.

*Lucifer*, October, 1889

## THE TIDAL WAVE

The tidal wave of deeper souls,  
Into our inmost being rolls,  
And lifts us unawares,  
Out of all meaner cares.  
Longfellow

THE great psychic and spiritual change now taking place in the realm of the human Soul, is quite remarkable. It began towards the very commencement of the now slowly vanishing last quarter of our century, and will end—so says a mystic prophecy—either for the weal or the woe of civilized humanity with the present cycle which will close in 1897. But the great change is not effected in solemn silence, nor is it perceived only by the few. On the contrary, it asserts itself amid a loud din of busy, boisterous tongues, a clash of public opinion, in comparison to which the incessant, ever increasing roar even of the noisiest political agitation seems like the rustling of the young forest foliage, on a warm spring day.

Verily the Spirit in man, so long hidden out of public sight, so carefully concealed and so far exiled from the arena of modern learning, has at last awakened. It now asserts itself and is loudly re-demanding its unrecognized

yet ever legitimate rights. It refuses to be any longer trampled under the brutal foot of Materialism, speculated upon by the Churches, and made a fathomless source of income by those who have self-constituted themselves its universal custodians. The former would deny the Divine Presence any right to existence; the latter would accentuate and prove it through their Sidesmen and Church Wardens armed with money-bags and collection-boxes. But the Spirit in man—the direct, though now but broken ray and emanation of the Universal Spirit—has at last awakened. Hitherto, while so often reviled, persecuted and abased through ignorance, ambition and greed; while so frequently turned by insane *Pride* “into a blind wanderer, like unto a buffoon mocked by a host of buffoons,” in the realm of Delusion, it remained unheard and unheeded. Today, the Spirit in man has returned like King Lear, from seeming insanity to its senses; and, raising its voice,

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it now speaks in those authoritative tones to which the men of old have listened in reverential silence through incalculable ages, until deafened by the din and roar of civilization and culture, they could hear it no longer. . . .

Look around you and behold! Think of what you see and hear, and draw therefrom your conclusions. The age of crass materialism, of Soul insanity and blindness, is swiftly passing away. A death struggle between Mysticism and Materialism is no longer at hand, but is already raging. And the party which will win the day at this supreme hour will become the master of the situation and of the future; *i.e.*, it will become the autocrat and sole disposer of the *millions* of men already born and to be born, up to the latter end of the XXth century. If the signs of the times can be trusted it is not the *Animalists* who will remain conquerors. This is warranted us by the many brave and prolific authors and writers who have arisen of late to defend the rights of Spirit to reign over matter. Many are the honest, aspiring Souls now raising themselves like a dead wall against the torrent of the muddy waters of Materialism. And facing the hitherto domineering flood which is still steadily carrying off into unknown abysses the fragments from the wreck of the dethroned, cast down Human Spirit, they now command: “So far hast thou come; but thou shalt go no further!”

Amid all this external discord and disorganisation of social harmony; amid confusion and the weak and cowardly hesitations of the masses, tied down to the narrow frames of routine, propriety and cant; amid that late dead calm of public thought that had exiled from literature every reference to Soul and Spirit and their divine working during the whole of the middle period of our century—we hear a sound arising. Like a clear, definite, far-reaching note of promise, the voice of the great human Soul proclaims, in no longer timid tones, the rise and almost the resurrection of the human Spirit in the masses. It is now awakening in the foremost representatives of thought and learning; it speaks in the lowest as in the highest, and stimulates them all to action. The renovated, life-giving Spirit in man is boldly freeing itself from the dark fetters of the hitherto all-capturing animal life and matter. Behold it, saith the poet, as, ascending on its broad, white wings, it soars into the regions of real life and light; whence, calm and godlike, it contemplates with unfeigned pity those golden idols of the modern material cult with their feet of clay, which have hitherto screened from the purblind masses

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their true and living gods. . . .

Literature—once wrote a critic—is the confession of social life, reflecting all its sins, and all its acts of baseness as of heroism. In this sense a book is of a far greater importance than any man. Books do not represent one man, but they are the mirror of a host of men. Hence the great English poet-philosopher said of books, that he knew that they were as hard to kill and as prolific as the teeth of the fabulous dragon; sow them hither and thither and armed warriors will grow out of them. To kill a good book, is equal to killing a man.

The “poet-philosopher” is right.

A new era has begun in literature, this is certain. New thoughts and new interests have created new intellectual needs; hence a new race of authors is springing up. And this new species will gradually and imperceptibly shut out the old one, those fogies of yore who, though they still reign nominally, are allowed to do so rather by force of habit than predilection. It is not he who repeats obstinately and parrot-like the old literary formulae and holds desperately to publishers’ traditions, who will find himself answering to the



new needs; not the man who prefers his narrow party discipline to the search for the long-exiled Spirit of man and the now lost Truths; not these, but verily he who, parting company with his beloved “authority,” lifts boldly and carries on unflinchingly the standard of the *Future Man*. It is finally those who, amidst the present wholesale dominion of the worship of matter, material interests and selfishness, will have bravely fought for human rights and *man’s divine nature*, who will become, if they only win, the teachers of the masses in the coming century, and so their benefactors.

But woe to the XXth century if the now reigning school of thought prevails, for Spirit would once more be made captive and silenced till the end of the now coming age. It is not the fanatics of the dead letter in general, nor the iconoclasts and Vandals who fight the new Spirit of thought, nor yet the modern Roundheads, supporters of the old Puritan religious and social traditions, who will ever become the protectors and Saviours of the now resurrecting human thought and Spirit. It is not these too willing supporters of the old cult, and the mediaeval heresies of those who guard like a relic every error of their sect or party, who jealously watch over their own thought lest it should, growing out of its teens, assimilate some fresher and more beneficent idea—not these who are the wise men of the future.

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It is not for them that the hour of the new historical era will have struck, but for those who will have learnt to express and put into practice the aspirations as well as the physical needs of the rising generations and of the now trampled-down masses. In order that one should fully comprehend *individual* life with its physiological, psychic and spiritual mysteries, he has to devote himself with all the fervour of unselfish philanthropy and love for his brother men, to studying and knowing *collective* life, or Mankind. Without preconceptions or prejudice, as also without the least fear of possible results in one or another direction, he has to decipher, understand and *remember* the deep and innermost feelings and the aspirations of the poor people’s great and suffering heart. To do this he has first “to attune his soul with that of Humanity,” as the old philosophy teaches; to thoroughly master the correct meaning of every line and word in the rapidly turning pages of the Book of Life of Mankind and to be thoroughly saturated with the truism that the latter is a whole inseparable from his own Self.

How many of such profound readers of life may be found in our boasted age of sciences and culture? Ofcourse we do not mean authors alone, but rather the practical and still unrecognized, though well known, philanthropists and altruists of our age; the people's friends, the unselfish lovers of man, and the defenders of human right to the freedom of Spirit. Few indeed are such; for they are the rare blossoms of the age, and generally the martyrs to prejudiced mobs and time-servers. Like those wonderful "Snow flowers" of Northern Siberia, which, in order to shoot forth from the cold frozen soil, have to pierce through a thick layer of hard, icy snow, so these rare characters have to fight their battles all their life with cold indifference and human harshness, and with the selfish ever-mocking world of wealth. Yet, it is only they who can carry out the task of perseverance. To them alone is given the mission of turning the "Upper Ten" of social circles from the broad and easy highway of wealth, vanity and empty pleasures into the arduous and thorny path of higher moral problems, and the perception of loftier moral duties than they are now pursuing. It is also those who, already themselves awakened to a higher Soul activity, are being endowed at the same time with literary talent, whose duty it is to undertake the part of awakening the sleeping Beauty and the Beast, in their enchanted Castle of Frivolity, to real life and light. Let all those who can, proceed fearlessly with this idea uppermost in their mind,

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and they will succeed. It is the rich who have to be regenerated, if we would do good to the poor; for it is in the former that lies the root of evil of which the "disinherited" classes are but the too luxuriant growth. This may seem at first sight paradoxical, yet it is true, as may be shown.

In the face of the present degradation of every ideal, as also of the noblest aspirations of the human heart, becoming each day more prominent in the higher classes, what can be expected from the "great unwashed"? It is the head that has to guide the feet, and the latter are to be hardly held responsible for their actions. Work, therefore, to bring about the moral regeneration of the cultured but far more immoral classes before you attempt to do the same for our ignorant younger Brethren. The latter was undertaken years ago, and is carried on to this day, yet with no perceptible good results. Is it not evident that the reason for this lies in the fact that [except] for a few earnest, sincere and all-

sacrificing workers in that field, the great majority of the volunteers consists of those same frivolous, *ultra*-selfish classes, who “play at charity” and whose ideas of the amelioration of the physical and moral status of the poor are confined to the hobby that money and the Bible alone can do it. We say that neither of these can accomplish any good; for dead-letter preaching and forced Bible-reading develop irritation and later atheism, and money as a temporary help finds its way into the tills of the public-houses rather than serves to buy bread with. The root of evil lies, therefore, in a moral not in a physical cause.

If asked, what is it then that will help, we answer boldly:—Theosophical literature; hastening to add that under this term, neither books concerning adepts and phenomena, nor the Theosophical Society publications are meant.

Take advantage of, and profit by, the “tidal wave” which is now happily overpowering half of Humanity. Speak to the awakening Spirit of Humanity, to the human Spirit and the Spirit in man, these three in One and the One in All. Dickens and Thackeray both born a century too late—or a century too early—came between two tidal waves of human spiritual thought, and though they have done yeoman service individually and induced certain partial reforms, yet they failed to touch Society and the masses at large. What the European world now needs is a dozen writers such as Dostoevsky, the Russian author, whose works, though *terra incognita* for most, are still well known on the Continent, as also in England and America

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among the cultured classes. And what the Russian novelist has done is this:— he spoke boldly and fearlessly the most unwelcome truths to the higher and *even to the official classes*—the latter a far more dangerous proceeding than the former. And yet, behold, most of the administrative reforms during the last twenty years are due to the silent and *unwelcome* influence of his pen. As one of his critics remarks, the great truths uttered by him were felt by all classes so vividly and so strongly that people whose views were most diametrically opposed to his own could not but feel the warmest sympathy for this bold writer and even expressed it to him.

In the eyes of all, friends or foes, he became the mouthpiece of the irrepressible no longer to be delayed need felt by Society, to look with absolute sincerity into the innermost depths of its own soul, to become the impartial judge of its own actions and its own aspirations.

Every new current of thought, every new tendency of the age had and ever will have, its rivals, as its enemies, some counteracting it boldly but unsuccessfully, others with great ability. But such, are always made of the same paste, so to say, common to all. They are goaded to resistance and objections by the same external, selfish and worldly objects, the same material ends and calculations as those that guided their opponents. While pointing out other problems and advocating other methods, in truth, they cease not for one moment to live with their foes in a world of the same and common interests, as also to continue in the same fundamental identical views on life.

That which then became necessary was a man, who, standing outside of any partizanship or struggle for supremacy, would bring his past life as a guarantee of the sincerity and honesty of his views and purposes; one whose personal suffering would be an *imprimatur* to the firmness of his convictions, a writer finally, of undeniable literary genius:— for such a man alone, could pronounce words capable of awakening the true spirit in a Society which had drifted away in a wrong direction.

Just such a man was Dostoevsky—the patriot-convict, the galley-slave, returned from Siberia; that writer, far-famed in Europe and Russia, the pauper buried by voluntary subscription, the soul-stirring bard, of everything poor, insulted, injured, humiliated; he who unveiled with such merciless cruelty the plagues and sores of his age. . . .

It is writers of this kind that are needed in our day of reawakening; not authors writing for wealth or fame, but fearless apostles of the living Word of Truth; moral healers of the pustulous sores of our century. France has her Zola

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still true to life—the degradation and moral leprosy of his people. But Zola, while castigating the vices of the lower classes, has never dared to lash higher with his pen than the *petite bourgeoisie*, the immorality of the higher classes being ignored by him. Result: the peasants who do not read novels have not

been in the least affected by his writings, and the *bourgeoisie* caring little for the *plebs*, took such notice of *Pot bouille* as to make the French realist lose all desire of burning his fingers again at their family pots. From the first then, Zola has pursued a path which though bringing him to fame and fortune has led him nowhere in so far as salutary effects are concerned.

Whether Theosophists, in the present or future, will ever work out a practical application of the suggestion is doubtful. To write novels with a moral sense in them deep enough to stir Society, requires a great literary talent and a *born* theosophist as was Dostoevsky—Zola standing outside of any comparison with him. But such talents are rare in all countries. Yet, even in the absence of such great gifts one may do good in a smaller and humbler way by taking note and exposing in impersonal narratives the crying vices and evils of the day, by word and deed, by publications and practical example. Let the force of that example impress others to follow it; and then instead of deriding our doctrines and aspirations the men of the XXth, if not the XIXth century will see clearer, and judge with knowledge and according to facts instead of prejudging agreeably to rooted misconceptions. Then and not till then will the world find itself forced to acknowledge that it was wrong, and that Theosophy alone can gradually create a mankind as harmonious and as simple-souled as Kosmos itself; but to effect this theosophists have to act as such. Having helped to awaken the spirit in many a man—we say this boldly, challenging contradiction—shall we now stop instead of swimming with the Tidal Wave?

*Lucifer*, November, 1889

## WHY I DO NOT RETURN TO INDIA

To my Brothers of Aryavarta,

In April, 1890, five years elapsed since I left India.

Great kindness has been shown to me by many of my Hindu brethren at various times since I left; especially this year (1890), when, ill almost to death, I have received from several Indian Branches letters of sympathy, and

assurances that they had not forgotten her to whom India and the Hindus have been most of her life far dearer than her own Country.

It is, therefore, my duty to explain why I do not return to India and my attitude with regard to the new leaf turned in the history of the T.S. by my being formally placed at the head of the Theosophical Movement in Europe. For it is not solely on account of bad health that I do not return to India. Those who have saved me from death at Adyar, and twice since then, could easily keep me alive there as They do me here. There is a far more serious reason. A line of conduct has been traced for me here, and I have found among the English and Americans what I have so far vainly sought for in India.

In Europe and America, during the last three years, I have met with hundreds of men and women who have the courage to avow their conviction of the real existence of the Masters, and who are working for Theosophy on *Their* lines and under *Their* guidance, given through my humble self.

In India, on the other hand, ever since my departure, the true spirit of devotion to the Masters and the courage to avow it has steadily dwindled away. At Adyar itself, increasing strife and conflict has raged between personalities; uncalled for and utterly undeserved animosity—almost hatred—has been shown towards me by several members of the staff. There seems to have been something strange and uncanny going on at Adyar, during these last years. No sooner does a European, most Theosophically inclined, most devoted to the Cause, and the personal friend of myself or the President, set his foot in Headquarters, than he becomes forthwith a personal enemy to one or other of us, and what is worse, ends by injuring and deserting the Cause.

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Let it be understood at once that I accuse no one. Knowing what I do of the activity of the forces of Kali Yuga, at work to impede and ruin the Theosophical Movement, I do not regard those who have become, one after the other, my enemies—and that without any fault of my own—as I might regard them, were it otherwise.

One of the chief factors in the reawakening of Aryavarta which has been part of the work of the Theosophical Society, was the ideal of the Masters. But owing

to want of judgment, discretion, and discrimination, and the liberties taken with Their names and *Personalities*, great misconception arose concerning Them. I was under the most solemn oath and pledge never to reveal the whole truth to anyone, excepting to those who, like Damodar, had been finally selected and called by Them. All that I was then permitted to reveal was, that there existed somewhere such great men; that some of Them were Hindus; that They were learned as none others in all the ancient wisdom of Gupta Vidya, and had acquired all the Siddhis; not as these are represented in tradition and the “blinds” of ancient writings, but as they are in fact and nature; and also that I was a Chela of one of Them. However, in the fancy of some Hindus, the most wild and ridiculous fancies soon grew up concerning Them. They were referred to as “Mahatmas” and still some too enthusiastic friends belittled Them with their strange fancy-pictures; our opponents, describing a Mahatma as a full Jivanmukta, urged that, as such, He was debarred from holding any communication whatsoever with persons living in the world. They also maintained that as this is the Kali Yuga, it was impossible that there could be any Mahatmas at all in our age.

These early misconceptions notwithstanding, the idea of the Masters, and belief in Them, has already brought its good fruit in India. Their chief desire was to preserve the true religious and philosophical spirit of ancient India; to defend the Ancient Wisdom contained in its Darshanas and Upanishads against the systematic assaults of the missionaries; and finally to reawaken the dormant ethical and patriotic spirit in those youths in whom it had almost disappeared owing to college education. Much of this has been achieved by and through the Theosophical Society, in spite of all its mistakes and imperfections.

Had it not been for Theosophy, would India have had her Tukaram Tatyia doing now the priceless work he does, and which no one in India ever thought of doing before him? Without the Theosophical Society

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would India have ever thought of wrenching from the hands of learned but unspiritual Orientalists the duty of reviving, translating and editing the Sacred Books of the East, of popularizing and selling them at a far cheaper rate, and at the same time in a far more correct form than had ever been done at Oxford? Would our respected and devoted brother Tukaram Tatyia himself have ever

thought of doing so, had he not joined the Theosophical Society? Would your political Congress itself have even been a possibility, without the Theosophical Society? Most important of all, one at least among you has fully benefited by it; and if the Society had never given to India but that one future Adept (Damodar) who has now the prospect of becoming one day a Mahatma, Kali Yuga notwithstanding, that alone would be proof that it was not founded at New York and transplanted to India in vain. Finally, if any one among the three hundred millions of India can demonstrate, proof in hand, that Theosophy, the T.S., or even my humble self, have been the means of doing the slightest harm, either to the country or any Hindu, that the Founders have been guilty of teaching pernicious doctrines, or offering bad advice—then and then only, can it be imputed to me as a crime that I have brought forward the ideal of the Masters and founded the Theosophical Society.

Aye, my good and never-to-be-forgotten Hindu Brothers, the name alone of the holy Masters, which was at one time invoked with prayers for Their blessings, from one end of India to the other—Their name alone has wrought a mighty change for the better in your land. It is not to Colonel Olcott or to myself that you owe anything, but verily to these names, which, but a few years ago, had become a household word in your mouths.

Thus it was that, so long as I remained at Adyar, things went on smoothly enough, because one or other of the Masters was almost constantly present among us, and their spirit ever protected the Theosophical Society from real harm. But in 1884, Colonel Olcott and myself left for a visit to Europe, and while we were away the Padri-Coulomb “thunderbolt” descended. I returned in November, and was taken most dangerously ill. It was during that time and Colonel Olcott’s absence in Burma, that the seeds of all future strifes, and—let me say at once—disintegration of the Theosophical Society, were planted by our enemies. What with the Patterson-Coulomb-Hodgson conspiracy, and the faint-heartedness of the chief Theosophists, that the Society did not then and there collapse should

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be sufficient proof of how it was protected. Shaken in their belief, the faint-hearted began to ask: “Why, if the Masters are genuine Mahatmas, have They allowed such things to take place, or why have They not used Their powers to



destroy this plot or that conspiracy, or even this or that man and woman?" Yet it had been explained numberless times that no Adept of the Right Path will interfere with the just workings of Karma. Not even the greatest of Yogis can divert the progress of Karma, or arrest the natural results of actions for than a short period, and even in that case, these results will only reassert themselves later with even tenfold force, for such is the occult law of Karma and the Nidanas.

Nor again will even the greatest of phenomena aid real spiritual progress. We have each of us to win our Moksha or Nirvana by our own merit, not because a Guru or Deva will help to conceal our shortcomings. There is no merit in having been created an immaculate Deva or in being God; but there is the eternal bliss of Moksha looming forth for the man who becomes *as a God* and Deity by his own personal exertions. It is the mission of Karma to punish the guilty and not the duty of any Master. But those who act up to Their teaching and live the life of which They are the best exemplars, will never be abandoned by Them, and will always find Their beneficent help whenever needed, whether obviously or invisibly. This is of course addressed to those who have not yet quite lost their faith in Masters; those who have never believed, or have ceased to believe in Them, are welcome to their own opinions. No one, except themselves perhaps someday, will be the losers thereby.

As for myself, who can charge me with having acted like an imposter? with having, for instance, taken one single pie\* from any living soul? with having ever asked for money, or with having accepted it, notwithstanding that I was repeatedly offered large sums? Those who, in spite of this, have chosen to think otherwise, will have to explain what even my traducers of the Padri class and Psychical Research Society have been unable to explain to this day, *viz.*, the motive for such fraud. They will have to explain why, instead of taking and making money, I gave away to the Society every penny I earned by writing for the papers; why at the same time I nearly killed myself with overwork and incessant labour year after year, until my health gave way, so that but for my Master's repeated help, I should have died long ago from the effects of such voluntary hard labour.

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\* *Pie*, i.e., "penny." A *pie* is the smallest Anglo-Indian coin.—Eds.

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For the absurd Russian spy theory, if it still finds credit in some idiotic heads, has long ago disappeared, at any rate from the official brains of the Anglo-Indians.

If, I say, at that critical moment, the members of the Society, and especially its leaders at Adyar, Hindu and European, had stood together as one man, firm in their conviction of the reality and power of the Masters, Theosophy would have come out more triumphantly than ever, and none of their fears would have ever been realized, however cunning the legal traps set for me, and whatever mistakes and errors of judgment I, their humble representative, might have made in the executive conduct of the matter.

But the loyalty and courage of the Adyar Authorities, and of the few Europeans who had trusted in the Masters, were not equal to the trial when it came. In spite of my protests, I was hurried away from Headquarters. Ill as I was, almost dying in truth, as the physicians said, yet I protested, and would have battled for Theosophy in India to my last breath, had I found loyal support. But some feared legal entanglements, some the Government, while my best friends believed in the doctors' threats that I must die if I remained in India. So I was sent to Europe to regain my strength, with a promise of speedy return to my beloved Aryavarta.

Well, I left, and immediately intrigues and rumours began. Even at Naples already, I learnt that I was reported to be meditating to start in Europe "a rival Society" and "burst up Adyar" (!!). At this I laughed. Then it was rumoured that I had been *abandoned* by the Masters, been disloyal to Them, done this or the other. None of it had the slightest truth or foundation in fact. Then I was accused of being, at best, a hallucinated *medium*, who had mistaken "spooks" for living Masters; while others declared that the real H. P. Blavatsky was dead—had died through the injudicious use of *Kundalini*—and that the form had been forthwith seized upon by a Dugpa Chela, who was the present H.P.B. Some again held me to be a witch, a sorceress, who for purposes of her own played the part of a philanthropist and lover of India, while in reality bent upon the destruction of all those who had the misfortune to be *psychologised* by me.

In fact, the powers of psychology attributed to me by my enemies, whenever a fact or a “phenomenon” could not be explained away, are so great that they alone would have made of me a most remarkable Adept—independently of any Masters or Mahatmas. In short, up to 1886, when the S.P.R. Report was published

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and this soap-bubble burst over our heads, it was one long series of false charges, every mail bringing something new. I will name no one; or does it matter who said a thing and who repeated it. One thing is certain; with the exception of Colonel Olcott, everyone seemed to banish the Masters from their thoughts and Their spirit from Adyar. Every imaginable incongruity was connected with these holy names, and I alone was held responsible for every disagreeable event that took place, every mistake made. In a letter received from Damodar in 1886, he notified me that the Masters’ influence was becoming with every day weaker at Adyar; that They were daily represented as less than “second-rate Yogis,” totally denied by some, while even those who believed in, and had remained loyal to Them, feared even to pronounce Their names. Finally, he urged me very strongly to return, saying that of course the Masters would see that my health should not suffer from it. I wrote to that effect to Colonel Olcott, imploring him to let me return, and promising that I would live at Pondicherry, if needed, should my presence not be desirable at Adyar. To this I received the ridiculous answer that no sooner should I return, than I should be sent to the Andaman Islands as a Russian spy, which of course Colonel Olcott subsequently found out to be absolutely untrue. The readiness with which such a futile pretext for keeping me from Adyar was seized upon, shows in clear colours the ingratitude of those to whom I had given my life and health. Nay more, urged on, as I understood, by the Executive Council, under the entirely absurd pretext that, in case of my death, my heirs might claim a share in the Adyar property, the President sent me a legal paper to sign, by which I formally renounced any right to the Headquarters or even to live there without the Council’s permission. This, although I had spent several thousand rupees of my own private money, and had devoted my share of the profits of *The Theosophist* to the purchase of the house and its furniture. Nevertheless I signed the renunciation without one word of protest. I saw I was not wanted, and remained in Europe in spite of my ardent desire to return to India. How

could I do otherwise than feel that all my labours had been rewarded with ingratitude, when my most urgent wishes to return were met with flimsy excuses and answers inspired by those who were hostile to me?

The result of this is too apparent. You know too well the state of affairs in India for me to dwell longer upon details. In a word, since my departure, not only has the activity of the movement there

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gradually slackened, but those for whom I had the deepest affections, regarding them as a mother would her own sons, have turned against me. While in the West, no sooner had I accepted the invitation to come to London, than I found people—the S.P.R. Report and wild suspicions and hypotheses rampant in every direction notwithstanding—to believe in the truth of the great Cause I have struggled for, and in my own *bona fides*.

Acting under the Master's orders I began a new movement in the West on the original lines; I founded *Lucifer*, and the Lodge which bears my name. Recognizing the splendid work done at Adyar by Colonel Olcott and others to carry out the second of the three objects of the T.S., *viz.*, to promote the study of Oriental Literature, I was determined to carry out here the two others. All know with what success this had been attended. Twice Colonel Olcott was asked to come over, and then I learned that I was once more wanted in India — at any rate by some. But the invitation came too late; neither would my doctor permit it, nor can I, if I would be true to my life-pledge and vows, now live at the Headquarters from which the Masters and Their spirit are virtually banished. The presence of Their portraits will not help; They are a dead letter. The truth is that I can never return to India in any other capacity than as Their faithful agent. And as, unless They appear among the Council *in propria persona* (which They will certainly never do now), no advice of mine on occult lines seems likely to be accepted, as the fact of my relations with the Masters is doubted, even totally denied by some; and I myself having no right to the Headquarters, what reason is there, therefore, for me to live at Adyar?

The fact is this: In my position, half-measures are worse than none. People have either to believe entirely in me, or to *honestly* disbelieve. No one, no Theosophist, is compelled to believe, but it is worse than useless for people to

ask me to help them, if they do not believe in me. Here in Europe and America are many who have never flinched in their devotion to Theosophy; consequently the spread of Theosophy and of the T.S., in the West, during the last three years, has been extraordinary. The chief reason for this is that I was enabled and encouraged by the devotion of an ever-increasing number of members to the Cause and to Those who guide it, to establish an Esoteric Section, in which I can teach something of what I have learned to those who have confidence in me, and who prove this confidence by their disinterested work for Theosophy and

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the T.S. For the future, then, it is my intention to devote my life and energy to the E.S., and to the teaching of those whose confidence I retain. It is useless that I should use the little time I have before me to justify myself before those who do not feel sure about the real existence of the Masters, only because, misunderstanding me, it therefore suits them to suspect me.

And let me say at once, to avoid misconception, that my only reason for accepting the exoteric direction of European affairs, was to save those who really have Theosophy at heart and work for it and the Society, from being hampered by those who not only do not care for Theosophy, as laid out by the Masters, but are entirely working against both, endeavouring to undermine and counteract the influence of the good work done, both by open denial of the existence of the Masters, by declared and bitter hostility to myself, and also by joining forces with the most desperate enemies of our Society.

Half-measures, I repeat, are no longer possible. Either I have stated the truth as I know it about the Masters, and teach what I have been taught by them, or I have invented both Them and the Esoteric Philosophy. There are those among the Esotericists of the inner group who say that if I have done the latter, then I must myself be a "Master." However it may be, there is no alternative to this dilemma.

The only claim, therefore, which India could ever have upon me would be strong only in proportion to the activity of the Fellows there for Theosophy and their loyalty to the Masters. You should not need my presence among you to convince you of the truth of Theosophy, any more than your American brothers

need it. A conviction that wanes when any particular personality is absent is no conviction at all. Know, moreover, that any further proof and teaching I can give only to the Esoteric Section, and this for the following reason: its members are the only ones whom I have the right to expel for open disloyalty to their pledge (*not to me, H.P.B., but to their Higher Self and the Mahatmic aspect of the Masters*), a privilege I cannot exercise with F.T.S.'s at large, yet one which is the only means of cutting off a diseased limb from the healthy body of the Tree, and thus save it from infection. I can care only for those who cannot be swayed by every breath of calumny, and every sneer, suspicion, or criticism, whoever it may emanate from.

Thenceforth let it be clearly understood that the rest of my life  
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is devoted only to those who believe in the Masters, and are willing to work for Theosophy as They understand it, and for the T.S. on the lines upon which They originally established it.

If, then, my Hindu brothers really and earnestly desire to bring about the regeneration of India, if they wish to ever bring back the days when the Masters, in the ages of India's ancient glory, came freely among them, guiding and teaching the people; then let them cast aside all fear and hesitation, and turn a new leaf in the history of the Theosophical Movement. Let them bravely rally around the President-Founder, whether I am in India or not, as around those few true Theosophists who have remained loyal throughout, and bid defiance to all calumniators and ambitious malcontents—both without and within the Theosophical Society.

*Theosophist*, January, 1922  
(written April, 1890)

### SHE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH

[In the will of the late H. P. Blavatsky was made the request that her friends should assemble on the anniversary of her death and read passages from the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Light of Asia*. This was accordingly done on

May 8th, in Adyar, London, New York, and other places. In New York, among other interesting items reported at the time, Mrs. J. Campbell Keightley read, after a few introductory remarks, extracts from the private letters of H.P.B. In response to many requests we print these as follows. The remarks, being extemporaneous, are quoted from memory.]

Mr. President, Friends:

This being the first occasion upon which I have ever spoken in public, I will ask you to condone my inexperience while I make a few remarks upon the extracts chosen from the letters of Madame Blavatsky to a few friends.

In regard to Mme. Blavatsky, the world, to use a phrase of Charles Lamb, was "the victim of imperfect sympathies." It failed to know her; that failure was its own great loss. Among the many accusations flung at her was one which, at the last ditch, it never failed to make; it said that Mme. Blavatsky had no Moral Ideal. This was false.

She had this ideal; she had also the Eastern reverence for an ideal—a reverence to the Western world unknown. We might hence expect to find her teaching that Ideal to a great extent under the privacy of a pledge, and there are indications of this in all that has been published concerning the Esoteric School. That her ideal was ever present to her mind and heart these extracts from private letters to her friends will show.

Her main teachings can be reduced to the following propositions:

That Morals have a basis in Law and in fact.

That Moral Law *is* Natural Law.

That Evolution makes for Righteousness.

That the "fundamental identity of all souls with the Oversoul" renders moral contagion possible through the subtle psychic medium.

That the Spiritual Identity of all Being renders Universal Brotherhood the only possible path for truth-seeking men.

She distrusted the appeal to sentiment. She saw that existing religions fail in it; that modern civilization frustrates it; that

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emotionalism is no basis for the Will which annuls all temptations of the flesh, and the Faith which shall make mountains move.

Hence she taught the *scientific* aspect and bearing of sin. Taught that Universal Law, in every department, rigidly opposes and avenges the

commission of sin, showing the free will of man counterbalanced by the declaration "Vengeance is mine, saith the *Law*; I will repay." She taught that the awful responsibility of the occultist, extending down to the least atom of substance, forever forbade our asking that question of Cain which we do ask daily—"Am I my Brother's keeper?" She taught that the deep reply reverberated down the ages, as we may read it in our bibles: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground."

Justice she taught, and the true discrimination of it; Mercy, too, and Love. She wrote of one: "He has developed an extraordinary hatred to me, but I have loved him too much to hate him." Above all she taught that "the pure in heart see God"; taught it as a scientific fact; showed it to be, so to say, materially as well as spiritually possible through the spiritual laws working in the one Substance, and, in the showing, lifted our courage higher than the visible stars.

The first of these extracts from H.P.B.'s letters is dated Nov. 29, 1878, and is interesting from the fact that it speaks of the original institution of three degrees of the T.S., a fact often disputed in these later days.

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YOU will find the aims and purposes of the Theosophical Society in the two inclosed circulars. It is a brotherhood of humanity, established to make away with all and every dogmatic religion founded on dead-letter interpretation, and to teach people and every member to believe but in one impersonal God; to rely upon his (man's) own powers; to consider himself his only saviour; to learn the infinitude of the occult psychological powers hidden within his own physical man; to develop these powers; and to give him the assurance of the immortality of his divine spirit and the survival of his soul; to make him regard every man of whatever race, color, or creed, and to prove to him that the only truths revealed to man by superior men (not a god) are contained in the Vedas of the ancient Aryas of India. Finally, to demonstrate to him that there never were, will be, nor are, any miracles; that there can be nothing 'supernatural' in this universe, and that on earth, at least, the only god is man himself.

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"It lies within his powers to become and to continue a god after the death of his



physical body. Our society receives nothing the possibility of which it cannot demonstrate at will. We believe in the phenomena, but we disbelieve in the constant intervention of 'spirits' to produce such phenomena. We maintain that the embodied spirit has more powers to produce them than a disembodied one. We believe in the existence of spirits, but of many classes, the human spirits being but one class of the many.

"The Society requires of its members but the time they can give it without encroaching upon that due to their private affairs. There are three degrees of membership. It is but in the highest or third that members have to devote themselves quasi entirely to the work of the T.S. . . .

"Everyone is eligible, provided he is an honest, pure man or woman, no free lover, and especially no *bigoted* Christian. We go dead against idolatry, and as much against materialism."

"Of the two unpardonable sins, the first is Hypocrisy—Peck-sniffianism. Better one hundred mistakes through unwise, injudicious sincerity and indiscretion than Tartuffe-like *saintship* as the whitened sepulchre, and rottenness and decay within. . . . This is not unpardonable, but very dangerous, . . . doubt, eternal wavering—it leads one to wreck. . . . One little period passed without doubt, murmuring, and despair; what a gain it would be; a period a mere tithe of what every one of us has had to pass through. But every one forges his own destiny."

"Those who fall off from our *living* human Mahatmas to fall into the *Saptarishi*—the Star Rishis, are no Theosophists."

"Allow me to quote from a very esoterically wise and exoterically foolish book, the work and production of some ancient friends and foes: 'There is more joy in the Kingdom of Heaven for one repentant sinner than for ninety-nine saints.' . . . Let us be just and give to Caesar what *is* Caesar's, however imperfect, even vicious, Caesar may be. 'Blessed be the peacemakers,' said another old adept of 107 years B.C., and the saying is alive and kicks to the present day amongst the Masters."

“The Esoteric Section is to be a School for earnest Theosophists who would learn more (than they can from published works) of the true Esoteric tenets. . . . There is no room for despotism or ruling in it; no money to pay or make; no glory for me, but a series of misconceptions, slanders, suspicions, and ingratitude in almost an

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immediate future:<sup>1</sup> but if out of the . . . Theosophists who have already pledged themselves I can place on the right and true path half a dozen or so, I will die happy. Many are called, few are chosen. Unless they comply with the lines you speak of, traced originally by the Masters, they *cannot* succeed.<sup>2</sup> I can only show the way to those whose eyes are open to the truth, whose souls are full of altruism, charity, and love for the whole creation, and who think of themselves *last*. The blind . . . will never profit by these teachings. They would make of the ‘strait gate’ a large public thoroughfare leading not to the Kingdom of Heaven, now and hereafter, to the Buddha-Christos in the Sanctuary of our innermost souls, but to their own idols with feet of clay. . . . The Esoteric Section is not of the earth, earthy; it does not interfere with the exoteric administration of Lodges; takes no stock in *external Theosophy*; has no officers or staff; needs no halls or meeting rooms... Finally, it requires neither subscription fees nor money, for ‘as I have not so received it, I *shall* not so impart it,’ and that I would rather starve in the gutter than take one penny for my teaching of the sacred truths. . . . Here I am with perhaps a few years or a few months only (Master knoweth) to remain on earth in this loathsome, old, ruined body; and I am ready to answer the call of any good Theosophist who *works for Theosophy on the lines traced by the Masters*, and as ready as the Rosicrucian pelican to feed with my heart’s blood the chosen ‘Seven.’ He who would have his inheritance before I die . . . let him ask first. What I have, or rather what I am permitted to give, I will give.”

“Many are called but few are chosen. Well, no need breaking my heart over spilt milk. Come what may, I shall die at my post, Theosophical banner in hand, and while I live I *do* fervently hope that all the splashes of mud thrown at it will reach me personally. At any rate I mean to continue protecting the glorious truth with my old carcass so long as it lasts. And when I do drop down for good, I hope in such Theosophists as . . . and . . . to carry on the work and protect

the banner of Truth in their turn. Oh, I do feel so sick at heart in looking round and perceiving nothing save selfishness, personal vanity, and mean little ambitions. What is this about 'the soldier not being free'?<sup>3</sup> Of course no soldier can be free to move about his physical body wherever he likes. But what has the esoteric

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<sup>1</sup> Dated December 1, 1888. Subsequent events proved the prediction true.

<sup>2</sup> Her correspondent had quoted the Simla letter of "K.H." in *The Occult World*.

<sup>3</sup> Referring to the dilemma of an F.T.S. soldier in the army, presented to her.

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teaching to do with the outward man? A soldier may be stuck to his sentry box like a barnacle to its ship, and the soldier's Ego be free to go where it likes and think what it likes best. . . . No man is required to carry a burden heavier than he can bear; nor do more than it is possible for him to do. A man of means, independent and free from any duty, will have to move about and go, missionary-like, to teach Theosophy to the Sadducees and the Gentiles of Christianity. A man tied by his duty to one place has no right to desert it in order to fulfill another duty, let it be however much greater; for the first *duty* taught in Occultism is to do one's duty unflinchingly *by every duty*. Pardon these seemingly absurd paradoxes and Irish Bulls; but I have to repeat this *ad nauseam usque* for the last month. 'Shall I risk to be ordered to leave my wife, desert my children and home if I pledge myself?' asks one. 'No,' I say, 'because he who plays truant in one thing will be faithless in another. No real, genuine Master will accept a chela who sacrifices *anyone* except himself to go to that Master.' If one cannot, owing to circumstances or his position in life, become a full adept in this existence, let him prepare his mental luggage for the next, so as to be ready at the first call when he is once more reborn. What one has to do before he pledges himself irretrievably is, to probe one's nature to the bottom, for self-discipline is based on self-knowledge. It is said somewhere that self-discipline often leads one to a state of self-confidence which becomes vanity and pride in the long run. I say, foolish is the man who says so. This may happen only when our motives are of a worldly character or selfish; otherwise, self-confidence is the first step to that kind of Will which will make a mountain move:

“ ‘To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou can’st not then be false to any man.’

“The question is whether Polonius meant this for worldly wisdom or for occult knowledge; and by ‘own self’ the *false Ego* (or the terrestrial personality) or that spark in us which is but the reflection of the ‘One Universal Ego.’

“But I am dreaming. I had but four hours’ sleep. . . . Give my sincere, fraternal respects to . . . , and let him try to feel my old hand giving him the *Master’s grip*, the strong grip of the Lion’s paw of Punjab (not of the tribe of Judah) across the Atlantic. To you my eternal affection and gratitude.

Your H.P.B.”

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“To live like cats and dogs in the T.S. is *positively* against all rules—and wishes of ‘the Masters,’ as against our Brotherhood—so-called—and all its rules. They are disgusted. They look on, and in that look (oh Lord! if you could only see it as I have!) there’s an ocean deep of sad disgust, contempt, and sorrow. . . . The ideal was besmeared with mud, but as it is no golden idol on feet of clay it stands to this day immovable . . . and what the profane see is only their own mud thrown with their own hands, and which has created a veil, an impassable barrier between them and the ideal. . . without touching the latter. . . . Have a large Society, the more the better; all that is chaff and husk is bound to fall away in time; all that is grain will remain. But the *seed* is in the bad and evil man as well as in the good ones,—only it is more difficult to call into life and cause it to germinate. The good husbandman does not stop to pick out the seeds from the handful. He gives them all their chance, and even some of the half-rotten seeds come to life when thrown into good soil. Be that soil. . . . Look at me—the universal Theosophical manure—the rope for whose hanging and lashing is made out of the flax I have sown, and each strand it is twisted of represents a ‘mistake’ (so-called) of mine. Hence, if you fail only nine times out of ten in your selections you are successful one time out of ten —and that’s more than many other Theosophists can say. . . . Those few true souls will be the nucleus for future success, and their children will. . . . Let us sow good—and if evil crops up, it will be blown away by the wind like all other things in this life—in its time.”

“I am the Mother and the Creator of the Society; it has my magnetic fluid, and the child has inherited all of its parent’s physical, psychical, and spiritual attributes—faults and virtues if any. Therefore I alone and to a degree . . . can serve as a lightning conductor of Karma for it. I was asked whether I was willing, when on the point of dying—and I said Yes—for it was the only means to save it. Therefore I consented to live—which in my case means to suffer physically during twelve hours of the day—mentally twelve hours of night, when I get rid of the physical shell. . . . It is true about the Kali Yuga. Once that I have offered myself as the goat of atonement, the Kali Yuga<sup>4</sup> recognizes its own—whereas any other would shrink from such a thing—as I am doomed and overburdened in this life worse than a poor weak donkey full of sores made to drag up hill a cart load of heavy rocks. You are the *first* one to whom I tell

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<sup>4</sup> *Kali Yuga*—the Dark Age, the present cycle.

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it, because you force me into the confession. . . . You have a wide and noble prospect before you if you do not lose patience. . . . Try to hear the small voice within.”

“Yes, there are ‘two persons’ in me. But what of that? So there are two in you; only mine is conscious and responsible—and yours is not. So you are happier than I am. I *know* you sympathise with me, and you do so because you feel that I have always stood up for you, and will do so to the bitter or the happy end—as the case may be.”

“He may be moved to doubt—and that is the beginning of wisdom.”

“Well, sir, and my *only friend*, the crisis is nearing. I am ending my *Secret Doctrine*, and you *are* going to replace me, or take my place in America. I *know you will have success* if you do not lose heart; but do, do remain true to the Masters and *Their* Theosophy and the *names*. . . . May *They* help you and allow us to send you our best blessings. . . .”

“There are traitors, conscious and *unconscious*. There is falsity and there is injudiciousness. . . . Pray do not imagine that because I *hold my tongue as bound by my oath and duty* I do not know who is who. . . . I must say nothing, however

much I may be disgusted. But as the ranks thin around us, and one after the other our best intellectual forces depart, to turn into bitter enemies, I say—Blessed are the pure-hearted who have only intuition—for intuition is better than intellect.”

“The duty,—let alone happiness—of every Theosophist—and especially Esotericist—is certainly to help others to carry their burden; but no Theosophist or other has the right to sacrifice himself unless *he knows for a certainty* that by so doing he helps someone and does not sacrifice himself in vain for the empty glory of the abstract virtue. . . . Psychic and vital energy are limited in every man. It is like a capital. If you have a dollar a day and spend two, at the end of the month you will have a deficit of \$30.”

“One refuses to pledge himself not to listen without protest to any evil thing said of a brother—as though Buddha our divine Lord—or Jesus—or any great initiate has ever condemned any one on hearsay. Ah, poor, poor, blind man, not to know the difference between condemning in words—which is uncharitable—and withdrawing

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in silent pity from the culprit and thus punishing him, but still giving him a chance to repent of his ways. No man will ever speak ill of his brother without cause and proof of the iniquity of that brother, and he will abstain from all backbiting, slandering, and gossip. No man should ever say behind a Brother’s back what he would not say openly to his face. Insinuations against one’s neighbor are often productive of more evil consequences than gross slander. Every Theosophist has to fight and battle against evil,—but he must have the courage of his words and actions, and what he does must be done openly and honestly before all.”

“Every pledge or promise unless built upon four pillars—absolute sincerity, unflinching determination, unselfishness of purpose, and *moral power*, which makes the fourth support and equipoises the three other pillars—is an insecure building. The pledges of those who are sure of the strength of the fourth alone are recorded.”

“Are you children, that you want marvels? Have you so little faith as to need constant stimulus, as a dying fire needs fuel! . . . Would you let the nucleus of a splendid Society die under your hands like a sick man under the hands of a quack? . . . You should never forget what a solemn thing it is for us to exert our powers and raise the dread sentinels that lie at the threshold. They cannot hurt *us*, but they can avenge themselves by precipitating themselves upon the unprotected neophyte. You are all like so many children playing with fire because it is pretty, when you ought to be men studying philosophy for its own sake.”

“If among you there was one who embodied in himself the idea depicted, it would be my duty to relinquish the teacher’s chair to him. For it would be the extreme of audacity in me to claim the possession of so many virtues. That the Masters do in proportion to their respective temperaments and stages of Bodhisatvic development possess such Paramitas, constitutes their right to our reverence as our Teachers. It should be the aim of each and all of us to strive with all the intensity of our natures to follow and imitate Them. . . . Try to realize that progress is made step by step, and each step gained by *heroic* effort. Withdrawal means despair or timidity. . . . Conquered passions, like slain tigers, can no longer turn and rend you. Be hopeful then, not despairing. With *each* morning’s awakening try to live through the day in harmony with the Higher Self. ‘Try’ is the battle-cry taught by the teacher to each pupil. Naught else is *expected* of you. *One who does his best does all that*

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*can be asked.* There is a moment when even a Buddha ceases to be a sinning mortal and takes his first step toward Buddhahood. The sixteen Paramitas (virtues) are not for priests and yogis alone, as said, but stand for models for us all to strive after—and neither priest nor yogi, Chela nor Mahatma, ever attained all at once. . . . The idea that sinners and not saints are expected to enter the Path is emphatically stated in the *Voice of the Silence.*”

“I do not believe in the success of the . . . T.S. unless you assimilate *Master* or myself; unless you work with me and Them, hand in hand, heart. . . . Yes; let him who offers himself to Masters as a chela, unreservedly, . . . let him do what *he can* if he would ever see Them. . . . Then things were done *because I alone was responsible for the issues.* I alone had to bear Karma in case of failure and *no*

*reward in case of success. . . . I saw the T.S. would be smashed or that I had to offer myself as the Scapegoat for atonement. It is the latter I did. The T.S. lives,—I am killed. Killed in my honor, fame, name, in everything H.P.B, held near and dear, for this body is Mine and I feel acutely through it. ... I may err in my powers as H.P.B. I have not worked and toiled for forty years, playing parts, risking my future reward, and taking karma upon this unfortunate appearance to serve Them without being permitted to have some voice in the matter. H.P.B. is not infallible. H.P.B. is an old, rotten, sick, worn-out body, but it is the best I can have in this cycle. Hence follow the path I show, the Masters that are behind—and do not follow me or my Path. When I am dead and gone in this body, then will you know the whole truth. Then will you know that I have never, never, been false to any one, nor have I deceived anyone, but had many a time to allow them to deceive themselves, for I had no right to interfere with their Karma. . . . Oh ye foolish blind moles, all of you; who is able to offer himself in sacrifice as I did!”*

*Path, June, July, August, 1892*

## THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

THE problem of the origin of evil can be philosophically approached only if the archaic Indian formula is taken as the basis of the argument. Ancient wisdom alone solves the presence of the universal fiend in a satisfactory way. It attributes the birth of Kosmos and the evolution of life to the breaking asunder of primordial, manifested Unity, into plurality, or the great illusion of form. Homogeneity having transformed itself into Heterogeneity, contrasts have naturally been created; hence sprang what we call Evil, which thenceforward reigned supreme in this “Vale of Tears.”

Materialistic Western philosophy (so misnamed) has not failed to profit by this grand metaphysical tenet. Even physical Science, with Chemistry at its head, has turned its attention of late to the first proposition, and directs its efforts toward proving on irrefutable data the homogeneity of primordial



matter. But now steps in materialistic Pessimism, a teaching which is neither philosophy nor science, but only a deluge of meaningless words. Pessimism, in its latest development, having ceased to be pantheistic, having wedded itself to materialism, prepares to make capital out of the old Indian formula. But the atheistic pessimist soars no higher than the terrestrial homogeneous plasm of the Darwinists. For him the *ultima thule* is earth and matter, and he sees, beyond the *prima materia*, only an ugly void, an empty nothingness. Some of the pessimists attempt to poetize their idea after the manner of the whitened sepulchres, or the Mexican corpses, whose ghastly cheeks and lips are thickly covered with rouge. The decay of matter pierces through the mask of seeming life, all efforts to the contrary notwithstanding.

Materialism patronizes Indian metaphors and imagery now. In a new work upon the subject by Dr. Mainlander, "Pessimism and Progress," one learns that Indian Pantheism and German Pessimism are *identical*; and that it is the breaking up of homogeneous matter into heterogeneous material, the transition from uniformity to multiformity, which resulted in so unhappy a universe. Saith Pessimism:

This [transition] is precisely the original mistake, the *primordial sin*, which the whole creation has now to expiate by heavy

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suffering; it is just that *sin*, which, having launched into existence all that lives, plunged it thereby into the abysmal depths of evil and misery, to escape from which there is but one means possible, *i.e.*, by putting *an end to being itself*.

This interpretation of the Eastern formula, attributing to it the first idea of escaping the misery of life by "putting an end to being" — whether that being is viewed as applicable to the whole Kosmos, or only to individual life — is a gross misconception. The Eastern pantheist, whose philosophy teaches him to discriminate between Being or Esse and conditioned existence, would hardly indulge in so absurd an idea as the postulation of such an alternative. He knows he can put an end to *form* alone, not to *being* — and that only on this plane of terrestrial illusion. True, he knows that by killing out in himself *Tanha* (the unsatisfied desire for existence, or the "will to live") — he will thus gradually

escape the curse of rebirth and *conditioned* existence. But he knows also that he cannot kill, or “put an end,” even to his own little life except as a personality, which after all is but a change of dress. And believing but in One Reality, which is eternal *Be-ness*, the “*causeless Cause*” from which he has exiled himself into a world of forms, he regards the temporary and progressing manifestations of it in the state of *Maya* (change or illusion), as the greatest evil, truly; but at the same time as a process in nature, as unavoidable as are the pangs of birth. It is the only means by which he can pass from limited and conditioned lives of sorrow into eternal life, or into that absolute “Be-ness,” which is so graphically expressed in the Sanskrit word *sat*.

The “Pessimism” of the Hindu or Buddhist Pantheist is metaphysical, abstruse, and philosophical. The idea that matter and its Protean manifestations are the source and origin of universal evil and sorrow is a very old one, though Gautama Buddha was the first to give it its definite expression. But the great Indian Reformer assuredly never meant to make of it a handle for the modern pessimist to get hold of, or a peg for the materialist to hang his distorted and pernicious tenets upon! The Sage and Philosopher, who sacrificed himself for Humanity *by living for it, in order to save it*, by teaching men to see in the sensuous existence of matter misery alone, had never in his deep philosophical mind any idea of offering a premium for suicide; his efforts were to release mankind from too strong an attachment to life, which is the chief cause of Selfishness—hence the creator of mutual pain and suffering. In his personal case,

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Buddha left us an example of fortitude to follow; in living, not in running away from life. His doctrine shows evil immanent, *not in matter*, which is eternal, but in the illusions created by it: through the changes and transformations of matter generating life—because these changes are conditioned and such life is ephemeral. At the same time those evils are shown to be not only unavoidable, but necessary. For if we would discern good from evil, light from darkness, and appreciate the former, we can do so only through the contrasts between the two. While Buddha’s philosophy points, in its dead-letter meaning, only to the dark side of things on this illusive plane; its esotericism, the hidden soul of it, draws the veil aside and reveals to the Arhat all the glories of Life Eternal in *all*

*the Homogeneousness of Consciousness and Being.* Another absurdity, no doubt, in the eyes of materialistic science and even modern Idealism, yet a *fact* to the Sage and esoteric Pantheist.

Nevertheless, the root idea that evil is born and generated by the ever increasing complications of the homogeneous material, which enters into form and differentiates more and more as that form becomes physically more perfect, has an esoteric side to it which seems to have never occurred to the modern pessimist. Its dead-letter aspect, however, became the subject of speculation with every ancient thinking nation. Even in India the primitive thought, underlying the formula already cited, has been disfigured by Sectarianism, and has led to the ritualistic, purely dogmatic observances of the *Hatha Yogis*, in contradistinction to the philosophical Vedantic *Raja Yoga*. Pagan and Christian exoteric speculation, and even mediæval monastic asceticism, have extracted all they could from the originally noble idea, and made it subservient to their narrow-minded sectarian views. Their false conceptions of matter have led the Christians from the earliest day to identify woman with Evil and matter—notwithstanding the worship paid by the Roman Catholic Church to the Virgin.

But the latest application of the misunderstood Indian formula by the Pessimists in Germany is quite original, and rather unexpected, as we shall see. To draw any analogy between a highly metaphysical teaching, and Darwin's theory of physical evolution would, in itself, seem rather a hopeless task. The more so as the theory of natural selection does not preach any conceivable extermination of *being*, but, on the contrary, a continuous and ever increasing development of *life*. Nevertheless, German ingenuity has contrived, by means of

scientific paradoxes and much sophistry, to give it a semblance of philosophical truth. The old Indian tenet itself has not escaped litigation at the hands of modern pessimism. The happy discoverer of the theory, that the origin of evil dates from the protoplasmic *Amoeba*, which divided itself for procreation, and thus lost its immaculate homogeneity, has laid claim to the Aryan archaic formula in his new volume. While extolling its philosophy and the depth of ancient conceptions, he declares that it ought to be viewed "as the most

profound truth *precogitated* and *robbed* by the ancient sages from modern thought”!

It thus follows that the deeply religious Pantheism of the Hindu and Buddhist philosopher, and the occasional vagaries of the pessimistic materialist, are placed on the same level and identified by “modern thought.” The impassable chasm between the two is ignored. It matters little, it seems, that the Pantheist, recognizing no reality in the manifested Kosmos, and regarding it as a simple illusion of his senses, has to view his own existence also as only a bundle of illusions. When, therefore, he speaks of the means of escaping from the sufferings of objective life, his view of those sufferings, and his motive for putting an end to existence are entirely different from those of the pessimistic materialist. For him, pain as well as sorrow are illusions, due to attachment to this life, and ignorance. Therefore he strives after eternal, changeless life, and absolute consciousness in the state of Nirvana; whereas the European pessimist, taking the “evils” of life as *realities*, aspires when he has the time to aspire after anything except those said mundane *realities*, to annihilation of “being,” as he expresses it.

For the philosopher there is but one real life, *Nirvanic bliss*, which is a state differing in kind, not in degree only, from that of any of the planes of consciousness in the manifested universe. The Pessimist calls “Nirvana” superstition, and explains it as “cessation of life,” life for him beginning and ending on earth. The former ignores in his spiritual aspirations even the integral homogeneous unit, of which the German Pessimist now makes such capital. He knows of, and believes in only the direct cause of that unit, eternal and *ever living*, because *the One uncreated*, or rather not evolved. Hence all his efforts are directed toward the speediest reunion possible with, and return to his *pre-primordial* condition, after his pilgrimage through this illusive series of visionary lives, with their unreal phantasmagoria of sensuous perceptions.

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Such pantheism can be qualified as “pessimistic” only by a believer in a personal Providence; by one who contrasts its negation of the reality of anything “created”—*i.e.*, conditioned and limited—with his own blind unphilosophical faith. The Oriental mind does not busy itself with extracting evil from every radical law and manifestation of life, and multiplying every

phenomenal quantity by the units of very often imaginary evils: the Eastern Pantheist simply submits to the inevitable, and tries to blot out from his path in life as many “descents into rebirth” as he can, by avoiding the creation of new *Karmic* causes. The Buddhist philosopher knows that the duration of the series of lives of every human being—unless he reaches Nirvana “artificially” (“takes the kingdom of God by violence,” in Kabalistic parlance)—is given, allegorically, in the *forty-nine* days passed by Gautama the Buddha under the Bo-tree. And the Hindu sage is aware, in his turn, that he has to light the *first*, and extinguish the *forty-ninth fire*<sup>1</sup> before he reaches his final deliverance. Knowing this, both sage and philosopher wait patiently for the natural hour of deliverance; whereas their unlucky copyist, the European Pessimist, is ever ready to commit, as to preach, suicide. Ignorant of the numberless heads of the hydra of existence, he is incapable of feeling the same philosophical scorn for life as he does for death, and of, thereby, following the wise example given him by his Oriental brother.

Thus, philosophic pantheism is very different from modern pessimism. The first is based upon the correct understanding of the mysteries of being; the latter is in reality only one more system of evil added by unhealthy fancy to the already large sum of real social evils. In sober truth it is no philosophy, but simply a systematic slander of life and being; the bilious utterances of a dyspeptic or an incurable hypochondriac. No parallel can ever be attempted between the two systems of thought.

The seeds of evil and sorrow were indeed the earliest result and consequence of the heterogeneity of the manifested universe. Still they are but an illusion produced by the law of contrasts, which, as described, is a fundamental law in nature. Neither good nor evil would exist were it not for the light they mutually throw on each

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<sup>1</sup> This is an esoteric tenet, and the general reader will not make much out of it. But the Theosophist who has read *Esoteric Buddhism* may compute the 7 by 7 of the *forty-nine* “days” and the *forty-nine* “fires,” and understand that the allegory refers esoterically to the seven human consecutive root-races with their seven subdivisions. Every monad is born in the first and obtains deliverance in the last seventh race. Only a “Buddha” is

shown reaching it during the course of one life.

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other. *Being*, under whatever form, having been observed from the World's creation to offer these contrasts, and evil predominating in the universe owing to Ego-ship or selfishness, the rich Oriental metaphor has pointed to existence as expiating the mistake of nature; and the human soul (*psüche*), was henceforth regarded as the scapegoat and victim of *unconscious* over-soul. But it is not to Pessimism, but to Wisdom that it gave birth.

Ignorance alone is the willing martyr, but knowledge is the master, of natural Pessimism. Gradually, and by the process of heredity or *atavism*, the latter became innate in man. It is always present in us, howsoever latent and silent its voice in the beginning. Amid the early joys of existence, when we are still full of the vital energies of youth, we are yet apt, each of us, at the first pang of sorrow, after a failure, or at the sudden appearance of a black cloud, to accuse *life* of it; to feel *life* a burden, and often curse our being. This shows pessimism in our blood, but at the same time the presence of the fruits of ignorance.

As mankind multiplies, and with it suffering—which is the natural result of an increasing number of units that generate it—sorrow and pain are intensified. We live in an atmosphere of gloom and despair, but this is because our eyes are downcast and riveted to the earth, with all its physical and grossly material manifestations. If, instead of that, man proceeding on his life-journey looked—not heavenward, which is but a figure of speech—but *within himself* and centered his point of observation on the *inner* man, he would soon escape from the coils of the great serpent of illusion. From the cradle to the grave, his life would then become supportable and worth living, even in its worst phases.

Pessimism—that chronic suspicion of lurking evil everywhere—is thus of a two-fold nature, and brings fruits of two kinds. It is a natural characteristic in physical man, and becomes a curse only to the ignorant. It is a boon to the spiritual, inasmuch as it makes the latter turn into the right path, and brings him to the discovery of another as fundamental a truth; namely, that all in this world is only *preparatory* because transitory. It is like a chink in the dark prison walls of earth-life, through which breaks in a ray of light from the eternal home,

which, illuminating the *inner* senses, whispers to the prisoner in his shell of clay of the origin and the dual mystery of our being. At the same time, it is a tacit proof of the presence in man of that *which knows, without being told, viz:—* that there is

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another and a better life, once that the curse of earth-lives is lived through.

This explanation of the problem and origin of evil being, as already said, of an entirely metaphysical character, has nothing to do with physical laws. Belonging as it does altogether to the spiritual part of man, to dabble with it superficially is, therefore, far more dangerous than to remain ignorant of it. For, as it lies at the very root of Gautama Buddha's ethics, and since it has now fallen into the hands of the modern Philistines of materialism, to confuse the two systems of "pessimistic" thought can lead but to mental suicide, if it does not lead to worse.

Eastern wisdom teaches that spirit has to pass through the ordeal of incarnation and life, and be baptised with matter before it can reach experience and knowledge. After which only it receives the baptism of soul, or self-consciousness, and may return to its original condition of a god, *plus* experience, ending with omniscience. In other words, it can return to the original state of the homogeneity of primordial essence only through the addition of the fruitage of Karma, which alone is able to create an absolute *conscious* deity, removed but one degree from the absolute All.

Even according to the letter of the Bible, evil must have existed before Adam and Eve, who, therefore, are innocent of the slander of the original sin. For, had there been no evil or sin before them, there could exist neither tempting Serpent nor a Tree of Knowledge of *good and evil* in Eden. The characteristics of that apple-tree are shown in the verse when the couple had tasted of its fruit: "The eyes of them both were opened, and *they knew*" many things besides knowing they were naked. Too much knowledge about things of matter is thus rightly shown an evil.

But so it is, and it is our duty to examine and combat the new pernicious theory. Hitherto, pessimism was kept in the regions of philosophy and metaphysics,

and showed no pretensions to intrude into the domain of purely physical science, such as Darwinism. The theory of evolution has become almost universal now, and there is no school (save the Sunday and missionary schools) where it is not taught, with more or less modifications from the original programme. On the other hand, there is no other teaching more abused and taken advantage of than evolution, especially by the application of its fundamental laws to the solution of the most compound and abstract problems of man's many-sided existence. There, where

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psychology and even philosophy "fear to tread," materialistic biology applies its sledge-hammer of superficial analogies and prejudiced conclusions. Worse than all, claiming man to be only a higher animal, it maintains this right as undeniably pertaining to the domain of the science of evolution. Paradoxes in those "domains" do not rain now, they pour. As "man is the measure of all things," therefore is man measured and analysed by the animal. One German materialist claims spiritual and psychic evolution as the lawful property of physiology and biology; the mysteries of embryology and zoology alone, it is said, being capable of solving those of consciousness in man and the origin of his soul.<sup>2</sup> Another finds justification for suicide in the example of animals, who, when tired of living, put an end to existence by starvation.<sup>3</sup>

Hitherto pessimism, notwithstanding the abundance and brilliancy of its paradoxes, had a weak point—namely, the absence of any real and evident basis for it to rest upon. Its followers had no living, guiding thought to serve them as a beacon and help them to steer clear of the sandbanks of life—real and imaginary—so profusely sown by themselves in the shape of denunciations against life and being. All they could do was to rely upon their representatives, who occupied their time very ingeniously if not profitably, in tacking the many and various evils of life to the metaphysical propositions of great German thinkers, like Schopenhauer and Hartmann, as small boys tack on coloured tails to the kites of their elders and rejoice at seeing them launched in the air. But now the programme will be changed. The Pessimists have found something more solid and authoritative, if less philosophical, to tack their jeremiads and dirges to, than the metaphysical *kites* of Schopenhauer. The day when they agreed with the views of this philosopher, which pointed at the



Universal Will as the perpetrator of all the World-evil, is gone to return no more. Nor will they be any better satisfied with the hazy "Unconscious" of von Hartmann. They have been seeking diligently for a more congenial and less metaphysical soil to build their pessimistic *philosophy* upon, and they have been rewarded with success, now that the cause of Universal Suffering has been discovered by them in the fundamental laws of physical development. Evil will no longer be allied with the misty and uncertain Phantom called "Will," but with an actual and obvious fact: the Pessimists will henceforth be towed by the Evolutionists.

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<sup>2</sup>Haeckel.

<sup>3</sup>Leo Back.

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The basic argument of their representative has been given in the opening sentence of this article. The Universe and all on it appeared in consequence of the "breaking asunder of Unity into *Plurality*." This rather dim rendering of the Indian formula is not made to refer, as I have shown, in the mind of the Pessimist, to the one Unity, to the Vedantin abstraction—Parabrahm: otherwise, I should certainly not have used the words "breaking up." Nor does it concern itself much with Mulaprakriti, or the "Veil" of Parabrahm; nor even with the first manifested primordial matter, except inferentially, as follows from Dr. Mainlander's exposition, but chiefly with the terrestrial *protoplasm*. Spirit or deity is entirely ignored in this case; evidently because of the necessity for showing the whole as "the lawful domain of physical Science."

In short, the time-honoured formula is claimed to have its basis and to find its justification in the theory that from "a few, perhaps one, single form of the very simplest nature" (Darwin), "all the different animals and plants living today, and all the organisms that have ever lived on the earth," have gradually developed. It is this axiom of Science, we are told, which justifies and demonstrates the Hindu philosophical tenet. What is this axiom? Why, it is this: Science teaches that the series of transformations through which the seed is made to pass—the seed that grows into a tree, or becomes an *ovum*, or that which develops into an animal—consists in every case in nothing but the passage of the fabric of that seed, from the homogeneous into the

heterogeneous or compound form. This is then the scientific verity which checks the Indian formula by that of the Evolutionists, identifies both, and thus exalts ancient wisdom by recognizing it worthy of modern materialistic thought.

This philosophical formula is not simply corroborated by the individual growth and development of isolated species, explains our Pessimist; but it is demonstrated in general as in detail. It is shown justified in the evolution and growth of the Universe as well as in that of our planet. In short, the birth, growth and development of the whole organic world in its integral totality, are there to demonstrate ancient wisdom. From the universals down to the particulars, the organic world is discovered to be subject to the same laws of ever increasing elaboration, of the transition from unity to plurality as “the fundamental formula of the evolution of life.” Even the growth of nations, of social life, public institutions, the development of the languages, arts and sciences, all this follows inevitably

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and fatally the all-embracing law of “the breaking asunder of unity into plurality, and the passage of the homogeneous into multiformity.”

But while following Indian wisdom, our author exaggerates this fundamental law in his own way, and distorts it. He brings this law to bear even on the historical destinies of mankind. He makes these destinies subservient to, and a proof of, the correctness of the Indian conception. He maintains that humanity as an integral whole, in proportion as it develops and progresses in its evolution, and separates in its parts—each becoming a distinct and independent branch of the unit—drifts more and more away from its original healthy, harmonious unity. The complications of social establishment, social relations, as those of individuality, all lead to the weakening of the vital power, the relaxation of the energy of feeling, and to the destruction of that integral unity, without which no inner harmony is possible. The absence of that harmony generates an inner discord which becomes the cause of the greatest mental misery. Evil has its roots in the very nature of the evolution of life and its complications. Every one of its steps forward is at the same time a step taken toward the dissolution of its energy, and leads to passive apathy. Such is the inevitable result, he says, of every progressive complication of life; because

evolution or development is a transition from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, a scattering of the whole into the many, etc., etc. This terrible law is universal and applies to all creation, from the infinitesimally small up to man for, as he says, it is a fundamental law of nature.

Now, it is just in this one-sided view of physical nature, which the German author accepts without one single thought as to its spiritual and psychic aspect, that his school is doomed to certain failure. It is not a question whether the said law of differentiation and its fatal consequences may or may not apply, in certain cases, to the growth and development of the animal species, and even of man; but simply, since it is the basis and main support of the whole new theory of the Pessimistic school, whether it is really a *universal* and fundamental law? We want to know whether this basic formula of evolution embraces the whole process of development and growth in its entirety; and whether, indeed, it is within the domain of physical science or not. If it is “nothing else than the transition from the homogeneous state to the heterogeneous,” as says Mainlander, then it remains to be proved that the given process “produces that complicated

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combination of tissues and organs which forms and completes the perfect animal and plant.”

As remarked already by some critics on “Pessimism and Progress,” the German Pessimist does not doubt it for one moment. His supposed discovery and teaching “rest wholly on his certitude that development and the fundamental law of the complicated process of organization represent but one thing: the transformation of unity into plurality.” Hence the identification of the process with dissolution and decay, and the weakening of all the forces and energies. Mainlander would be right in his analogies were this law of the differentiation of the homogeneous into the heterogeneous to really represent the fundamental law of the evolution of life. But the idea is quite erroneous — metaphysically as well as physically. Evolution does not proceed in a straight line; *no more* than any other process in nature, but journeys on *cyclically*, as does all the rest. The cyclic serpents swallow their tails like the Serpent of Eternity. And it is in this that the Indian formula, which is a Secret Doctrine teaching, is indeed corroborated by the natural Sciences, and especially by biology.

This is what we read in the “Scientific Letters” by an anonymous Russian author and critic:

In the evolution of isolated individuals, in the evolution of the organic world, in that of the Universe, as in the growth and development of our planet—in short wherever any of the processes of progressive complexity take place, there we find, apart from the transition from unity to plurality, and homogeneity to heterogeneity, *a converse transformation—the transition from plurality to unity, from the heterogeneous to the homogeneous. . . .* Minute observation of the given process of progressive complexity has shown, that what takes place in it is not alone the separation of parts, but also their mutual absorption. . . . While one portion of the cells merge into each other and unite into one uniform whole, forming muscular fibres, muscular tissue, others are absorbed in the bone and nerve tissues, etc., etc. The same takes place in the formation of plants. . . .

In this case material nature repeats the law that acts in the evolution of the psychic and the spiritual: both descend but to reascend and merge at the starting-point. *The homogeneous formative mass or element differentiated in its parts, is gradually transformed into the heterogeneous; then, merging those parts into a harmonious whole, it recommences a converse process, or involution, and returns as gradually into its primitive or primordial state.*

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Nor does Pessimism find any better support in pure Materialism, as hitherto the latter has been tinged with a decidedly optimistic bias. Its leading advocates have, indeed, never hesitated to sneer at the theological adoration of the “glory of God and all his works.” Büchner flings a taunt at the pantheist who sees in so “mad and bad” a world the manifestation of the Absolute. But, on the whole, the materialists admit a balance of good over evil, perhaps as a buffer against any “superstitious” tendency to look out and hope for a better one. Narrow as is their outlook, and limited as is their spiritual horizon, they yet see no cause to despair of the drift of things in general. The *pantheistic* pessimists, however, have never ceased to urge that a despair of conscious being is the only legitimate outcome of atheistic negation. This opinion is, of course, axiomatic, or ought to be so. If “in this life only is there hope,” the tragedy of life is

absolutely without any *raison d'être* and a perpetuation of the drama is as foolish as it is futile.

The fact that the conclusions of pessimism have been at last assimilated by a certain class of atheistic writers, is a striking feature of the day, and another sign of the times. It illustrates the truism that the void created by modern scientific negation cannot and never can be filled by the cold prospects offered as a *solatium* to optimists. The Comtean "enthusiasm of Humanity" is a poor thing enough with annihilation of the Race to ensue "as the solar fires die slowly out" —if, indeed, *they do die* at all—to please physical science at the computed time. If all present sorrow and suffering, the fierce struggle for existence and all its attendant horrors, go for nothing in the long run, if Man is a mere ephemeron, the sport of blind forces, why assist in the perpetuation of the farce? The "ceaseless grind of matter, force and law," will but hurry the swarming human millions into eternal oblivion, and ultimately leave no trace or memory of the past, when things return to the nebulosity of the fire-mist, whence they emerged. Terrestrial life is no object in itself. It is overcast with gloom and misery. It does not seem strange, then, that the Soul-blind negationist should prefer the pessimism of Schopenhauer to the baseless optimism of Strauss and his followers, which, in the face of their teachings, reminds one of the animal spirits of a young donkey, after a good meal of thistles.

One thing is, however, clear: the absolute necessity for some solution, which embraces the facts of existence on an optimistic basis. Modern Society is permeated with an increasing cynicism

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and honeycombed with disgust of life. This is the result of an utter ignorance of the operations of Karma and the nature of Soul evolution. It is from a mistaken allegiance to the dogmas of a mechanical and largely spurious theory of Evolution, that Pessimism has risen to such undue importance. Once the basis of the Great Law is grasped—and what philosophy can furnish better means for such a grasp and final solution, than the esoteric doctrine of the great Indian Sages—there remains no possible *locus standi* for the recent amendments to the Schopenhauerian system of thought or the metaphysical subtleties, woven by the "philosopher of the Unconscious." The reasonableness

of *Conscious* Existence can be proved only by the study of the primeval—now esoteric—philosophy. And it says “there is neither death nor life, for both are illusions; being (or *be-ness*) is the only reality.” This paradox was repeated thousands of ages later by one of the greatest physiologists that ever lived. “Life is Death,” said Claude Bernard. The organism lives because its parts are ever dying. The survival of the fittest is surely based on this truism. The life of the superior whole requires the death of the inferior, the death of the parts depending on and being subservient to it. And, as life is death, so death is life, and the whole great cycle of lives form but one existence—*the worst day of which is on our planet.*

He who knows will make the best of it. For there is a dawn for every being, when once freed from illusion and ignorance by Knowledge; and he will at last proclaim in truth *and all Consciousness* to Mahamaya:

Broken thy house is, and the ridge-pole split!  
Delusion fashioned it!  
Safe pass I thence—deliverance to obtain. . . .

*Lucifer*, October,  
1887

H.P.B.

## THE FALL OF IDEALS

ALAS, whether we turn East, West, North or South, it is but a contrast of externals; whether one observes life among Christians or Pagans, worldly or religious men, everywhere one finds oneself dealing with man, masked man—only Man. Though centuries lapse and decades of ages drop out of the lap of time, great reforms take place, empires rise and fall and rise again, and even whole races disappear before the triumphant march of civilization, in his terrific selfishness the “man” that *was* is the “man” that *is*—judged by its representative element the public, and especially society. But have we the right to judge man by the utterly artificial standard of the latter? A century ago we would have answered in the negative. Today, owing to the rapid strides of

mankind toward civilization, generating selfishness and making it (mankind) keep pace with it, we answer decidedly, yes. Today everyone, especially in England and America, is that public and that society, and exceptions but prove and reinforce the rule. The progress of mankind cannot be summed up by counting units especially on the basis of internal and not external growth. Therefore, we have the right to judge of that progress by the public standard of morality in the majority; leaving the minority to bewail the fall of its ideals. And what do we find? First of all Society—Church, State and Law—in conventional conspiracy, leagued against the public exposure of the results of the application of such a test. They wish the said minority to take Society and the rest *en bloc*, in its fine clothes, and not pry into the social rottenness beneath. By common consent they pretend to worship an Ideal, one at any rate, the Founder of their State Christianity; but they also combine to put down and martyrise any unit belonging to the minority who has the audacity, in this time of social abasement and corruption, to live up to it.

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Do we not all know such self-devoting men and women in our midst? Have we not all of us followed the career of certain individuals, Christ-like in aspirations and practical charity, though, perhaps, Christ-denying and Church-defying in intellect and words, who

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were tabooed for years by bigoted society, insolent clergy, and persecuted by both to the last limits of law? How many of such victims have found justice and the recognition they merit? After doing the noblest work among the poor for years, embellishing our cold and conventional age by their altruistic charity, making themselves blessed by old and young, beloved by all who suffer, the reward they found was to hear themselves traduced and denounced, slandered and secretly defamed by those unworthy to unloosen the latches of their shoes—the Church-going hypocrites and Pharisees, *the Sanhedrim of the World of Cant!* . . .

Thus, out of the many noble ideals trampled practically in the mud by modern society, the one held by the Western World as the highest and grandest of all, is, after all, the most ill-treated. The life preached in the Sermon on the Mount, and the commandments left to the Church by her Master, are precisely those

ideals that have fallen the lowest in our day. All these are trampled under the heel of the caitiffs of the canting caste *de facto*—though *sub rosa* of course, *cant* preventing that they should do so *de jure*—and *shams* are substituted in their place. . . .

The great scandal of modern religion as a rule of life is, that taking modern Society all around in a broad way, it does not command any attention at all. It has failed not so much to show what ought to be done and left undone—for of course even the maxims of the church as far as words go, cover a great deal of ground—as it has failed to show with any adequate force *why* this or that should be a guiding principle. The modern church, in fact, has broken down as a practical agency governing the acts of its followers—*i.e.*, of the millions who are content to be called its followers, but who never dream of listening to a word it says.

Fully conscious that a great deal it says is *very good*, its exponents (blandly ignorant how bad is a great deal of the rest) think it is owing to the perversity of mankind that people at large are not better than they are. They never realize that they themselves—the Dry Monopole of social wines—are primarily to blame for having divorced the good codes of morals bequeathed to them from the religions of all time, from the fundamental sanctions which a correct appreciation of true spiritual science would attach to them. They have converted the divine teaching which is the Theosophy of all ages into a barbarous caricature, and they expect to find their parrot echoes of preposterous creeds a cry that will draw the worldlings

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to their fold, an appeal which will stir them up to the sublime task of spiritualizing their own natures. They fail to see that the command to love one another must be ineffective in the case of people whose whole conceptions of futurity turn upon their chances of drawing a lucky number in the lottery of the elect, or of dodging the punishment that would naturally be their due, at a happy moment when the divine mind may be thrown off its balance by reflecting on the beauty of the Christian sacrifice. The teachers of modern religion, in fact, have lost touch with the wisdom underlying their own perverted doctrines, and the blind followers of these blind leaders have lost touch even with the elementary principles of physical morality which the



churches still continue to repeat, without understanding their purpose, and from mere force of habit. The ministers of religion, in short, of the Nineteenth Century, have eaten the sour grapes of ignorance, and the teeth of their unfortunate children are set on edge. . . .

Of all the beautiful ideals of the Past, the true religious feeling that manifests in the worship of the spiritually beautiful alone, and the love of plain truth, are those that have been the most roughly handled in this age of obligatory dissembling. We are surrounded on all sides by Hypocrisy, and those of its followers of whom Pollock has said that they were men:

Who stole the livery of the court of heaven,  
To serve the devil in.

Oh, the unspeakable hypocrisy of our age! The age when everything under the Sun and Moon is for sale and bought. The age when all that is honest, just, noble-minded, is held up to the derision of the public, sneered at, and deprecated; when every truth-loving and fearlessly truth-speaking man is hooted out of polite Society, as a transgressor of cultured traditions which demand that every member of it should accept that in which he does not believe, say what he does not think, and lie to his own soul! The age, when the open pursuit of any of the grand ideals of the Past is treated as almost insane eccentricity or fraud; and the rejection of empty form—the dead letter that killeth—and preference for the Spirit “that giveth life” —is called *infidelity*, and forthwith the cry is started, “Stone him to death!” No sooner is the sacrifice of empty conventionalities, that yield reward and benefit but to self, made for the sake of practically working out some grand humanitarian idea that will help the masses, than a howl of indignation and pious horror is raised: the p. 140

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doors of fashionable Society are shut on the transgressor, and the mouths of slanderous gossips opened to dishonour his very name.

Yet, we are daily served with sanctimonious discourses upon the blessings conferred by *Christian civilization* and the advantages offered by both, as contrasted with the curses of “heathenism” and the superstitions and horrors of say—the Middle Ages. The Inquisition with its burning of heretics and witches, its tortures at the stake and on the rack, is contrasted with the

great *freedom of modern thought*, on one hand, and the security of human life and property *now*, as compared with their insecurity in days of old. "Is it not civilization that abolished the Inquisition and now affords the beggar the same protection of law as the wealthy duke?" we are asked. "We do not know," we say. History would make us rather think that it was Napoleon the First, the Attila whose iniquitous wars stripped France and Europe of their lustiest manhood, who abolished the Inquisition, and this not at all for the sake of civilization, but rather because he was not prepared to allow the Church to burn and torture those who could serve him as *chair à canon*. As to the second proposition with regard to the beggar and the duke, we have to qualify it before accepting it as true. The beggar, however right, will hardly find as full justice as the duke will; and if he happens to be unpopular, or an heretic, ten to one he will find the reverse of justice. And this proves that if Church and State *were un-christian* then, they are still *un-christian*, if not more so now.

True Christianity and true civilization both ought to be opposed to murder, however legal. And yet we find, in the last half of our departing century more human lives sacrificed—because of the improved system and weapons of warfare, *thanks to the progress of science and civilization*—than there were in its first half. "Christian civilization," indeed! Civilization, perhaps; but why "Christian"? Did Pope Leo XIII personify it when in an agony of despair he shut himself up on the day when Bruno's monument was unveiled, and marked it as a *dies iræ* in Church History? But may we not turn to civilization, pure and simple? "Our manners, our civilization," says Burke, "and all the good things connected with manners . . . have in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles. . . . I mean the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion." We are quite willing to test the character of the age by these ideals. Only, it has always been hard to say just what definition to give to the term "gentleman"; while as to religion, ninety-nine

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out of every hundred people one meets would, if asked, reply in such a fashion as to make it plain that they had confounded religion with theology.

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But perhaps we have to look for true Christianity and true civilization and culture in the modern higher courts of Law? Alas, there are modern judges of whom their Lord (our Karma) would say, "Hear what the unjust judge sayeth." For, in our day, the decree of justice is sometimes uttered in the voice of the bigots who sit in Solomon's seat and judge as the Inquisitors of old did. In our century of Christian civilization, judges emulating their predecessors of the tribunal of the sons of Loyola, employ the more exquisite instruments of *moral* torture, to insult and goad to desperation a helpless plaintiff or defendant. In this they are aided by advocates, often the type of the ancient headsman, who, metaphorically, break the bones of the wretch seeking justice; or worse yet, defile his good name and stab him to the heart with the vilest innuendoes, false suppositions concocted for the occasion but which the victim knows will henceforth become *actual truths* in the mouth of foul gossip and slander. Between the defunct brutal tortures of the unchristian Inquisition of old, and the more refined mental tortures of its as unchristian but more civilized copy—our Court and truculent cross-examiners, the palm of "gentleness" and charity might almost be given to the former.

Thus we find every ideal of old, moral and spiritual, abased to correspond with the present low moral and unspiritual conceptions of the public. Brutalized by a psychical famine which has lasted through generations, they are ready to give every ideal spiritual Regenerator as food for the dogs, while like their debauched prototypes, the Roman populace under Nero, Caligula, and Heliogabalus, they crowd to see bull-fights in Paris, where the wretched horses drag their bleeding bowels around the arena, imported *Almehs* dancing their loathsome *danse du ventre*, black and white pugilists bruising each other's features into bloody pulp, and "raise the roof" with their cheers when the Samsons and Sandows burst chains and snap wires by expanding their preternatural muscles. Why keep up the old farce any longer? Why not change the Christmas carol thus:

*Gladiator natus hodie.*

Or change the well-known anthem after this fashion:

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"Glory to Gold in the highest And on earth strife, ill-will toward men."

In a world of illusion in which the law of evolution operates, nothing could be more natural than that the ideals of Man—as a unit of total, or mankind—should be forever shifting. A part of the Nature around him, that Protean, ever-changing Nature, every particle of which is incessantly transformed, while the harmonious body remains as a whole ever the same, like these particles man is continually changing, physically, intellectually, morally, spiritually. At one time he is at the topmost point of the circle of development; at another, at the lowest. And, as he thus alternately rises and sinks, and his moral nature responsively expands or contracts, so will his moral code at one time embody the noblest altruistic and aspirational ideals, while at the other, the ruling conscience will be but the reflection of selfishness, brutality and faithlessness. But this, however, is so only on the external, illusionary plane. In their internal, or rather *essential* constitution, both nature and man are at one, as their essence is identical. All grows and develops and strives toward perfection on the former planes of externality or, as well said by a philosopher, is—“ever becoming”; but on the ultimate plane of the spiritual essence all Is, and remains therefore immutable. It is toward this eternal *Esse* that everything, as every being, is gravitating, gradually, almost imperceptibly, but as surely as the Universe of stars and worlds moves towards a mysterious point known to, yet still unnamed by, astronomy, and called by the Occultists—the *central Spiritual Sun*.

Hitherto, it was remarked in almost every historical age that a wide interval, almost a chasm, lay between practical and ideal perfection. Yet, as from time to time certain great characters appeared on earth who taught mankind to look beyond the veil of illusion, man learnt that the gulf was not an impassable one; that it is the province of mankind through its higher and more spiritual races to fill the great gap more and more with every coming cycle; for every man, as a unit, has it in his power to add his mite toward filling it. Yes; there are still men, who, notwithstanding the present chaotic condition of the moral world, and the sorry *débris* of the best human ideals, still persist in believing and teaching that the now *ideal* human perfection is no dream, but a law of divine nature; and that,

had Mankind to wait even millions of years, still it must someday reach it and rebecome *a race of gods*.

Meanwhile, the periodical rise and fall of human character on the external planes takes place now, as it did before, and the ordinary average perception of man is too weak to see that both processes occur each time on a higher plane than the preceding. But as such changes are not always the work of centuries, for often extreme changes are wrought by swift acting forces—*e.g.* by wars, speculations, epidemics, the devastation of famines or religious fanaticism — therefore, do the blind masses imagine that man was, is, and will be the same. To the eyes of us, moles, mankind is like our globe—seemingly stationary. And yet, both move in space and time with an equal velocity, around themselves and—*onward*.

Moreover, at whatever end of his evolution, from the birth of his consciousness, in fact, man was, and still is, the vehicle of a dual spirit in him—good and evil. Like the twin sisters of Victor Hugo's grand, posthumous poem "Satan"—the progeny issued respectively from Light and Darkness—the angel "Liberty" and the angel "Isis-Lilith" have chosen man as their dwelling on earth, and these are at eternal strife in him.

The Churches tell the world that "man is born in sin," and John (1st Epist.iii.,8) adds that "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning." Those who still believe in the rib-and-apple fable and in the rebellious angel "Satan," believe, as a matter of course, in a personal Devil—as a contrast in a dualistic religion—to a personal God. We, Theosophists of the Eastern school, believe in neither. Yet we go, perhaps, further still than the Biblical dead letter. For we say that while as *extra-cosmic* Entities there is neither god nor devil, that both exist, nevertheless. And we add that both dwell on earth in man, being, in truth, *the very man himself*, who is, as a physical being, the devil, the true vehicle of *evil*, and as a spiritual entity—god, or *good*. Hence, to say to mankind, "thou hast the devil," is to utter as metaphysical a truth as when saying to all its men, "Know ye not that god dwelleth in you?" Both statements are true. But, we are at the turning point of the great social cycle, and it is the former fact which has the upper hand at present. Yet, as—to paraphrase a Pauline text—"there be devils many . . . yet there is but one Satan," so while we have a great variety of devils constituting collectively mankind, of such grandiose Satanic characters as are painted by Milton, Byron and

recently by Victor Hugo, there are few, if any. Hence, owing to such mediocrity, are the human ideals falling, to remain unreplaced; a prose-life as spiritually dead as the London November fog, and as alive with brutal materialism and vices, the seven capital sins forming but a portion of these, as that fog is with deadly microbes. Now we rarely find aspirations toward the eternal ideal in the human heart, but instead of it every thought tending toward the one central idea of our century, the great "I," *self* being for each the one mighty center around which the whole Universe is made to revolve and turn.

When the Emperor Julian—called the *Apostate* because, believing in the grand ideals of his forefathers, the Initiates, he would not accept the human anthropomorphic form thereof—saw for the last time his beloved gods appear to him, he wept. Alas, they were no longer the bright spiritual beings he had worshipped, but only the decrepit, pale and worn out shades of the gods he had so loved. Perchance they were the prophetic vision of the departing ideals of his age, as also of our own cycle. These "gods" are now regarded by the Church as *demons* and called so; while he who has preserved a poetical, lingering love for them, is forthwith branded as an Anti-Christ and a modern Satan.

Well, Satan is an elastic term, and no one has yet ever given even an approximately logical definition of the symbolical meaning of the name. The first to anthropomorphize it was John Milton; he is his true putative intellectual father, as it is widely conceded that the *theological* Satan of the Fall is the "mind-born Son" of the blind poet. Bereft of his theological and dogmatic attributes Satan is simply an *adversary*;—not necessarily an "arch fiend" or a "persecutor of men," but possibly also a foe of evil. He may thus become a Saviour of the oppressed, a champion of the weak and poor, crushed by the minor devils (men), the demons of avarice, selfishness and hypocrisy. Michelet calls him the "great Disinherited" and takes him to his heart. The giant Satan of poetical concept is, in reality, but the compound of all the dissatisfied and noble intellectuality of the age. But Victor Hugo was the first to intuitively grasp the occult truth. Satan, in his poem of that time, is a truly grandiose Entity, with enough human in him to bring it within the grasp of average intellects. To realize the Satans of Milton and of Byron is like trying to grasp a handful of the morning mist: there is nothing *human* in them. Milton's Satan wars with angels

who are a

sort of flying puppets, without spontaneity, pulled into the stage of being and of action by the invisible string of theological predestination; Hugo's Lucifer fights a fearful battle with his own terrible passions and again becomes an Archangel of Light, after the awfulest agonies ever conceived by mortal mind and recorded by human pen.

All other Satanic ideals pale before his splendour. The Mephisto of Goethe is a true devil of theology; the Ahriman of Byron's "Manfred" — a too supernatural character, and even Manfred has little akin to the human element, great as was the genius of his creator. All these images pale before Hugo's Satan, who loves as strongly as he hates. Manfred and Cain are the incarnate *Protests* of downtrodden, wronged and persecuted individuality against the "World" and "Society" — those giant fiends and savage monsters of collective injustice. Manfred is the type of an indomitable will, proud, yielding to no influence earthly or divine, valuing his full absolute freedom of action above any personal feeling or social consideration, higher than Nature and all in it. But, with Manfred as with Cain, the Self, the "I" is ever foremost; and there is not a spark of the all-redeeming love in them, no more than of fear. Manfred will not submit even to the universal Spirit of Evil; alone, face to face with the dark opponent of Ahura-Mazda—Universal Light—Ahriman and his countless hosts of Darkness, he still holds his own. These types arouse in one intense wonder, awe-struck amazement by their all-defiant daring, but arouse no human feeling: they are *too supernatural ideals*. Byron never thought of vivifying his Archangel with that undying spark of love which forms—nay, *must* form the essence of the "First-Born" out of the homogeneous essence of eternal Harmony and Light, and is the element of forgiving reconciliation, even in its (according to our philosophy) last terrestrial offspring—Humanity. Discord is the concomitant of differentiation, and Satan being an evolution, must in that sense, be an adversary, a contrast, being a type of Chaotic matter. The loving essence cannot be extinguished but only perverted. Without this saving redemptive power, embodied in Satan, he simply appears the nonsensical failure of omnipotent and omniscient imbecility which the opponents of theological Christianity sneeringly and very justly make him: with it he

becomes a thinkable Entity, the *Asuras* of the Puranic myths, the first *breaths* of Brahma, who, after fighting the gods and defeating them are finally themselves defeated and then hurled

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on to the earth where they incarnate in Humanity. Thus Satanic Humanity becomes comprehensible. After moving around his cycle of obstacles he may, with accumulated experiences, after all the throes of Humanity, emerge again into the light—as Eastern philosophy teaches.

If Hugo had lived to complete his poem, possibly with strengthened insight, he would have blended his Satanic concept with that of the Aryan races which makes all minor powers, good or evil, born at the beginning and dying at the close of each “Divine Age.” As human nature is ever the same, and sociological, spiritual and intellectual evolution is a question of step by step, it is quite possible that instead of catching one half of the Satanic ideal as Hugo did, the next great poet may get it wholly: thus voicing for his generation the eternal idea of Cosmic equilibrium so nobly emphasized in the Aryan mythology. The first half of that ideal approaches sufficiently to the human ideal to make the moral tortures of Hugo’s Satan entirely comprehensible to the Eastern Theosophist. What is the chief torment of this great Cosmic Anarchist? It is the moral agony caused by such a duality of nature—the tearing asunder of the Spirit of Evil and Opposition from the undying element of primeval love in the Archangel. That spark of divine love for Light and Harmony, that no Hate can wholly smother, causes him a torture far more unbearable than his Fall and exile for protest and Rebellion. This bright, heavenly spark, shining from Satan in the black darkness of his kingdom of moral night, makes him visible to the intuitive reader. It made Victor Hugo see him sobbing in superhuman despair, each mighty sob shaking the earth from pole to pole; sobs first of baffled rage that he cannot extirpate love for divine Goodness (God) from his nature; then changing into a wail of despair at being cut off from that divine love he so much yearns for. All this is intensely human. This abyss of despair is Satan’s salvation. In his *Fall*, a feather drops from his white and once immaculate wing, is lighted up by a ray of divine radiance and forthwith transformed into a bright Being, the Angel Liberty. Thus, she is Satan’s daughter, the child jointly of God and the Fallen Archangel, the progeny of Good and Evil, of Light and Darkness,



and God acknowledges this common and “sublime paternity” that unites them. It is Satan’s daughter who saves him. At the acme of despair at feeling himself hated by Light, Satan hears the divine words “No; I hate thee not.” Saith the Voice, “An angel is between

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us, and her deeds go to thy credit. Man, bound by thee, by her is now delivered.”

O Satan, tu peux dire á present: je vivrai!  
Viens; l’Ange Liberté c’est ta fille et la mienne  
Cette paternité sublime nous unit! . . .

The whole conception is an efflorescence of metaphysical ideality. This white lotus of thought springs now, as in former ages, from the rottenness of the world of matter, generating *Protest* and Liberty. It is springing in our very midst and under our very eyes, from the mire of modern civilization, fecund bed of contrasting virtues. In this foul soil sprouted the germs which ultimately developed into All-denying protestators, Atheists, Nihilists, and Anarchists, men of the Terror. Bad, violent, criminal some of them may be, yet no one of them could stand as the copy of Satan; but taking this heart-broken, hopeless, embittered portion of humanity in their collectivity, they are just Satan himself; for he is the ideal synthesis of all discordant forces and each separate human vice or passion is but an atom of his totality. In the very depths of the heart of this Human Satanic totality burns the divine spark, all negations notwithstanding. It is called Love for Humanity, an ardent aspiration for a universal reign of Justice—hence a latent desire for light, harmony and goodness. Where do we find such a divine spark among the proud and the wealthy? In respectable Society and the correct orthodox, so-called religious portion of the public, one finds but a predominating feeling of selfishness and a desire for wealth at the expense of the weak and the destitute, hence as a parallel, indifference to injustice and evil. Before Satan, the incarnate Protest, repents and reunites with his fellow men in one common Brotherhood, all cause for protest must have disappeared from earth. And that can come to pass only when Greed, Bias, and Prejudice shall have disappeared before the elements of Altruism and Justice to all. Freedom, or Liberty, is but a vain word just now all over the civilized globe; freedom is but a cunning

synonym for oppression of the people in the name of the people, and it exists for castes, never for units. To bring about the reign of Freedom as contemplated by Hugo's Satan, the "Angel Liberty" has to be born simultaneously and by common love and consent of the "higher" wealthy caste, and the

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But this is a Utopia—for the present. It cannot take place before the castes of the modern *Levites* and their theology—the Dead-sea fruit of Spirituality—shall have disappeared; and the priests of the Future have declared before the whole World in the words of *their* "God" —

Et j'efface la nuit sinistre, et rien n'en reste,

Satan est mort, renais O Lucifer Celeste!

H.P.B.

*Lucifer*, December, 1889

## CIVILIZATION, THE DEATH OF ART AND BEAUTY

IN an interview with the celebrated Hungarian violinist, M. Remenyi, the *Pall Mall Gazette* reporter makes the artist narrate some very interesting experiences in the Far East. "I was the first European artist who ever played before the Mikado of Japan," he said; and reverting to that which has ever been a matter of deep regret for every lover of the artistic and the picturesque, the violinist added:

On August 8th, 1886, I appeared before His Majesty—a day memorable, unfortunately, for the change of costume commanded by the Empress. She herself, abandoning the exquisite beauty of the feminine Japanese costume, appeared on that day for the first time and at my concert in European costume, and it made my heart ache to see her. I could have greeted her had I dared with a long wail of despair upon my travelled

violin. Six ladies accompanied her, they themselves being clad in their native costume, and walking with infinite grace and charm.

Alas, alas, but this is not all! The Mikado—this hitherto sacred, mysterious, invisible and unreachable personage:

The Mikado himself was in the uniform of a European general! At that time the Court etiquette was so strict, my accompanist was not permitted into His Majesty's drawing room, and this was told me beforehand. I had a good *remplacement*, as my ambassador, Count Zaluski, who had been a pupil of Liszt, was able himself to accompany me. You will be astonished when I tell you that, having chosen for the first piece in the programme my transcription for the violin, of a C sharp minor polonaise by Chopin, a musical piece of the most intrinsic value and poetic depths, the Emperor, when I had finished, intimated to Count Ito, his first minister, that I should play it again. The Japanese taste is good. I was laden with presents of untold value, one item only being a gold-lacquer box of the seventeenth century. I played in Hong Kong and *outside* Canton, no European being allowed to live inside. There I made an interesting excursion to the Portuguese possession of Macao, visiting the cave where Camoëns wrote his *Lusiad*. It was very interesting to see outside the Chinese town of Macao a European Portuguese town which to this very day has remained unchanged since the sixteenth century. In the midst of the exquisite tropical vegetation of Java, and despite the terrific heat, I gave sixty-two concerts

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in sixty-seven days, travelling all over the island, inspecting its antiquities, the chief of which is a most wonderful Buddhist temple, the Boro Budhur, or Many Buddhas. This building contains six miles of figures, and is a solid pile of stone, larger than the pyramids. They have, these Javans, an extraordinarily sweet orchestra in the national Samelang, which consists of percussion instruments played by eighteen people; but to hear this orchestra, with its most weird Oriental chorus and ecstatic dances, one must have had the privilege of being invited by the Sultan of Solo, "Sole Emperor of the World." I have seen and heard nothing more dreamy and poetic than the Serimpis danced by nine Royal Princesses.

Where are the Æsthetes of a few years ago? Or was this little confederation of the lovers of art but one of the soap-bubbles of our *fin de siècle*, rich in promise and suggestion of many a possibility, but dead in works and act? Or, if there are any true lovers of art yet left among them, why do they not organize and send out missionaries the world over, to tell picturesque Japan and other countries ready to fall victims that, to imitate the will-o'-the-wisp of European culture and fascination, means for a non-Christian land, the committing of suicide; that it means sacrificing one's individuality for an empty show and shadow; at best it is to exchange the original and the picturesque for the vulgar and the hideous. Truly and indeed it is high time that at last something should be done in this direction, and before the deceitful civilization of the conceited nations of but yesterday has irretrievably hypnotized the older races, and made them succumb to its upas-tree wiles and supposed superiority. Otherwise, old arts and artistic creations, everything original and unique will very soon disappear. Already national dresses and time-honoured customs, and everything beautiful, artistic, and worth preservation is fast disappearing from view. At no distant day, alas, the best relics of the past will perhaps be found only in museums in sorry, solitary, and be-ticketed samples preserved under glass!

Such is the work and the unavoidable result of our modern civilization. Skin-deep in reality in its visible effects, in the "blessings" it is alleged to have given to the world, its roots are rotten to the core. It is to its progress that selfishness and materialism, the greatest curses of the nations, are due; and the latter will most surely lead to the annihilation of art and of the appreciation of the truly harmonious and beautiful. Hitherto, materialism has only led

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to a universal tendency to unification on the material plane and a corresponding diversity on that of thought and spirit. It is this universal tendency, which by propelling humanity, through its ambition and selfish greed, to an incessant chase after wealth and the obtaining *at any price* of the supposed blessings of this life, causes it to aspire or rather gravitate to one level, the lowest of all—the plane of empty appearance. Materialism and indifference to all save the selfish realization of wealth and power, and the over-feeding of national and personal vanity, have gradually led nations and men to the almost

entire oblivion of spiritual ideals, of the love of nature, to the correct appreciation of things. Like a hideous leprosy our Western civilization has eaten its way through all the quarters of the globe and hardened the human heart. "Soul-saving" is its deceitful, lying pretext; greed for additional revenue through opium, rum, and the inoculation of European vices—the real aim. In the far East it has infected with the spirit of imitation the higher classes of the "pagans"—save China, whose national conservatism deserves our respect; and in Europe it has engrafted *fashion*—save the mark—even on the dirty, starving proletariat itself! For the last thirty years, as if some deceitful semblance of a reversion to the ancestral type—awarded to men by the Darwinian theory in its moral added to its physical characteristics—were contemplated by an evil spirit tempting mankind, almost every race and nation under the Sun in Asia has gone mad in its passion for *aping* Europe. This, added to the frantic endeavor to destroy Nature in every direction, and also every vestige of older civilizations—far superior to our own in arts, godliness, and the appreciation of the grandiose and harmonious—must result in such national calamities. Therefore, do we find hitherto artistic and picturesque Japan succumbing wholly to the temptation of justifying the "ape theory" by *simianizing* its populations in order to bring the country on a level with canting, greedy and artificial Europe!

For certainly Europe is all this. It is canting and deceitful from its diplomats down to its custodians of religion, from its political down to its social laws, selfish, greedy and brutal beyond expression in its grabbing characteristics. And yet there are those who wonder at the gradual decadence of true art, as if art could exist without imagination, fancy, and a just appreciation of the beautiful in Nature, or without poetry and high religious, hence, metaphysical aspirations! The galleries of paintings and sculpture, we hear, become.

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every year poorer in quality, if richer in quantity. It is lamented that while there is a plethora of ordinary productions, the greatest scarcity of remarkable pictures and statuary prevails. Is this not most evidently due to the facts that (a) the artists will very soon remain with no better models than *nature morte* (or "still life") to inspire themselves with; and (b) that the chief concern is not the

creation of artistic objects, but their speedy sale and profits? Under such conditions, the fall of true art is only a natural consequence.

Owing to the triumphant march and the invasion of civilization, Nature, as well as man and ethics, is sacrificed, and is fast becoming artificial. Climates are changing, and the face of the whole world will soon be altered. Under the murderous hand of the pioneers of civilization, the destruction of whole primeval forests is leading to the drying up of rivers, and the opening of the Canal of Suez has changed the climate of Egypt as that of Panama will divert the course of the Gulf Stream. Almost tropical countries are now becoming cold and rainy, and fertile lands threaten to be soon transformed into sandy deserts. A few years more and there will not remain within a radius of fifty miles around our large cities one single rural spot inviolate from vulgar speculation. In scenery, the picturesque and the natural is daily replaced by the grotesque and the artificial. Scarce a landscape in England but the fair body of nature is desecrated by the advertisements of "Pears' Soap" and "Beecham's Pills." The pure air of the country is polluted with smoke, the smells of greasy railway-engines, and the sickening odours of gin, whiskey, and beer. And once that every natural spot in the surrounding scenery is gone, and the eye of the painter finds but the artificial and hideous products of modern speculation to rest upon, artistic taste will have to follow suit and disappear along with them.

"No man ever did or ever will work well, but either from actual sight or sight of faith," says Ruskin, speaking of art. Thus, the first quarter of the coming century may witness painters of landscapes, who have never seen an acre of land free from human improvement; and painters of figures whose ideas of female beauty of form will be based on the wasp-like pinched-in waists of corseted, hollow-chested and consumptive society *belles*. It is not from such models that a picture deserving of the definition of Horace—"a poem without words"—is produced. Artificially draped *Parisiennes* and London Cockneys sitting for Italian *contadini* or Arab Bedouins

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can never replace the genuine article; and both free Bedouins and genuine Italian peasant girls are, thanks to "civilization," fast becoming things of the past. Where shall artists find genuine models in the coming century, when the hosts of the free Nomads of the Desert, and perchance all the Negro tribes of

Africa—or what will remain of them after their decimation by Christian cannons, and the rum and opium of the Christian civilizer—will have donned European coats and top hats? And that this is precisely what awaits art under the beneficial progress of modern civilization, is self-evident to all.

Aye! let us boast of the blessings of civilization, by all means. Let us brag of our sciences and the grand discoveries of the age, its achievements in mechanical arts, its railroads, telephones and electric batteries; but let us not forget, meanwhile, to purchase at fabulous prices (almost as great as those given in our day for a prize dog, or an old prima donna's song) the paintings and statuary of uncivilized, barbarous antiquity and of the middle ages: for such objects of art will be reproduced no more. Civilization has tolled their eleventh hour. It has rung the death-knell of the old arts, and the last decade of our century is summoning the world to the funeral of all that was grand, genuine, and original in the old civilizations. Would Raphael, O ye lovers of art, have created one single of his many Madonnas, had he had, instead of Fornarina and the once Juno-like women of the Trastevere of Rome to inspire his genius, only the present-day models, or the niched Virgins of the nooks and corners of modern Italy, in crinolines and high-heeled boots? Or would Andrea del Sarto have produced his famous "Venus and Cupid" from a modern East End working girl—one of the latest victims to fashion—holding under the shadow of a gigantic hat *à la mousquetaire*, feathered like the scalp of an Indian chief, a dirty, scrofulous brat from the slums? How could Titian have ever immortalized his golden-haired patrician ladies of Venice, had he been compelled to move all his life in the society of our actual "professional beauties," with their straw-colored, dyed capillaries that transform human hair into the fur of a yellow Angora cat? May not one venture to state with the utmost confidence that the world would never have had the Athena Limnia of Phidias—that ideal of beauty *in face and form*—had Aspasia, the Milesian, or the fair daughters of Hellas, whether in the days of Pericles or in any other, disfigured that "form" with stays and bustle, and coated that "face"

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with white enamel, after the fashion of the varnished features of the mummies of the dead Egyptians.

We see the same in architecture. Not even the genius of Michael Angelo himself could have failed to receive its death-blow at the first sight of the Eiffel Tower, or the Albert Hall, or more horrible still, the Albert Memorial. Nor, for the matter of that, could it have received any suggestive idea from the Colosseum and the palace of the Cæsars, in their present *whitewashed* and *repaired* state! Whither, then, shall we, in our days of civilization, go to find the natural, or even simply the picturesque? Is it still to Italy, to Switzerland or Spain? But the Bay of Naples—even if its waters be as blue and transparent as on the day when the people of Cumæ selected its shores for a colony, and its surrounding scenery as gloriously beautiful as ever—thanks to that spirit of mimicry which has infected sea and land, has now lost its most artistic and most original features. It is bereft of its lazy, dirty, but intensely picturesque figures of old; of its *lazzaroni* and *barcarolos*, its fishermen and country girls. Instead of the former's red or blue Phrygian cap, and the latter's statuesque, half-nude figure and poetical rags, we see nowadays but the caricatured specimens of modern civilization and fashion. The gay *tarantella* resounds no longer on the cool sands of the moonlit shore; it is replaced by that libel on Terpsichore, the modern quadrille, in the gas-lit, gin-smelling sailor's *trattorias*. Filth still pervades the land, as of yore; but it is made the more apparent on the threadbare city coat, the mangled chimney-pot hat and the once fashionable, now cast-away European bonnet. Picked up in the hotel gutters, they now grace the unkempt heads of the once picturesque Neapolitans. The type of the latter has died out, and there is nothing to distinguish the *lazzaroni* from the Venetian *gondoliere*, the Calabrian brigand, or the London street-sweeper and beggar. The still, sunlit waters of *Canal Grande* bear no longer their gondolas, filled on festival days with gaily dressed Venetians, with picturesque boatmen and girls. The black gondola that glides silently under the heavy carved balconies of the old patrician palazze, reminds one now more of a black floating coffin, with a solemn-looking, dark-clothed undertaker paddling it on towards the Styx, than of the gondola of thirty years ago. Venice looks more gloomy now than during the days of Austrian slavery from which it was rescued by Napoleon III. Once on shore, its *gondoliere* is scarcely distinguishable from his "fare," the British M.P. on his



holiday-tour in the old city of the Doges. Such is the levelling hand of all-destroying civilization.

It is the same all over Europe. Look at Switzerland. Hardly a decade ago, every Canton had its distinguishing national costume, as clean and fresh as it was peculiar. Now the people are ashamed to wear it. They want to be mistaken for foreign guests, to be regarded as a civilized nation which follows suit even in fashion. Cross over to Spain. Of all the relics of old, the smell of rancid oil and garlic is alone left to remind one of the poetry of the old days in the country of the Cid. The graceful mantilla has almost disappeared; the proud hidalgo-beggar has taken himself off from the street-corner; the nightly serenades of love-sick Romeos are gone out of fashion; and the duenna contemplates going in for woman's rights. The members of the "Social Purity" Associations may say "thank God" to this and lay the change at the door of Christian and moral reforms of civilization. But has morality gained anything in Spain with the disappearance of the nocturnal lovers and duennas? We have every right to say, *no*. A Don Juan *outside* a house is less dangerous than one *inside*. Social immorality is as rife as ever—if not more so, in Spain, and it must be so, indeed, when even "Harper's Guide Book" quotes in its last edition as follows: "Morals in all classes, especially in the higher, are in the most degraded state. Veils, indeed, are thrown aside, and serenades are rare, but gallantry and intrigue are as active as ever. The men think little of their married obligations; the women . . . are willing victims of unprincipled gallantry." (*Spain, "Madrid,"* page 678.) In this, Spain is but on a par with all other countries civilized or now civilizing, and is assuredly not worse than many another country that could be named; but that which may be said of it with truth is, that what it has lost in poetry through civilization, it has gained in hypocrisy and loose morals. The *Cortejo* has turned into the *petit crevé*; the castanets have become silent, because, perhaps, the noise of the uncorked champagne bottles affords more excitement to the rapidly civilizing nation; and the *Andalouse au teint bruni* having taken to cosmetics and face-enamel, "la Marquesa d' Almedi" may be said to have been buried with Alfred de Musset.

The gods have indeed been propitious to the Alhambra. They have permitted it to be burnt before its chaste Moresque beauty had been finally desecrated, as are the rock-cut temples of India, the Pyramids and other relics, by drunken

orgies. This superb relic

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of the Moors had already suffered, once before, by Christian improvement. It is a tradition still told in Granada, and history too, that the monks of Ferdinand and Isabella had made of Alhambra—that “palace of petrified flowers dyed with the hues of the wings of angels”—a filthy prison for thieves and murderers. Modern speculators might have done worse; they might have polluted its walls and pearl-inlaid ceilings, the lovely gilding and stucco, the fairy-like arabesques, and the marble and gossamer-like carvings, with commercial advertisements, after the Inquisitors had already once before covered the building with whitewash and permitted the prison-keepers to use Alhambra Halls for their donkeys and cattle. Doubting but little that the fury of the *Madrilenos* for imitating the French and English must have already, at this stage of modern civilization, infected every province of Spain, we may regard that lovely country as dead. A friend speaks, as an eye-witness, of “cocktails” spilled near the marble fountain of the Alhambra, over the blood-marks left by the hapless Abancerages slain by Boabdil, and of a Parisian *cancan pur sang* performed by working girls and soldiers of Granada, in the Court of Lions!

But these are only trifling signs of the time and the spread of *culture* among the middle and the lower classes. Wherever the spirit of aping possesses the heart of the nation—the poor working classes —there the elements of nationality disappear and the country is on the eve of losing its individuality and all things change for the worse. What is the use of talking so loudly of “the benefits of *Christian* civilization,” of its having softened public morals, refined national customs and manners, etc., etc., when our modern civilization has achieved quite the reverse! Civilization has depended, for ages, says Burke, “upon two principles . . . the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion.” And how many true *gentlemen* have we left, when compared even with the days of half-barbarous knighthood? Religion has become canting hypocrisy and the genuine religious spirit is regarded now-a-days as insanity. Civilization, it is averred, “has destroyed brigandage, established public security, elevated morality and built railways which now honeycomb the face of the globe.” Indeed? Let us analyze seriously and impartially all these “benefits” and we shall soon find that civilization has done nothing of the kind. At best it has put

a false nose on every evil of the Past, adding hypocrisy and false pretence to the natural ugliness of each. If it is true to say that it has put down in some civilized centers

of Europe—near Rome, in the Bois de Boulogne or on Hampstead Heath—*banditti* and highway-men, it is also as true that it has, thereby, destroyed robbery only as a specialty, the latter having now become a common occupation in every city great or small. The robber and cut-throat has only exchanged his dress and appearance by donning the livery of civilization—the ugly modern attire. Instead of being robbed under the vault of thick woods and the protection of darkness, people are robbed now-a-days under the electric light of saloons and the protection of trade-laws and police-regulations. As to open day-light brigandage, the *Mafia* of New Orleans and the *Mala Vita* of Sicily, with high officialdom, population, police, and jury forced to play into the hands of regularly organized bands of murderers, thieves, and tyrants<sup>1</sup> in the full glare of European “culture,” show how far our civilization has succeeded in establishing public security, or Christian religion in softening the hearts of men and the ways and customs of a barbarous past. Modern Cyclopædias are very fond of expatiating upon the decadence of Rome and its *pagan* horrors. But if the latest editions of the *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography* were honest enough to make a parallel between those “monsters of depravity” of ancient civilization, Messalina and Faustina, Nero and Commodus, and modern European aristocracy, it might be found that the latter could give odds to the former—in social hypocrisy, at any rate. Between “the shameless and beastly debauchery” of an Emperor Commodus, and as beastly a depravity of more than one “Honourable,” high official representative of the people, the only difference to be found is that while Commodus was a member of all the sacerdotal colleges of Paganism, the modern debauchee may be a high member of the Evangelical Christian Churches, a distinguished and pious pupil of Moody and Sankey and what not. It is not the Calchas of Homer, who was the type of the Calchas in the Operette “*La Belle Helène*,” but the modern sacerdotal Pecksniff and his followers.

As to the blessings of railways and “the annihilation of space and time,” it is still an undecided question—without speaking of the misery and starvation the

introduction of steam engines and machinery in general has brought for years on those who depend on their manual labour—whether railways do not kill more people in one month than the brigands of all Europe used to murder in

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<sup>1</sup> Read the “Cut Throat’s Paradise” in the *Edinburgh Review* for April, 1877, and the digest of it in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of April 15th, 1891, “Murder as a Profession.” p. 158

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a whole year. The victims of railroads, moreover, are killed under circumstances which surpass in horror anything the cut-throats may have devised. One reads almost daily of railway disasters in which people are “burned to death in the blazing wreckage,” “mangled and crushed out of recognition” and killed by dozens and scores.<sup>2</sup> This is a trifle worse than the highwaymen of old Newgate.

Nor has crime been abated at all by the spread of civilization; though owing to the progress of science in chemistry and physics, it has become more secure from detection and more ghastly in its realization than it ever has been. Speak of Christian civilization having improved public morals; of Christianity being the only religion which has established and recognized Universal Brotherhood! Look at the brotherly feeling shown by American Christians to the Red Indian and the Negro, whose *citizenship* is the farce of the age. Witness the love of the Anglo-Indians for the “mild Hindu,” the Mussulman, and the Buddhist. See “how these Christians love each other” in their incessant law litigations, their libels against each other, the mutual hatred of the Churches and of the sects. Modern civilization and Christianity are oil and water—they will never mix. Nations among which the most horrible crimes are daily perpetrated; nations which rejoice in Tropmanns and Jack the Rippers, in fiends like Mrs. Reeves the trader in baby slaughter—to the number of 300 victims as is believed—for the sake of filthy lucre; nations which not only permit but encourage a Monaco with its hosts of suicides, that patronize prize-fights, bull-fights, useless and cruel sport and even indiscriminate vivisection—such nations have no right to boast of their civilization. Nations furthermore which from political considerations, dare not put down slave-trade *once for all*, and out of revenue-greed, hesitate to abolish opium and whiskey trades, fattening on the untold misery and degradation of millions of human beings, have no right to call

themselves either Christian or civilized. A civilization finally that leads only to the destruction of every noble, artistic feeling in man, can only deserve the epithet

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<sup>2</sup>To take one instance. A Reuter's telegram from America, where such accidents are almost of daily occurrence, gives the following details of a wrecked train: "One of the cars which was attached to a gravel train and which contained five Italian workmen, was thrown forward into the center of the wreck, and the whole mass caught fire. Two of the men were killed outright and the remaining three were injured, pinioned in the wreckage. As the flames reached them their cries and groans were heartrending. Owing to the position of the car and the intense heat the rescuers were unable to reach them, and were compelled to watch them slowly burn to death. It is understood that all the victims leave families."

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of barbarous. We, the modern-day Europeans, are Vandals as great, if not greater than Atilla with his savage hordes.

*Consummatum est.* Such is the work of our modern Christian civilization and its direct effects. The destroyer of art, the Shylock, who, for every mite of gold it gives, demands and receives in return a pound of human flesh, in the heart-blood, in the physical and mental suffering of the masses, in the loss of everything true and lovable—can hardly pretend to deserve grateful or respectful recognition. The unconsciously prophetic *fin de siècle*, in short, is the long ago foreseen *fin de cycle*; when according to *Manjunâtha Sutra*, "Justice will have died, leaving as its successor blind Law, and as its Guru and guide—*Selfishness*; when wicked things and deeds will have to be regarded as meritorious, and holy actions as madness." Beliefs are dying out, divine life is mocked at; art and genius, truth and justice are daily sacrificed to the insatiable mammon of the age —money grubbing. The artificial replaces everywhere the real, the false substitutes the true. Not a sunny valley, not a shadowy grove left immaculate on the bosom of mother nature. And yet what marble fountain in fashionable square or city park, what bronze lions or tumble-down dolphins with upturned tails can compare with an old worm-eaten, moss-covered, weather-stained country well, or a rural windmill in a green meadow! What Arc de Triomphe can ever compare with the low arch of Grotto Azzurra, at Capri, and what city park or Champs Elysées, rival Sorrento, "the wild garden

of the world," the birth-place of Tasso? Ancient civilizations have never sacrificed Nature to speculation, but holding it as divine, have honoured her natural beauties by the erection of works of art, such as our modern electric civilization could never produce even in dream. The sublime grandeur, the mournful gloom and majesty of the ruined temples of Pæstum, that stand for ages like so many sentries over the sepulchre of the Past and the forlorn hope of the Future amid the mountain wilderness of Sorrento, have inspired more men of genius than the new civilization will ever produce. Give us the *banditti* who once infested these ruins, rather than the railroads that cut through the old Etruscan tombs; the first may take the purse and life of the few; the second are undermining the lives of the millions by poisoning with foul gases the sweet breath of the pure air. In ten years, by century xxth, Southern France with its Nice and Cannes, and even Engadine, may hope to rival the London atmosphere with its fogs, thanks to the increase of population and changes of

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climate. We hear that Speculation is preparing a new iniquity against Nature: smoky, greasy, stench-breathing *funiculaires* (baby-railways) are being contemplated for some world-renowned mountains. They are preparing to creep like so many loathsome, fire-vomiting reptiles over the immaculate body of the Jungfrau, and a railway-tunnel is to pierce the heart of the snow-capped Virgin mountain, the glory of Europe. And why not? Has not national speculation pulled down the priceless remains of the grand Temple of Neptune at Rome, to build over its colossal corpse and sculptured pillars the present Custom House?

Are we so wrong then, in maintaining that modern civilization with its Spirit of Speculation is the very *Genius of Destruction*; and as such, what better words can be addressed to it than this definition of Burke:

"A Spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors."

*Lucifer*, May, 1891

H.P.B.

## ON PSEUDO-THEOSOPHY

The more honesty a man has, the less he  
affects the air of a saint. The affectation of  
sanctity is a blotch on the face of devotion.

—Lavater

The most difficult thing in life is to know yourself.

—Thales

### SHALL WE WINNOW THE CORN, BUT FEED UPON THE CHAFF?

THE presiding genius in the *Daily News* Office runs amuck at Lucifer in his issue of February 16th. He makes merry over the presumed distress of some theosophists who see in our serial novel, “The Talking Image of Urur” —by our colleague, Dr. F. Hartmann—an attempt to poke fun at the Theosophical Society. Thereupon, the witty editor quizzes “Madame Blavatsky” for observing that she “does not agree with the view” taken by some pessimists; and ends by expressing fear that “the misgivings that have been awakened will not easily be laid to rest.”

*Ride, si sapiis.* It is precisely because it is our desire that the “misgivings” awakened should reach those in whom the sense of *personality* and *conceit* has not yet entirely stifled their better feelings, and force them to recognize themselves in the mirror offered to them in the “Talking Image,” that we publish the “satirical” novel.

This proceeding of ours—rather unusual, to be sure, for editors—to publish a satire, which *seems* to the short-sighted to be aimed at their gods and parties only because they are unable to sense the underlying philosophy and moral in them, has created quite a stir in the dailies.

The various Metropolitan Press Cutting Agencies are pouring every morning on our breakfast-table their load of criticism, advice, and comment upon the rather novel policy. So, for instance, a kindly-disposed correspondent of the *Lancashire Evening Post* (February 18) writes as follows:

The editor of *Lucifer* has done a bold thing. She is publishing a story called “The Talking Image of Urur,” which is designed to satirise the false prophets of Theosophy in order that

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the true prophets may be justified. I appreciate the motive entirely, but, unfortunately, there are weak-minded theosophists who can see nothing in Dr. Hartmann’s spirited talk but a caricature of their whole belief. So they have remonstrated with Madame Blavatsky, and she replies in *Lucifer* that “the story casts more just ridicule upon the enemies and detractors of the Theosophic Society than upon the few theosophists whose enthusiasm may have carried them into extremes.” Unfortunately, this is not strictly accurate. The hero of the tale, a certain Pancho, is one of these enthusiasts, and it is upon him and upon the mock “adepts” who deceive him that the ridicule is thrown. But it never seems to have occurred to Madame Blavatsky and Dr. Hartmann that the moment you begin to ridicule one element, even though it be a false element, in the faith, you are apt to shake the confidence of many if not most believers, for the simple reason that they have no sense of humour. The high priestess of the cult may have this sense for obvious reasons,<sup>1</sup> but her disciples are likely to be lost if they begin to laugh, and if they can’t laugh they will be bewildered and indignant. I offer this explanation with all humility to Madame Blavatsky, who has had some experience of the effects of satire.

The more so as, according to those members of the T.S. who have read the whole story, it is precisely “Madame Blavatsky” against whom its *satire* is the



most directed. And if “Mme. Blavatsky” —presumably “the Talking Image” — does not object to finding herself represented as a kind of *mediumistic* poll parrot, why should other “theosophists” object? A theosophist above all men ought ever to bear in mind the advice of Epictetus: “If evil be said of thee, *and if it be true*, correct thyself; if it be a lie, *laugh at it*.” We welcome a *witty* satire always, and defy ridicule or any efforts in this direction to kill the Theosophical Society, so long as it, *as a body*, remains true to its *original* principles.

As to the other dangers so kindly urged by the *Post*, the “high priestess” acknowledges the benevolent objections by answering and giving her reasons, which are these: The chosen motto of the Theosophical Society has been for years—“There is no religion *higher than truth*”; the object of Lucifer is in the epigraph on its cover, which is “to bring to light the hidden things of darkness.” If the editor of Lucifer and the Theosophists would not believe

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<sup>1</sup> The “obvious reasons” so delicately worded are these: “the high priestess of the cult” is almost universally supposed, outside of the T.S., to have exercised her own satirical powers and “sense of humour” on her *alleged* and numerous victims by *bamboozling* them into a belief of *her own invention*. So be it. The tree is known by its fruits, and it is posterity which will have to decide on the nature of the fruit. —[Ed.]

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these two propositions and be true to their colours, they have to deal with perfect impartiality, sparing no more themselves than outsiders, or even their enemies. As to the “weak-minded theosophists” —if any—they can take care of themselves in the way they please. If the “false prophets of Theosophy” are to be left untouched, the *true* prophets will be very soon—as they have already been—confused with the false. It is nigh time to winnow our corn and cast away the chaff. The T.S. is becoming enormous in its numbers, and if the *false* prophets, the pretenders (*e.g.*, the “H.B. of L.,” exposed in Yorkshire by Theosophists two years ago, and the “G.N.K.R.” just exposed in America), or even the weak-minded dupes, are left alone, then the Society threatens to become very soon a fanatical body split into three hundred sects—like Protestantism—each hating the other, and all bent on destroying the truth by monstrous exaggerations and idiotic schemes and shams. We do not believe in

allowing the presence of *sham* elements in Theosophy, because of the fear, forsooth, that if even “a false element in the faith” is *ridiculed*, the latter “is apt to shake the confidence” in the whole. At this rate Christianity would be the first to die out centuries ago under the sledge-hammer blows dealt to its various churches by its many reformers. No philosopher, no mystic or student of symbolism, can ever laugh at or disbelieve in the sublime allegory and conception of the “Second Advent” — whether in the person of Christ, Krishna, Sosiosh, or Buddha. The *Kalki Avatar*, or last (not “second”) Advent, to wit, the appearance of the “Saviour of Humanity” or the “Faithful” *light of Truth*, on the White Horse of Death—death to falsehood, illusion, and idol, or *self-worship*—is a universal belief. Shall we for all that abstain from denouncing the behaviour of certain “Second Adventists” (as in America)? What *true* Christians shall see their co-religionists making fools of themselves, or disgracing their faith, and still abstain from rebuking them publicly as privately, for fear lest this *false* element should throw out of Christianity the rest of the believers? Can any of them praise his co-religionists for climbing periodically, in a state of paradisiacal *decolleté*, on the top of their houses, trees, and high places, there to await the “advent”? No doubt those who hope by stealing a march on their slower Brethren to find themselves hooked up the first, and carried *bodily* into Heaven, are as good Christians as any. Should they not be rebuked for their folly all the same? Strange logic!

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THE WISE MAN COURTS TRUTH; THE FOOL, FLATTERY

However it may be, let rather our ranks be made thinner, than the Theosophical Society go on being made a spectacle to the world through the exaggerations of some fanatics, and the attempts of various charlatans to profit by a ready-made programme. These, by disfiguring and adapting Occultism to their own filthy and immoral ends, bring disgrace upon the whole movement. Some writer remarked that if one would know the enemy against whom he has to guard himself the most, the looking-glass will give him the best likeness of his face. This is quite true. If the first object of our Society be not to study one’s own self, but to find fault with all except that self, then, indeed, the T.S. is doomed to become—and it already has in certain centres—a Society for mutual *admiration*; a fit subject for the satire of so acute an observer as we know

the author of "The Talking Image of Urur" to be. This is our view and our policy. "And be it, indeed, that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself."

That such, however, is the policy of no other paper we know of—whether a daily, a weekly, a monthly, or a quarterly—we are quite aware. But, then, they are the public organs of the masses. Each has to pander to this or that other faction of politics or Society, and is doomed "to howl with the wolves," whether it likes or not. But our organs—Lucifer pre-eminently—are, or ought to be, the phonographs, so to speak, of the Theosophical Society, a body which is placed outside and beyond all centres of forced policy. We are painfully conscious that "he who tells the truth is turned out of nine cities"; that truth is unpalatable to most men; and that—since men must learn *to love the truth* before they thoroughly believe it—the truths we utter in our magazine are often as bitter as gall to many. This cannot be helped. Were we to adopt any other kind of policy, not only Lucifer—a very humble organ of Theosophy—but the Theosophical Society itself, would soon lose all its *raison d'être* and become an anomaly.

But "who shall sit in the seat of the scorner?" Is it the timid in heart, who tremble at every opinion too boldly expressed in Lucifer lest it should displease this faction of readers or give offense to that other class of subscribers? Is it the "self-admirers," who resent every remark, however kindly expressed, if it happens to clash with *their* notions, or fails to show respect to *their* hobbies?

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... I am Sir Oracle And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!

Surely we learn better and profit more by criticism than by flattery, and we amend our ways more through the abuse of our enemies than the blind pandering of friends. Such satires as the "Fallen Idol," and such chelas as Nebelsen, have done more good to our Society, and certain of its members, than any "theosophical" novel; for they have shown up and touched *au vif* the foolish exaggerations of more than one enthusiast.

*Self-abnegation is possible only to those who have learnt to know themselves; to such as will never mistake the echo of their own inner voice—that of selfish desire or passion—for the voice of divine inspiration, or an appeal from their Master. Nor is chelaship consonant with mediumistic sensitiveness and its hallucinations;*

and therefore all the *sensitives* who have hitherto forced themselves into discipleship have generally made fools of themselves, and, sooner or later, thrown ridicule upon the T.S. But after the publication of the “Fallen Idol” more than one such exhibition was stopped. “The Talking Image of Urur” may then render the same, if not better, service. If some traits in its various *dramatis personæ* fit in some particulars certain members who still belong to the Society, other characters—and the most successful of them—resemble rather certain EX-members; fanatics, in the past, bitter enemies now—conceited fools at all times. Furthermore “Puffer” is a compound and very vivid photograph. It *may* be that of several members of the T.S., but it looks also like a deluded victim of other bogus Esoteric and Occult Societies. One of such just sprung up at Boston U.S.A., is now being nipped in the bud and exposed by our own Theosophists.

These are the “Solar adepts” spoken of in our January editorial, the *âmes damnées* of shameful commercial enterprises. No event could vindicate the policy of our journal better than the timely exposure of these *pseudo*-adepts, those “Sages of the Ages” who bethought themselves of trading upon the public hunger for the marvellous *ad absurdum*. We did well to speak of them in the editorial as we have. It was timely and lucky for us to have pointed to the ringleaders of that shameful speculation—the sale of bogus occult knowledge. For we have averted thereby a great and new danger to the Society—namely that of unscrupulous charlatans being taken for Theosophists. Misled by their lies and their publications

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filled with terms from Eastern philosophy and with ideas they had bodily stolen from us only to disfigure and misapply them—the American press has already referred to them as Theosophists. Whether out of sheer flippancy, or actual malice, some dailies have headed their sensational articles with “Theosophic Knaves,” and “Pantognomostic Theosophs,” etc., etc. This is pure fiction. The editor of the “Esoteric” had never been at any time a member of our society, or of any of its numerous Branches. “Adhy-apaka, *alias* the Hellenic Ethnomedon and Enphoron, *alias* the Greco-Tibetan, *Ensmovens Om mane padmi Aum*” (*sic*) was our enemy from the beginning of his career. As impudently stated by him to a reporter, we theosophists hated him

for his “many virtues”! Nor has the Sage “bent under the weight of centuries,” the Vidya Nyaika, said to be represented by a person called Eli Ohmart, had anything to do with the T.S. The two worthies had, like two venomous wily spiders, spread their webs far and wide, and numerous are the Yankee flies caught in them. But thanks to the energy of some of our Boston Members, the two hideous desecrators of Eastern philosophy are exposed. In the words of the “Boston Globe,” this is the—

#### WEIRD TALE WHICH MAY HAVE A SEQUEL IN COURT

“If there are no arrests made, I shall go right on with the work; but if they make trouble, I shall stay and face the music.”

Hiram Erastus Butler, the esoteric philosopher of 478 Shawmut avenue, uttered the foregoing sentiment to a Globe reporter last evening as calmly as one would make a casual remark about the weather.

Thereby hangs a tale, a long, complicated, involuted, weird, mystical, scientific, hysterical tale—a tale of love and intrigue, of adventure, of alleged and to some extent of admitted swindling, of charges of a horrible and unspeakable immorality, of communion with embodied and disembodied spirits, and especially of money. In short, a tale that would make your head weary and your heart faint if you attempted to follow out all its labyrinthine details and count the cogs on its wheels within wheels. A tale that quite possibly may find its sequel in the courts, where judge, jury, and counsel will have a chance to cudgel their brains over almost every mystery in the known universe.

These are the *heroes* whom certain timid Theosophists—those who raised their voices against the publication of the “Talking

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Image of Urur—” advised us to leave alone. Had it not been for that unwillingness to expose even impersonal things and deeds, our editorial would have been more explicit. Far from us be the desire to “attack” or “expose” even our enemies, so long as they harm only ourselves, personally and individually. But here the whole of the Theosophical body—already so maligned, opposed,

and persecuted—was endangered, and its destinies were hanging in the balance, because of that impudent *pseudo* esoteric speculation. He, therefore, who maintains in the face of the Boston scandal, that we did not act rightly in tearing off the sanctimonious mask of Pecksniffian piety and the “Wisdom of the Ages” which covered the grimacing face of a most bestial immorality, of insatiable greediness for lucre and impudence, fire, water, and police proof—is no true Theosophist. How minds, even of an average intelligence, could be caught by such transparent snares as these publicly exhibited by the two worthies, to wit: Adhy-Apaka and Vidya Nyaika—traced by the American press to one Hiram E. Butler and Eli Ohmart—passes all comprehension! Suffice to read the pamphlet issued by the two confederates, to see at the first glance that it was a mere repetition—more enlarged and barefaced, and with a wider, bolder programme, still a repetition —of the now defunct “H.B. of L.” with its mysterious appeals of four years ago to the “Dissatisfied” with “the Theosophical Mahatmas.” The two hundred pages of the wildest balderdash constitute their “Appeal from the Unseen and the Unknown” and the “Interior of the Inmost” (?) to “the Awakened.” *Pantognomos* and *Ekphoron* offer to teach the unwary “the laws of Ens, Movens, and Om,” and appeal for money. *Vidya Nyaika* and *Ethnomedon* propose to initiate the ignorant into the “*à priori* Sambudhistic (?) philosophy of Kapila” and—beg for hard cash. The story is so sickening that we dislike to stain our pages with its details. But now to the moral of the fable.

YE SPURNED THE SUBSTANCE AND HAVE  
CLUTCHED THE SHADOW

For fourteen years our Theosophical Society has been before the public. Born with the three-fold object of infusing a little more mutual brotherly feeling in mankind; of investigating the mysteries of nature from the Spiritual and Psychic aspect; and, of doing a tardy justice to the civilizations and Wisdom of Eastern pre-Christian

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nations and literature, if it did not do all the good that a richer Society might, it certainly did no harm. It appealed only to those who found no help for their perplexities anywhere else. To those lost in the psychic riddles of Spiritualism, or such, again, as, unable to stand the morbid atmosphere of modern unbelief,

and seeking light in vain from the unfathomable mysteries taught by the theology of the thousand and one Christian sects, had given up all hope of solving any of the problems of life. There was no entrance fee during the first two years of the Society's existence; afterwards, when the correspondence and postage alone demanded hundreds of pounds a year, new members had to pay £1 for their diploma. Unless one wanted to support the movement, one could remain a Fellow all his life without being asked for a penny, and two-thirds of our members have never put their hand in their pocket, nor were they asked to do so. Those who supported the cause were from the first a few devoted Theosophists who laboured without conditions or any hope for reward. Yet no association was more insulted and laughed at than was the Theosophical Society. No members of anybody were spoken of in more contemptuous terms than the Fellows of the T.S. from the first. The Society was born in America, and therefore it was regarded in England with disfavour and suspicion. We were considered as fools and knaves, victims and frauds before the benevolent interference of the Psychic Research Society, which tried to build its reputation on the downfall of Theosophy and Spiritualism, but really harmed neither. Nevertheless, when our enemies got the upper hand, and by dint of slander and inventions had most maliciously succeeded in placing before the credulous public, ever hungry for scandals and sensations, *mere conjectures as undeniable and proven facts*, it was the American press which became the most bitter in its denunciations of Theosophy, and the American public the most willing to drink in and giggle over the undeserved calumnies upon the Founders of the T.S. Yet it is they who were the first told, through our Society, of the actual existence of Eastern Adepts in Occult Sciences. But both the English and the Americans spurned and scoffed at the very idea, while even the Spiritualists and Mystics, who ought to have known better, would, with a few exceptions, have nothing to do with *heathen* Masters of Wisdom. The latter were, they maintained, "*invented* by the Theosophists": it was all "moonshine." For these "Masters," whom no member was ever asked to accept, unless he liked

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to do so himself, on whose behalf *no supernatural claim was ever made*, unless, perhaps, in the too ardent imagination of enthusiasts; these Masters who *gave to*, and often *helped* with money, poor Theosophists, but never asked anything of the rich—these masters *were too much like real men*. They neither

claimed to be gods nor spirits, nor did they pander to people's gush and sentimental creeds. And now those Americans have got at last what their hearts yearned for: a bonâ fide ideal of an adept and magician. A creature several thousand years old. A *true-blue* "Buddhist-Brahmin" who appeals to Jehovah, or *Jahveh*, speaks of Christ and the Messianic cycle, and blesses them with an amen and an "om mane padmi hum" in the same breath, relieving them at the same time of 40,000 dollars before they are a month old in their worship of him . . . *Wullahy!* Allah is great and—"Vidya Nyaika" is his only prophet. Indeed we feel little pity for the victims. What is the *psychology* that some Theosophists are accused of exercising over their victims in comparison with this? And this necessitates a few words of explanation.

#### IGNORANCE NOT ALTOGETHER BLISS

All know that there is a tacit, often openly-expressed, belief among a few of the Fellows of the T.S. that a certain prominent Theosophist among the leaders of the Society *psychologizes* all those who happen to come within the area of that individual's influence. Dozens, nay, hundreds, were, and still are, "psychologized." The hypnotic effect seems so strong as to virtually transform all such "unfortunates" into irresponsible nincompoops, mere cyphers and tools of that theosophical Circe. This idiotic belief was originally started by some "wise men" of the West. Unwilling to admit that the said person had either any knowledge or *powers*, bent on discrediting their victim, and yet unable to explain certain abnormal occurrences, they hit upon this happy and *logical* loop-hole to get out of their difficulties. The theory found a grateful and fruitful soil. Henceforth, whenever any Fellows connected theosophically with the said "psychologizer" happen to disagree in their views upon questions, metaphysical or even purely administrative, with some other member—"on despotism bent," forthwith the latter comes out with the favourite solution: "Oh, they are psychologized!" The *magic* word springs out on the arena of discussion like a Jack-in-a-box, and forthwith

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the attitude of the "rebels" is explained and plausibly accounted for.

Ofcourse the alleged "psychology" has really no existence outside the imagination of those who are too vain to allow any opposition to *their* all-wise



and autocratic decrees on any other ground than phenomenal—nay, *magical*—interference with their will. A short analysis of the Karmic effects that would be produced by the exercise of such powers may prove interesting to theosophists.

Even on the terrestrial, purely physical plane, moral irresponsibility ensures impunity. Parents are answerable for their children, tutors and guardians for their pupils and wards, and even the Supreme Courts have admitted extenuating circumstances for criminals who are proved to have been led to crime by a will or influences stronger than their own. How much more forcibly this law of simple retributive justice must act on the psychic plane; and what, therefore, may be the responsibility incurred by using such psychological powers, in the face of Karma and its punitive laws, may be easily inferred. Is it not evident that, if even human justice recognizes the impossibility of punishing an irrational idiot, a child, a minor, etc., taking into account even hereditary causes and bad family influences—that the divine Law of Retribution, which we call Karma, must visit with hundredfold severity one who deprives reasonable, thinking men of their *free will* and powers of ratiocination? From the occult standpoint, the charge is simply one of black magic, of *envoûtement*. Alone a *Dugpa*, with “Avitchi” yawning at the further end of his life cycle, could risk such a thing. Have those so prompt to hurl the charge at the head of persons in their way, ever understood the whole terrible meaning implied in the accusation? We doubt it. No occultist, no intelligent student of the mysterious laws of the “night side of Nature,” no one who knows anything of Karma, would ever suggest such an explanation. What adept or even a moderately-informed chela would ever risk an endless future by interfering with, and therefore *taking upon himself, the Karmic debit of all those whom he would so psychologize as to make of them merely the tools of his own sweet will!*

This fact seems so evident and palpably flagrant, that it is absurd to have to recall it to those who boast of knowing *all* about Karma.

Is it not enough to bear the burden of the knowledge that from

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birth to death, the least, the most unimportant, unit of the human family exercises an influence over, and receives in his turn, as unconsciously as he

breathes, that of every other unit whom he approaches, or who comes in contact with him? Each of us either adds to or diminishes the sum total of human happiness and human misery, “not only of the present, but of every subsequent age of humanity,” as shown so ably by Elihu Burritt, who says:

There is no sequestered spot in the Universe, no dark niche along the disc of non-existence, from which he (man) can retreat from his relations to others, where he can withdraw the influence of his existence upon the moral destiny of the world; everywhere his presence or absence will be felt—everywhere he will have companions who will be better or worse for his influence. It is an old saying, and one of fearful and fathoming import, that *we are forming characters for eternity*. Forming characters! Whose? Our own or others’? Both—and in that momentous fact lies the peril and responsibility of our existence. Who is sufficient for the thought? Thousands of my fellow-beings will yearly enter eternity<sup>2</sup> with characters differing from those they would have carried thither had I never lived. The sunlight of that world will reveal my finger-marks in their primary formations, and in their successive strata of thought and life.

These are the words of a profound thinker. And if the simple fact of our living changes the sum of human weal and woe—in a way for which we are, owing to our ignorance, entirely irresponsible—what must be the Karmic decree in the matter of influencing hundreds of people by an act perpetrated and carried on for years in premeditation *and the full consciousness* of what we are doing!

Verily the man or woman in the unconscious possession of such dangerous powers had much better never be born. The Occultist who exercises them consciously will be caught up by the whirlwind of successive rebirths, without even an hour of rest. Woe to him, then, in that ceaseless, dreary series of terrestrial *Avitchis*; in that interminable æon of torture, suffering, and despair, during which, like the squirrel doomed to turn the wheel at every motion, he will launch from one life of misery into another, only to awake each time with a fresh burden of other people’s Karma, which he will have drawn upon himself! Is it not enough, indeed, to be regarded as “frauds, cranks, and infidels,” by the outsiders, without being identified with *wizards* and *witches* by our own members!

— — —

THE GENUS "INFIDEL" AND ITS VARIETIES

It is true to say that the varieties of infidels are many, and that one "infidel" differs from another infidel as a Danish boar-hound differs from the street mongrel. A man may be the most heterodox infidel with regard to orthodox dogmas. Yet, provided he proclaims himself loudly a Christian, that heterodoxy—when even going to the length of saying that "revealed religion is an imposture"—will be regarded by some as simply "of that exalted kind which rises above all human forms."<sup>3</sup>

A "Christian" of such a kind may—as the late Laurence Oliphant has—give vent to a still more startling theory. He may affirm that he considers that "from time to time the Divine Influence emanates itself, so to speak, in phenomenal persons. Sakya-mouni was such; Christ was such; and such I consider Mr. (Lake) Harris to be—in fact, he is a new avatar,"<sup>4</sup> and still remain a Christian of an "exalted kind" in the sight of the "Upper Ten." But let an "infidel" of the Theosophical Society say *just the same* (minus the absurdity of including the American Lake Harris in the list of the *Avatars*), and no contumely heaped upon him by clergy and servile newspapers will ever be found too strong!

But this belongs properly to the paradoxes of the Age; though the *Avataric* idea has much to do with Karma and rebirth, and that belief in reincarnation has nothing in it that can militate against the teachings of Christ. We affirm, furthermore, that the great Nazarene Adept distinctly taught it. So did Paul and the Synoptics, and nearly all the earliest Church Fathers, with scarcely an exception, accepted it, while some actually taught the doctrine.

DO NOT START TWO HARES AT ONCE

From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step, and Karma acts along every line, on nations as on men. The Japanese Mikado is tottering towards his end for having played too long at *hide and seek* with his worshippers. Hundreds of shrewd Americans have been taken in through disbelieving in truths and lending a too credulous ear to bold lies. A French abbé has fallen under Karmic penalty for coquetting too openly with Theosophy, and

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Lady Grant Duff's article "Laurence Oliphant" in the *Contemporary Review* for February: pages 185 and 188.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Quoted from Sir Thomas Wade's notes, by Lady Grant Duff—page 186

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attempted to mirror himself, like a modern clerical Narcissus, in the too deep waters of Eastern Occultism. The Abbé Roca, an honorary *chanoine* (canon) in the diocese of Perpignan, our old friend and irrepressible adversary in the French *Lotus* a year ago —has come to grief. Yet his ambition was quite an innocent one, if rather difficult of realization. It was founded on a dream of his; a reconciliation between Pantheistic Theosophy and a Socialistic Latin Church, with a fancy Pope at the head of it. He longed to see the Masters of Wisdom of old India and Eastern Occultism under the sway of Rome *regenerated*, and amused himself with predicting the same. Hence a frantic race between his meridional phantasy and the clerical bent of his thought. Poor, eloquent abbé! Did he not already perceive the Kingdom of Heaven in the new Rome-Jerusalem? A new Pontiff seated on a throne made out of the *cranium* of Macroprosopus, with the *Zohar* in his right pocket, *Chochmah*, the male Sephiroth (transformed by the good abbé into the Mother of God), in his left, and a "Lamb" stuffed with dynamite, in the paternal Popish embrace. The "Wise Men" of the East were even now, he said, crossing the Himalayas, and, "led by the Star" of Theosophy, would soon be worshipping at the shrine of the reformed Pope and Lamb. It was a glorious dream—alas, still but a dream. But he persisted in calling us the "greatest of Christian-Buddhists." (*Lotus*, February, 1888.) Unfortunately for himself he also called the Pope of the "Cæsaro-papal Rome" "the Satan of the seven hills," in the same number. Result: Pope Leo XIII asserts once more the proverbial ingratitude of theological Rome. He has just deprived our poetical and eloquent friend and adversary, the Abbé Roca, of the—

exercise of all his functions in Holy Orders, as also of his living, for refusing to submit to a decree by which his works were placed on the Index Expurgatorius. These works bore the titles of "Christ, the Pope, and the Democracy"; "The Fatal Crisis and the Salvation of Europe"; and "The End of the World." Even in the face of the present papal decision, he is advertising the appearance of a fourth work, entitled "Glorieux

Centenaire,' 1889. "Monde Nouveau." "Nouveaux Cieux, nouvelle Terre."

According to *Galignani*—(and his own articles and letters in theosophical organs, we may add) the fearless—Abbé has for some time, (says *Galignani*), been denouncing the Papacy as a creature of Cæsar, and as wholly preoccupied with the question of its temporalities in face of the crying

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needs of humanity. According to his view, the Divine aid was promised the Church until the end of the world, or of the age; and the Cæsarean age having passed away, all things are to be made new. He looks forward to a spiritual coming of Christ by the spread of the modern sentiment of "liberty, equality, fraternity, toleration, solidarity, and mutuality," in the atmosphere of the Gospel. Although his views do not appear to be very clear, he argues that the Gospel is passing from "the mystico-sentimental phase to the organico-social phase," thanks to the progress of science, which will illumine everything. (*The Globe*.)

This is only what had to be expected. The Abbé would not accept our joint warnings and took no heed of them. The sad epilogue of our polemics is given (not altogether correctly as regards the present writer) in the same *Globe*, wherein the news is wound up in the following words:

He has been contending, in the *Lotus*, in favour of a union of the East and the West by means of a fusion between Buddhism and the Christian Gospel; but Mdme. Blavatsky, the foremost European convert to the Indian religion, has emphatically repudiated all attempts at such union, because she cannot or will not accept the authority of Christ. The Abbé Roca is therefore left out in the cold.

This is not so. What "Mdme. Blavatsky" replied in the *Lotus* (December 1887) to the Abbé's assertions that the said *fusion* between his Church and Theosophy would surely come, was this:

... "We are not as optimistic as he (the Abbé Roca) is. His church sees in vain her greatest 'mysteries' unmasked and the fact proclaimed in every country by scholars versed in Orientalism and Symbology as by Theosophists; and we refuse to believe that she will ever accept our truths or confess her errors. And

as, on the other hand, no true theosophist will accept any more a *carnalised* Christ according to the Latin dogma than an anthropomorphic God, and still less a 'Pastor' in the person of a Pope, it is not the adepts who will ever go toward 'the Mount of Salvation,' (as invited by the Abbé). They will rather wait that the Mahomet of Rome should go to the trouble of taking the path which leads to Mount Meru." . . .

This is not rejecting "the authority of Christ" if the latter be regarded as we and Laurence Oliphant regarded Him, *i.e.* as an *Avatar* like Gautama Buddha and other great adepts who became the vehicles or *Reincarnations* of the "one" Divine influence. What most of us will never accept is the anthropomorphized "*charmant*

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*docteur*" of Renan, or the Christ of Torquemada and Calvin rolled into one. Jesus, the Adept we believe in, taught our Eastern doctrines, karma and reincarnation foremost of all. When the so called Christians will have learnt to read the New Testament between the lines, their eyes will be opened and — they will see.

We propose to deal with the subject of Karma and Reincarnation in our next issue. Meanwhile, we are happy to see that a fair wind is blowing over Christendom and propels European thought more and more Eastward.

*Lucifer*, March, 1889

#### THE MOTE AND THE BEAM

Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. . . .  
Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye,  
But considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

—Matthew VII

OH the virtuous indignation, the roaring tempest raised in the tender souls of American and British philanthropists at the rumor that Russian authorities in Siberia are not as tender as they should be towards their political prisoners! What a hullabaloo of loud protests of "indignation meetings," of gigantic

gatherings to denounce their neighbors, while they keep prudently silent about the same misdeeds at home.

A monster meeting of some 250,000 men protested the other day at Hyde Park "in the name of civilization and humanity" against the brutal behavior of some unknown Russian officials and jailors. Now, one can readily understand and entirely appreciate the feelings of the masses, of the oppressed, the suffering poor and the *hoi polloi* in general. These being "sat upon" from birth to death by the high and the wealthy of their own land, and having all, to a man, many a sore place in their hearts, must feel them vibrating with pain and sympathy with their brothers in sorrow of other countries. True, the energy expended at the said meeting might have been more usefully directed, perhaps, against local and colonial "Siberias" and "Dead Houses"; but such as it was, the impulse being genuine, every Theosophist regarded it with respect. But that to which every member of the Theosophical Society ought to refuse that feeling of sympathy is the hypocritical cant in this matter of sundry editors who remain dumb in face of misdeeds at home, pouring all their wrath on the abuse of power and the brutality of Russian officers. This is enough to make an owl laugh in full daylight. That charges of cruelty should be brought forward, and leprous spots singled out on the body of Russia by England and America is a sufficiently curious piece of moral audacity; but that this attitude should be supported, and even enforced,

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by certain editors, instead of being passed over in prudent silence, makes one think of the wise adage "whom the Gods would destroy they first make mad." To the student of human nature a world of instruction is contained therein, and he feels thankful for this additional experience.

Bearing in mind that Lucifer has nought to do with the political situation in all this affair, let the reader remember, that it has, on the other hand everything to do with its moral aspect. Having its mission at heart, to wit: to bring "to light the hidden things of darkness," it has naturally a good deal to say about drunken John and drunken Jonathan nodding so frowningly at drunken Peter, and so gravely moralising at him as though they were themselves sinless. Here the writer speaks first of all as a Theosophist, and only secondly as a Russian; neither excusing Russia, nor accusing England and America, but simply

throwing the full glare of the torch of truth on *facts* which no one can deny. And once this position established, the writer says: "How consoling and hopeful might have been for our growing society—that of the 'Universal Brotherhood of Man'—such exhibition of the noblest and most human feelings, had it not been marred by a few antecedent facts," of which presently. Even as the "protest" against Russian cruelty stands now, all such show of pious regard for Christ's command "love your enemies," is spoiled by a disregard of that other injunction "thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are." Indeed, Europe might be asking now as of George Dandin in the comedy of Molière, "*Qui de nous deux trompe-t-on ici?*" Could even a child be really deceived by such *protests* on the Continent? If all this display of indignation is likely to impress anyone eventually, it will be only those "inferior races" under the paternal sway and benevolent rule of their respective white rulers. Hindus and Mussulmen, Burmese and Singhalese, upon listening to the reverberating echoes of pious horror from the West, are as likely as not to contrast the ferociousness of Russian jailors and prison-houses with that of their own rulers, with the Calcutta "Black Hole" of famous memory, and the Andaman Islands; while the hapless and ever-kicked Negroes of the United States, the Red Indians dying of exposure and starvation in their frozen wilderness, and even some Chinamen who seek hospitality on the Pacific coast, may yet come to envy the lot of the "political prisoners of Siberia." . . .

But what imposing pictures! On the other side of the "pond"

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the pathetic eloquence of Mr. George Kennan the Siberian traveller, "who has just seen all this for himself, you see!"—drawing tears from the street-flags and forcing lamp-posts to use their pocket-handkerchiefs—without speaking of the colored citizens, Red Indians and Chinamen. On this side of the Atlantic, Mr. Quilter, the editor of the *Universal Review*, showing like fervor on behalf of the "oppressed." Mr. Adolphe Smith's "Exile by administrative order," adorned by what Mr. Stead calls "a fancy sketch of the flogging of *Madame Sihida*'(?)<sup>1</sup> gracing one of the last numbers of the *Universal Review* produces likewise its effect. Moved by a spirit of lofty chivalry, its editor issued, as all know, a circular to M.P.'s, peers, judges, heads of Colleges and so on, to ask them "whether (a) the present system of Siberian exile by administrative order" was not "a disgrace to a civilized nation"; and (b),



whether the above mentioned authorities do not “consider that steps should be taken to call the attention of her Majesty’s Government to those outrages, in order that a diplomatic remonstrance should be addressed to the Czar”!

As this pertains to the domain of politics, and we do not care to trespass upon forbidden ground, those anxious to learn something of the replies are recommended to read the excellent summary of this curious incident on page 489 of the June *Review of Reviews*; but we must quote a few lines from it, in which the reader will learn (1) that some of the authorities appealed to are of opinion that “exile in Siberia is ... a just and beneficent punishment . . . much better for criminals than our own (British) convict system”; (2) that the outrage on Madame Sihida “does not rest upon unimpeachable evidence,” the sketch recalling to the writer’s memory “an equally dramatic picture of a Polish prince chained in a convict gang to a murderer, a story which this prince’s brother subsequently declared was false.”

But that which cannot be disproved by any means is that other and far more legitimate agitation going on in England for long years, and now at its acme in this country, that for the enfranchisement of women, and *the causes which made it arise*. Most

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<sup>1</sup> Were this “flogging” even proven—which it is not—still brutal and sickening as the fact would undeniably be, is it really any worse than the kicking by the police of women already knocked down by them; than the clubbing until mangled to death of men and crippled boys? And if one is reminded that the alleged “flogging” took place (if it ever did) in the wilds of Siberia, probably hundreds of miles away from any civilized centre, to speak of, and the well-proven “kicking and clubbing” right in the midst of the most civilized city in the world, namely, in Trafalgar Square, it does seem as if it were a case of merely “six of one and half-a-dozen of the other.”

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Theosophists have read Mrs. F. Fenwick Miller’s admirable address on the programme of the Women’s Franchise League<sup>2</sup>; and many of our Theosophists belong to this League. And there are such as have declared that many women in England—even now, when many of the women’s “disabilities” so-called, have been happily removed after centuries of *penal servitude* to their husbands—would gladly have consented to exchange places with “Madame

Sihida," whoever she is—not as a political prisoner perhaps, *but as a flogged woman*. What is the horror of being flogged (where brutal force is used, *there is no dishonor but martyrdom*), when compared with a long life of moral and physical slavery? Which of the female "serfs of sex"<sup>3</sup> in *free* England would not gladly exchange her position as a wife and mother, for that of a wife and mother in *despotic* Russia? Why, ladies and gentlemen, who have fought in the "Married Women's Property" agitation, for the "Custody of Infants' Bill," and the right of woman as an independent individual and a citizen, instead of the *thing* and her husband's chattel that she was and still is—are you aware that in *despotic* "half civilised" Russia, the rights of women before the law are on a par with those of men, and in some cases their privileges far greater? That a rich woman marrying a man is, and has been, since the days of Catharine II, sole mistress of her property, the husband having no right to one penny without the wife's legal signature. That a poor girl, marrying a rich man, having on the other hand a legal right to his property during his life and to a certain portion after his death whether he wills it or not, and also a right to the maintenance of herself and children *whatever she does*?<sup>4</sup> Have you not heard that a woman holding property and paying taxes *is obliged to give her vote*, whether personally or by proxy? And that so greatly is she protected by law *that even a child born between nine and ten months after the husband's death is considered legitimate by law*: simply because abnormally prolonged gestation does casually happen, and that the law states that it is *more consonant with the law of Christ to forgive nine guilty women, rather than wrong the tenth who may be innocent*? Compare this with the laws of *free* England with regard to woman, who until about eight or nine years ago was

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<sup>2</sup> The National Liberal Club, February 25th, 1890.

<sup>3</sup> "Woman's Rights as preached by Women," by a "Looker on."

<sup>4</sup> If separated (not divorced), and the husband is a public official, a certain portion is deducted from his salary and paid over to the wife.

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simply a slave, with less rights than a plantation negro. Read again Mrs. Fenwick Miller's paper (*Loc. cit. supra*) and judge. Everything went against her receiving a higher education, inasmuch as she was to remain all her life "under

the tutelage of some man." She had no right to her husband's property, and lost every right to hers, *even to every penny she earned by her own labor*, having, in short, no right to hold any property, whether inherited or acquired. A man deserting his wife for another woman, and leaving her and his children to starve, was not forced to support them, but had a legal right to every penny earned by his abandoned wife, as "the skill of her brain was not hers, it was her husband's." No matter what he did, or whatever crime he committed against her, she had no redress against him, could neither sue him, nor had even the right of lodging a complaint against him. More: she had no rights as a mother, English law recognizing only the father and the child. Her children could be taken away from her, separated from their mother for ever, and there was no redress for her. Says Mrs. Fenwick Miller:

The wife had in the eyes of the law simply no existence. . . .  
Even "within the last two years, seven judges in conclave have declared the law to be to-day that a married woman is in this respect *still absolutely a slave, with no rights of free will in herself*. . . . Was this not slavery? . . . The woes and flight of the mulatto mother invented by Mrs. Stowe's genius set all England weeping; but English and Scotch mothers too—refined women, adoring mothers. . . . —have seen their children torn from their embrace or have fled secretly and lived in desolate concealment with their little ones, as the only way to keep . . . near their breaking hearts the darlings of their souls. . . ."

Herbert Spencer seems to have said the same long ago, in these words:

Wives in England were bought from the fifth to the eleventh century, and as late as the seventeenth century husbands of decent station were not ashamed to beat their wives. Gentlemen(!) arranged parties of pleasure for the purpose of seeing wretched women whipped at Bridewell. It was not till 1817 that the public whipping of women was abolished in England.

Between 1817 and 1890 there are but a few years. But how many centuries old is English civilization as compared to that of Russia, whose era of barbarism closed only with Peter the Great?

Who, then, except men capable of taking such undue if legal advantage of their mothers, wives, and children, would not confess that there is far less cruelty even in the *casual flogging* of a woman,

than in such a systematic oppression, the life-long torture of millions of *innocent* women and mothers throughout past centuries and to the present day? And for what reasons? Simply to protect the animal passions and lust, the depravity of men—the masters and the legislators. And it is the men of England who have refused, till forced in their last retrenchments, to abrogate such fiendish laws, and who still refuse to make away with many more as iniquitous, who call this solitary case of flogging “a disgrace to civilization”! And so it would be, if once proved, as are the heartless laws of England against her women. No doubt that of drunken, and therefore cruel, brutes among Russian jailors and prison officials there are plenty. But we trow no more than there are in other countries and probably less. And we would advise the editors who would agitate in favor of sending “remonstrances” to Russia, to first extract the beam from the eye of their own country and then only to turn their attention to the mote in the eye of their neighbor. For that “neighbor” is a country which protects at any rate her mothers and wives, while England lets her laws treat them simply as the goods and chattels of her men, and treats them as the dumb brutes of creation. If there ever was a real “disgrace to a civilized nation” it was the formation of numberless Societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, before any one even thought of establishing a like Society for the protection of women and children, and the punishment of “wife-kickers” and wife-robbing rascally bipeds, such as are found in every class of Society. And why not rather turn the public attention to more than one “disgrace to a civilized nation,” taking place on British soil and in American lands, *e.g.*, to the revolting treatment by the Anglo-Indians of the millions of natives, from the highest Brahman to the lowest pariah, and the no less revolting attitude of the white Americans towards their black co-citizens, or the hapless Red-Indians? Cannibals inflict less torture on their prisoners of war than do the two cultured Christian nations in question on their colored Brethren of the “inferior” races. The former kill and devour their victims, after which these are at rest; while the whites of England and America act worse than Cains towards their black subjects and citizens: they torture them mentally, when not physically, from their cradle to their tomb; refusing them every privilege they have a right to, and then turning round and spitting on them as if they were so many toads.

Look at the unfortunate Red

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Skin! Deprived of every inch of his ancestral land, crowded off into the sea, robbed of his supply of blankets and provisions, the Indian is left to freeze and starve by hundreds and thousands, which he proceeds to do amidst catacombs of Bibles, a prey unfit even for the prairie-buzzard. . . .

But why go so far as to the colonies for our instances and proofs, when cases of repeated flogging of women, aye of young girls not out of their teens, necessitate "Royal Commissions" at home? "Ruby, or How Girls Are Trained for Circus Life," by Amye Reade, a *shocker* founded on *facts* as the author claims, has brought forth the following in the *Saturday Review* (July 26th, 1890):

"Royal Commission."—Mr. Gainsford Bruce, Q.C., M.P., has promised that as soon as sufficient evidence can be obtained to justify such a step, he will call attention to the matter in the House of Commons, with a view of inducing the Government to advise Her Majesty to appoint a Royal Commission to enquire into and report upon the treatment of children whilst being trained to the business of circus riders, acrobats, and contortionists.

"Manchester Guardian" says:—" 'Ruby,' by Amye Reade. This book is notable on account of the charges brought by the authoress against a manager or managers in general of circuses. It is an indictment so tremendous that, if it can be proved, the authoress should not be content with representing a picture to harrow novel-readers. She should collect her proofs and lay them before the Public Prosecutor. *Miss Reade asserts that in cases of contumacy girls of seventeen are stripped naked by the circus-master and flogged by him till they are sick and faint and bleeding.*"

Among the members of Parliament who have "allowed their names to be used as indication of their desire to assist the author in her . . . efforts to bring before the public the horrible cruelties," are Messrs. Gainsford Bruce, Jacob Bright, Sir Richard Temple, etc., etc. Now, "Madame Sihida," whatever she was else, was a murderess (political or not does not matter); but these unfortunate girls of seventeen are perfectly innocent victims.

Ah, gentlemen editors, of the two cultured champion nations of Christendom, you may play as much as you like at Sir Charles Grandison—that union of the perfect gentleman and good Christian—but who will believe you? Your protests are only suggestive of the Christian ethics of today, and are an insult to the ethics of Christ. They are no better than a glaring instance of modern cant

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and a gigantic apotheosis of hypocrisy. In the words of Lermontoff, the Russian poet, all this comedy—

. . . . would be too grotesque, in truth,  
If it were not so heartrending!

Read rather Bertillon's *Les Races Sauvages* and Charles Lüholtz's *Au Pays des Cannibales*—a French translation from the Swedish—if you would know what your friends accuse you of, while Russia is charged with her misdeeds only by her enemies, and those jealous of her growing power. Having just come across some reviews of these works, it is but right that our friends should have an idea of the charges published against England, or rather her colonies, and thus be given the means of comparing the Russian "mote" with the British "beam." We were just preparing to blush for the alleged misdeeds of the former, which misdeeds, *if true*, would not be excused by any Theosophist on the ground that the Anglo-Indians and the Americans do far worse at home as well as in their colonies—when we saw a Russian review of these works which made us long to read the works themselves. We had known for years—that which the whole world knows—in what a civilized and Christian way the English and the Americans treated—not their prisoners, political or others, but simply their most loyal subjects and citizens, harmless Hindus and other "black heathens," hard-working, honest negroes, and the much-wronged Red Indians. But we were not prepared to believe that which is published in the *Races Sauvages* of Bertillon and *Au Pays des Cannibales* by the well-known Swedish traveller in Australia, Charles Lüholtz.

Let us glance at the older work. Bertillon speaks of Tasmania, and shows that in 1803 there were still about 6,000 natives left, while just sixty-nine years later there remained of them but a legend, and a ghastly tale. In 1872 died the last of the Tasmanians. The country was swept out of its last *nigger*. How did it come to pass? This is Bertillon's tale:

To achieve such a brilliant result, the English did not stop before any kind of cruelty. They premised by offering £5 for the head of every adult, and £2 for that of every baby Tasmanian. To succeed in this chase after the miserable native the better, the English brought with them aborigines of Australia, the great enemies of the Tasmanians, and used them as blood hounds. But this method was found to work too slowly. Then a *cordon* was organised, or rather a band, selected from Colonists, and among the scum of the garrison . . . and Arthur, the

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then governor of the island, was appointed as its chief. After this commenced a regular chase after the Tasmanian, as one finds in hunts after wild boars. . . . The natives were driven into deep water, shot, as if by accident, and those who escaped were poisoned with arsenic . . . some Colonists going so far as to make a fine collection of their victims' skulls, and boasting of it. . . .

Now this may, or may not, be true; it may, or may not, be exaggerated, just as in the case of "Siberian flogging" and cruelty to political prisoners. As the latter charge comes to us from Russia's enemies and sensation-loving travellers, so the tale of Tasmania is told by the same kind of traveller, and, moreover, one of a nation not generally friendly to England. But here comes something more modern and trustworthy, a charge from a decided friend of England and the Australians, and one who says what he has seen with his own eyes, heard with his own ears—namely, Charles Lüholtz, in his work called in the French translation, *Au Pays des Cannibales*. We quote from an ample Russian review of the work, in the *Novoyé Vremya*, May 2 (14), 1890, No. 5,080. According to the latter, the "enlightenment" of the inferior races and the savage-islanders by the civilization-spreading Englishmen did not stop at the Tasmanians. This is from Lüholtz's revelation, and it is ghastly!

There is a chapter in this work treating specially of the relations of the English colonists with the natives, and what deadly terrible relations! The life of a black man is worth nothing, it seems, and his rights to existence are on a par with those of a wild beast. "To kill a native of Australia is the same as killing a dog in the eyes of a British colonist," says Lüholtz. More than this: no dog will be so cruelly treated in Europe. Its life, unless dangerous to men, will not be taken away without any cause. Not so for

the native of Australia, according to the evidence of the Swedish author, who shows that there are young men who make a point of hunting the blacks every Sunday in the neighborhood of their cities, systematically passing the whole day in that *sport, simply for pleasure's sake*. . . . A party of four or five horsemen prepares traps, or, driving the savages into a narrow pass, forces them to seek refuge on precipitous cliffs, and while the unfortunate wretches are climbing at their life's peril on almost perpendicular bare rocks, one ball after another is fired at them, making even those slightly wounded to lose their hold, and falling down, break and tear themselves into shreds on the sharp rocky projections below. . . . A squatter in Long Lagoon has become famous for the immense number of blacks he has poisoned with strychnine.

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And this is no single instance. A farmer from Lower Herbert confessed to the Swedish traveller that he was in the habit of burning the dead bodies of the natives—to get rid of them, in order to destroy a too palpable piece of evidence. But this was only an extra precaution. For, although local law (on paper) punishes murder, it is in reality only *the killing of white men* which is called murder. English colonists have repeatedly offered to Lümholtz to shoot a few blacks, to get for him the native skulls he was in need of. . . . Before law a black savage is entirely helpless. “Were I a native, I would kill every English colonist I met,” said an exasperated Englishman, an eye-witness like himself, to our author. Another traveller, in his letter to Lümholtz, speaks of these British colonists as of “the most disgusting caricatures of Christians,” and adds: “The English constantly throw stones at other nations for their behavior to conquered races, while no words can express the horror and the indignity of their own acts towards the natives of Australia.”

Thus, having swept off the face of the earth the unfortunate Tasmanians, the British colonists—

. . . “with a cruelty a tiger might envy, destroy to this day the Australian savages. When the first colony of the province of Victoria was founded, there were about 10,000 natives in that district. In 1871, their number fell to 3,000; and in 1880 there were only about 800 left, in all. How many remain alive now we do not know; at any rate, the above cited figures



show very eloquently that the civilizing influence of the enlightened mariners has born fruit and their handiwork is nearing its end." "A few more years," says Lümholtz, "and the Australian aboriginal race will have disappeared from the face of the earth. The English province of Victoria, raised on the black man's lands, soaked through and through with his savage blood and fertilized with his bones, will blossom the more luxuriously for that. . . ."

The Russian Reviewer ends with a paragraph which may be taken as a tit-for-tat to the English editor of the *Universal Review* and his colleagues. We give a *verbatim* translation of it:

Such is the soil on seem so proud of finds its vent. And it is this soil, furrowed in length and which that colonizing activity the English breadth by the brutal cruelty of the soulless English colonist, which proclaims loudly to the whole world that, to have right of throwing stones at other nations, it is not sufficient yet to be covered with an English skin. It is also necessary that the British soul should not be as black as are the bodies of, and the soil wrenched from, the poor natives; and that the hapless savages should not be viewed by their conquerors

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as no better than the Egyptian mummies of cats; to wit: good only to serve as land-fertilizers for their masters' flourishing colonies.

And now we have done, leaving the detractors and self-constituted judges of Russia to their own reflections. We have lived in India and throughout Asiatic countries; and, as a Theosophist, we feel bound to say that nowhere have we found such a potentiality of cruelty and cant under the brown and black skins as under the white epiderm of the refined European, save perhaps, in the class of the gariwalas, the bullock cart drivers. If the reader would learn the characteristics of this class he will be told for his edification what is that personage. The gariwala belongs to that specimen of humanity to which speech was given to conceal its thought, and which professes its religion only because it serves its ends. While offering divine honors and worship to the cow and the bull, and never letting any opportunity of denouncing his brother gariwala to the village Brahman for disrespect to the (sacred) animals, he himself twists the tails of his team of oxen until these appendages of his Gods hang only by a few

hairs and clotted blood. The gariwala, it is, then, who ought to feel a legitimate pride in finding himself acting on the same lines of whining cant as his masters—the *barasaabs*. And coming so near, in his own humble way, to the policy of the two most civilized and cultured nations of Christendom, the gariwala ought perhaps to be promoted from the ranks of the *inferior* to those of the *superior* race.

We have but one word more to say. When Russia has as much said of her by her friends, as Lümholtz says of Australia, and others of India and America, then will every honest man and woman of Europe join in the indignation meetings and righteous protests against Russian atrocities. Until then the best advice one can give to the English and the Americans is very, very old: “Judge not that ye be not judged. For how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold, a beam is in thine own?”

H.P.B.

*Lucifer*, August, 1890

## A PARADOXICAL WORLD

Open your ears . . . when loud rumour speaks!

I, from the Orient to the drooping West,

Making the wind my post horse, still unfold

The acts commenced on this ball of earth:

Upon my tongue continual slanders ride,

The which in every language I pronounce;

Stuffing the ears of men with false reports.

I speak of peace, while covert enmity,

Under the smile of safety, wounds the world:

And who but Rumour, who but only I . . .

—SHAKESPEARE

Why, I can smile, and murder while I smile;

And cry content, to that which grieves my heart;

And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,

And frame my face to all occasions . . .

—IBID.

WE live in an age of prejudice, dissimulation and paradox, wherein, like dry leaves caught in a whirlpool some of us are tossed helpless, hither and thither, ever struggling between our honest convictions and fear of that cruellest of tyrants—PUBLIC OPINION. Yea, we move on in life as in a Maelstrom formed of two conflicting currents, one rushing onward, the other repelling us downward; one making us cling desperately to what we believe to be right and true, and that we would fain carry out on the surface; the other knocking us off our feet, overpowering, and finally drowning us under the fierce, despotic wave of social propriety and that idiotic, arbitrary and ever wool gathering public opinion, based on slander and idle rumour. No person need in our modern day be honest, sincere, and righteous in order to curry favour or receive recognition as a man of worth. He need only be a successful hypocrite, or have become for no mortal reason he himself knows of—popular. In our age, in the words of Mrs. Montague, “while every vice is hid by hypocrisy, every virtue is suspected to be hypocrisy . . . and the suspicion is looked upon as wisdom.”

Thus, no one seeming to know what to

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believe, and what to reject, the best means of becoming a paragon of every virtue on blind faith, is—to acquire, *popularity*.

But how is popularity to be acquired? Very easily indeed. Howl with the

wolves. Pay homage to the favourite vices of the day, and reverence to mediocrities in public favour. Shut your eyes tight before any truth, *if* unpalatable to the chief leaders of the social herd, and sit with them upon the dissenting minority. Bow low before vulgarity in power; and bray loud applause to the rising donkey who kicks a dying lion, now a fallen idol. Respect public prejudice and pander to its cant and hobbies, and soon you will yourself become popular. Behold, now is your time. No matter if you be a plunderer and murderer combined: you will be glorified all the same, furnished with an aureole of virtues, and allowed even a broader margin for impunity than contained in the truism of that Turkish proverb, which states that "a thief not found out is honestest than a Bey." But now let a Socrates and Epictetus rolled into one suddenly become *unpopular*. That which will alone remain of him in the hazy mind of Dame Rumour is a pug nose and the body of a slave lacerated by the plying whip of his Master. The twin sisters, Public Opinion and Mrs. Grundy, will soon forget their classics. Their female aspect, siding with Xantippe, will charitably endeavour to unearth various good reasons for her outbreaks of passion in the shape of slops poured over the poor bald head; and will search as diligently for some hitherto unknown secret vices in the Greek Sage. Their male aspect will see but a lashed body before its mental eye, and will soon end by joining the harmonious concert of Society slander directed against the ghosts of the two philosophers. *Result*: Socrates-Epictetus will emerge out of the ordeal as black as pitch, a dangerous object for any finger to approach. Henceforth, and for æons to come, the said object will have become *unpopular*.

The same, in art, in politics, and even literature. "A damnèd saint, an honourable villain," are in the present social order of things. Truth and fact have become unpalatable, and are ostracised; he who ventures to defend an unpopular character or an unpopular subject, risks to become himself *anathema maranatha*. The ways of Society have contaminated all those who approach the threshold of civilized communities; and if we take the word and severe verdict of Lavater for it, there is no room in the world

for one who is not prepared to become a full-blown hypocrite. For, "He who by kindness and smooth attention can insinuate a hearty welcome to an unwelcome guest, is a hypocrite superior to a thousand plain-dealers," writes

the eminent physiognomist. This would seem to settle the line of demarcation and to preclude Society, for ever, from becoming a "Palace of Truth."

Owing to this, the world is perishing from spiritual starvation. Thousands and millions have turned their faces away from anthropomorphic ritualism. They believe no longer in a *personal* governor and Ruler; yet this prevents them in no wise from attending every Sunday "divine service," and professing during the week adherence to their respective Churches. Other millions have plunged headlong into Spiritualism, Christian and mental science or kindred mystic occupations; yet how few will confess their true opinions before a gathering of unbelievers! Most of the cultured men and women—save rabid materialists—are dying with the desire to fathom the mysteries of nature and even—whether they be true or imaginary—the mysteries of the magicians of old. Even our Weeklies and Dailies confess to the past existence of a knowledge which has now become a closed book save for the very few. Which of them, however, is brave enough to speak civilly of the unpopular phenomena called "spiritualistic," or dispassionately about Theosophy, or even to abstain from mocking remarks and insulting epithets? They will talk with every outward reverence of Elijah's chariot of fire, of the board and bed found by Jonah within the whale; and open their columns for large subscriptions to fit out scientifico-religious expeditions, for the purpose of fishing out from the Red Sea the drowned Pharaoh's golden tooth-pick, or in the Desert, a fragment of the broken tables of stone. But they would not touch with a pair of tongs any fact—no matter how well proven—if vouchsafed to them by the most reliable man living who is connected with Theosophy or Spiritualism. Why? Because Elijah flying away to heaven in his chariot is a Biblical orthodox *miracle*, hence *popular* and a relevant subject; while a medium levitated to the ceiling is an unpopular *fact*; not even a miracle, but simply a phenomenon due to intermagnetic and psycho-physiological and even physical causes. On one hand gigantic pretensions to civilization and science, professions of holding but to what is demonstrated on strictly inductive methods of observation and experiment; a blind trust in physical science—that

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science which pooh-poohs and throws slur on metaphysics, and is yet honeycombed with "working hypotheses" all based upon speculations far

beyond the region of sense, and often even of speculative thought itself: on the other hand, just as servile and apparently as blind an acceptance of that which orthodox science rejects with great scorn, namely, Pharaoh's tooth-pick, Elijah's chariot and the ichthyographic explorations of Jonah. No thought of the unfitness of things, of the absurdity, ever strikes any editor of a daily paper. He will place unhesitatingly, and side by side, the newest ape-theory of a materialistic F.R.S., and the latest discourse upon the quality of the apple which caused the fall of Adam. And he will add flattering editorial comments upon both lectures, as having an equal right to his respectful attention. Because, both are popular in their respective spheres.

Yet, are all editors natural-born sceptics and do not many of them show a decided leaning towards the Mysteries of the archaic Past, that which is the chief study of the Theosophical Society? The "Secrets of the Pyramids," the "rites of Isis" and "the dread traditions of the temple of Vulcan with their theories for transcendental speculation" seem to have a decided attraction for the *Evening Standard*. Speaking some time since on the "Egyptian Mysteries" it said:

We know little even now of the beginnings of the ancient religions of Thebes and Memphis. . . . All these idolatrous mysteries, it should also be remembered, were always kept profoundly secret; for the hieroglyphic writings were understood only by the initiated through all these ages. Plato, it is true, came to study from the Egyptian priests; Herodotus visited the Pyramids; Pausanias and Strabo admired the characters which were sculptured so large upon their outer casing that he who ran could read them; but not one of these took the trouble to learn their meaning. They were one and all content to give currency, if not credence, to the marvellous tales which the Egyptian priests and people recounted and invented for the benefit of strangers.

Herodotus and Plato, who were both Initiates into the Egyptian mysteries, accused of believing in and giving currency to marvellous tales invented by the Egyptian priests, is a novel accusation. Herodotus and Plato refusing "to take the trouble" of learning the meaning of the hieroglyphs, is another. Of course if both "gave currency" to tales, which neither an orthodox Christian, nor an

orthodox Materialist and Scientist will endorse, how can an editor of a Daily accept them as true? Nevertheless the information given and the remarks indulged in, are wonderfully broad and in the main free from the usual prejudice. We transcribe a few paragraphs, to let the reader judge.

It is an immemorial tradition that the pyramid of Cheops communicated by subterranean passages with the great Temple of Isis. The hints of the ancient writers as to the subterranean world which was actually excavated for the mysteries of Egyptian superstition, curiously agree. . . . Like the source of the Nile itself, there is hardly any line of inquiry in Egyptian lore which does not end in mystery. The whole country seems to share with the Sphinx an air of inscrutable silence. Some of its secrets, the researches of Wilkinson, Rawlinson, Brugsch, and Petrie have more or less fully revealed to us; but we shall never know much which lies concealed behind the veil of time.<sup>1</sup> We can hardly hope even to realize the glories of Thebes in its prime, when it spread over a circuit of thirty miles, with the noble river flowing through it, and each quarter filled with palaces and temples. And the tyranny of the Ethiopian priests, at whose command kings laid down and died, will always remain one of the strangest enigmas in the whole problem of primitive priestcraft.<sup>2</sup>

It was a tradition of the ancient world that the secret of immortality was to be found in Egypt, and that there, amongst the dark secrets of the antediluvian world which remained undeciphered, was the "Elixir of Life." Deep, it was said, under the Pyramids had for ages lain concealed the Table of Emerald, on which, as the legend ran, Hermes had engraved before the Flood, the secret of alchemy; and their weird associations justified the belief that still mightier wonders here remained hid. In the City of the Dead to the north of Memphis, for instance, pyramid after pyramid rose for centuries towering above each other; and in the interior passages and chambers of the rock-cut tombs were pictured the mystic wisdom of the Egyptians in quaint symbols. . . . A vast subterranean world, according to tradition, extended from the Catacombs of Alexandria to Thebes' Valley of Kings, and this is surrounded with a whole wealth of marvellous story. These, perhaps, culminate in the ceremony of initiation into the religious mysteries of the Pyramids. The identity of the

legend has been curiously preserved through all ages, for it is only in minor details that the versions differ. The ceremonies were undoubtedly very terrible.

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<sup>1</sup> The more so since the literature of theosophy, which is alone able to throw light on those mysteries, is boycotted, and being “unpopular” can never hope to be appreciated.

<sup>2</sup> Because these priests were real Initiates having occult powers, while the “Kings” mentioned *died* but for the world. They were the “dead in life.” The writer seems ignorant of the metaphorical ways of expression.

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The candidates were subjected to ordeals so frightful that many of them succumbed, and those who survived, not only shared the honours of the priesthood, but were looked upon as having risen from the dead. It was commonly believed, we are told, that they had descended into Hell itself. . . . They were, moreover, given draughts of the cups of Isis and Osiris, the waters of life and death, and clothed in the sacred robes of pure white linen, and on their heads the mystic symbol of initiation—the golden grasshopper. Instructed in the esoteric doctrines of the sacred college of Memphis, it was only the candidates and priests who knew those galleries and shrines that extended under the site upon which the city stood and formed a subterranean counterpart to its mighty temples, and those lower crypts in which were preserved the “seven tables of stone,” *on which was written all the “knowledge of the antediluvian race, decrees of the stars from the beginning of time, the annals of a still earlier world, and all the marvellous secrets both of heaven and earth.”*<sup>3</sup> And here, too, according to mythological tradition, were the Isiac serpents which possessed mystic meanings at which we can now only vainly guess. When the monuments are silent, certainty is impossible in Egyptology; and in thirty centuries vestiges have been ruthlessly swept away which can never be replaced.

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Does not this read like a page from “Isis Unveiled,” or one of our theosophical writings—minus their explanations? But why speak of thirty centuries, when the Egyptian Zodiac on the ceiling of the Dendera temple shows three tropical years, or 75,000 solar years? But listen further:



We can, in a sense, understand the awful grandeur of the Theban necropolis, and of the sepulchral chambers of Beni Hassan. . . . The cost and toil devoted to the “everlasting palaces” of departed monarchs; the wonders of the Pyramids themselves, as of the other royal tombs; the decoration of their walls; the embalmed bodies all point to the conclusion that this huge subterranean world was made a complete ante-type of the real world above. *But whether or no it was a verity in this primitive cult that there was an actual renovation of life at the end of some vast cycle is lost in learned conjecture.*

“Learned conjecture” does not go far nowadays, being of a pre-eminently materialistic character, and limited somehow to the sun. But if the unpopularity of the Theosophical Society prevents

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<sup>3</sup>Much of which knowledge and the mysteries of the same “earlier races” have been explained in the “Secret Doctrine,” a work, however, untouched by the English dailies as unorthodox and unscientific—a jumble, truly.

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the statements of its members from being heard; if we ignore “Isis Unveiled” and the “Secret Doctrine,” the *Theosophist*, etc., full of facts, most of which are as well authenticated by references to classical writers and the contemporaries of the Mysteries in Egypt and Greece, as any statement made by modern Egyptologists—why should not the writer on the “Egyptian Mysteries” turn to Origen and even to the *Æneid* for a positive answer to this particular question? This dogma of the return of the Soul or the *Ego* after a period of 1,000 or 1,500 years into a new body (a theosophical teaching now) was professed as a religious truth from the highest antiquity. Voltaire wrote on the subject of these thousand years of *post mortem* duration as follows:

This opinion about resurrection (*rather “reincarnation”*) after ten centuries, passed to the Greeks, the disciples of the Egyptians, and to the Romans (*their Initiates only*), disciples of the Greeks. One finds it in the Vith Book of the *Æneid*, which is but a description of the mysteries of Isis and of Ceres Eleusina;

*Has omnis ubi mille rotam volvere per annos,*

*Lethæum ad fluvium deus evocat agmine magno;  
Scilicet immemores, supera ut convexa revisant.*

This "opinion" passed from the Pagan Greeks and Romans to Christians, even in our century, though disfigured by sectarianism; for it is the origin of the *millennium*. No pagan, even of the lower classes, believed that the Soul would return into its *old* body: cultured Christians *do*, since the day of the Resurrection of all flesh is a universal dogma, and since the Millenarians wait for the second advent of Christ on earth when he will reign for a *thousand* years.

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All such articles as the above quoted are the paradoxes of the age, and show ingrained prejudices and preconceptions. Neither the very conservative and orthodox editor of the *Standard*, nor yet the very radical and infidel editors of many a London paper, will give fair or even dispassionate hearing to any Theosophical writer. "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" the Pharisees and Sadducees of old are credited with asking. "Can anything but *twaddle* come from Theosophical quarters?" repeat the modem followers of *cant* and materialism.

Of course not. We are so very *unpopular!* Besides which, theosophists  
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who have written the most upon those subjects at which, in the words of the *Evening Standard*, "we can now only vainly guess" are regarded by Mrs. Grundy's herds as the black sheep of Christian cultured centres. Having had access to Eastern secret works, hitherto concealed from the world of the profane, the said theosophists had means of studying and of ascertaining the value and real meaning of the "marvellous secrets both of heaven and earth," and thus of disinterring many of the vestiges now seemingly lost to the world of students. But what matters that? How can one so little in odour of sanctity with the majorities, a living embodiment of every vice and sin, according to most charitable souls, be credited with knowing anything? Nor does the possibility of such charges being merely the fruit of malice and slander, and therefore entitled to lie *sub judice*, nor simple logic, ever trouble their dreams or have any voice in the question. Oh no! But has the idea ever crossed their minds that on that principle the works of him who was proclaimed:

“The greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind”

ought also to become unpopular, and Baconian philosophy be at once shunned and boycotted? In our paradoxical age, as we now learn, the worth of a literary production has to be judged, not on its own intrinsic merits, but according to the private character, the shape of the nose, and the popularity or unpopularity of the writer thereof. Let us give an example, by quoting a favourite remark made by some bitter opponent of “The Secret Doctrine.” It is the reply given the other day to a theosophist who urged a would-be Scientist and supposed Assyriologist to read the said work. “Well,” he said, “I grant you there may be in it a few facts valuable to students of antiquity and to scientific speculation. But *who can have the patience to read 1,500 pages of dreary metaphysical twaddle* for the sake of discovering in it a few facts, however valuable?”

*O imitatores servum pecus!* And yet how joyfully you would set to work, sparing neither time, labour nor money, to extract two or three ounces of gold from tons of quartz and useless alluvial soil. . . .

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Thus, we find the civilized world and its humanities ever unfair, ever enforcing one law for the wealthy and the mighty, and another law for the poor and the uninfluential. Society, politics, commerce,

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literature, art and sciences, religion and ethics, all are full of paradoxes, contradictions, injustice, selfishness and unreliability. Might has become right, elsewhere than in colonies and for the detriment of “black men.” Wealth leads to impunity, poverty to condemnation even by the law, for the impecunious having no means of paying lawyers are debarred from their natural right to appeal to the courts for redress. Hint, even privately, that a person, notorious for having acquired his wealth by plunder and oppression, or unfair play on the Stock Exchange, is a thief, and the law to which he will appeal will ruin you with damages and court expenses and imprison you into the bargain for libel, for “the greater the truth, the greater the libel.” But let that wealthy thief slander your character publicly, accuse you falsely of breaking all the ten commandments, and if you are in the slightest degree unpopular, an infidel, or too radical in your views, no matter how honourable and honest you may be,

yet you will have to swallow the defamation, and let it get root in the minds of people; or, go to law and risk many hundreds or even thousands out of your pocket and get—*one farthing damages!* What chance has an “infidel” in the sight of a bigoted, ignorant jury? Behold those rich speculators who arrange bogus quotations on the Stock Exchange for shares which they wish to foist upon an innocent public that makes for everything whose price is rising. And look at that poor clerk, whose passion for gambling—which the example of those same wealthy capitalists has fired—if caught in some small embezzlement, the righteous indignation of the rich capitalists knows no bounds. They ostracise even one of their own *confreres* because he has been so indiscreet as to be found out in dealings with the unhappy wretch! Again, what country boasts more of Christian charity, and its code of honour, than old England? Yea, you have soldiers and champions of freedom, and they take out the deadly machine-guns of your latest purveyor of death and blow to fragments a stockade in Solymah, with its defending mob of half-armed savages, of poor “niggers,” because you *hear* that they *perchance* may molest your camps. Yet it is to that self-same continent you send your almighty fleets, into which you pour your soldiers, putting on the hypocritical mask of saving from slavery these very black men whom you have just blown into the air! What country, the world over, has so many philanthropic societies, charitable institutions, and generous donors as England has? And

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where, on the face of the earth, is the city which contains more misery, vice and starvation, than London—the queen of wealthy metropolises. Hideous poverty, filth and rags glare from behind every corner, and Carlyle was right in saying that the Poor Law was an anodyne—not a remedy. “Blessed are the poor,” said your Man-God. “Avaunt the ragged, starving beggar from our West End streets!” you shout, helped by your Police Force; and yet you call yourselves His “humble” followers. It is the indifference and contempt of the higher for the *lower* classes which has generated and bred in the latter that virus which has now grown in them into self-contempt, brutal indifference and cynicism, thus transforming a human species into the wild and soulless animals which fill the Whitechapel dens. Mighty are thy powers, most evidently, O, Christian civilization!

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But has not our Theosophical “Fraternity” escaped the infection of this paradoxical age? Alas, no. How often the cry against the “entrance fee” was heard among the wealthiest Theosophists. Many of these were Freemasons, who belonged to both institutions—their Lodges and Theosophy. They had paid fees upon entering the former, surpassing ten times the modest £1, paid for their diploma on becoming Theosophists. They had to pay as “Widow’s Sons,” a large price for every paltry jewel conferred upon them as a distinction, and had always to keep their hands in their pockets ready to spend large sums for paraphernalia, gorgeous banquets with rich viands and costly wines. This diminished in no way their reverence for Freemasonry. But that which is good for the masonic goose is not fit sauce for the theosophical gander. How often was the hapless President Founder of our Society, Col. H. S. Olcott taunted with *selling theosophy* for £1 per head! He, who worked and toiled from January 1st to December 31st for ten years under the broiling sun of India, and managed out of that wretched pound of the entrance fee and a few donations to keep up the Headquarters, to establish free schools and finally to build and open a library at Adyar of rare Sanskrit works—how often was he condemned, criticised, misjudged, and his best motives misinterpreted. Well, our critics must now be satisfied. Not only the payment of the entrance fee but even that of two shillings yearly, expected from our Fellows to help in paying the expenses of the anniversary meetings, at the Headquarters at Madras (this large

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sum of two shillings, by-the-bye, having never been sent in but by a very limited number of theosophists), all this is now abolished. On December 27th last “the Rules were completely recast, the entrance fee and annual dues were abolished,” writes a theosophist-stoic from Adyar. “We are on a purely voluntary contribution footing. Now if our members don’t give, we *starve and shut up*—that’s all.”

A brave and praiseworthy reform but rather a dangerous experiment. The “B. Lodge of the T.S.” in London never had an entrance fee from its beginning, eighteen months ago; and the results are that the whole burden of its expenses has fallen upon half a dozen of devoted and determined Theosophists. This last Anniversary Financial Report, at Adyar, has moreover brought to light some curious facts and paradoxical incongruities in the bosom of the Theosophical Society at large. For years our Christian and kind friends, the Anglo-Indian

missionaries, had set on foot and kept rolling the fantastic legend about the personal greediness and venality of the “Founders.” The disproportionately large number of members, who, on account of their poverty had been exonerated from any entrance fees, was ignored, and never taken into account. Our devotion to the cause, it was urged, was a *sham*; we were wolves in sheep’s clothing; bent on making money by psychologizing and deceiving those “poor benighted heathen” and the “credulous infidels” of Europe and America; figures are there, it was added; and the 100,000 theosophists (with which we were credited) represented £100,000, etc., etc.

Well, the day of reckoning has come, and as it is printed in the General Report of the *Theosophist* we may just mention it as a paradox in the region of theosophy. The Financial Report includes a summary of all our receipts *from donations and Initiation fees, since the beginning of our arrival in India, i.e. February 1879, or just ten years.* The total is 89,140 rupees, or about £6,600. Of the Rs 54,000 of donations, what are the large sums received by the Theosophical (Parent) Society in the respective countries? Here they are:

In India	.	.	.	.	.	Rupees 40,000
In Europe	.	.	.	.	.	" 7,000
In America	.	.	.	.	.	" 700!!

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Total 47,700 rupees or £3,600

*Vide infra* “Theosophical Activities”: “The President Founder’s Address.”

The two “greedy Founders” having given out of their own pockets during these years almost as much, in the result there remain two impecunious beggars, practically two *pauper*-Theosophists. But we are all proud of our poverty and do not regret either our labour or any sacrifices made to further the noble cause we have pledged ourselves to serve. The figures are simply published as one more proof in our defence and a superb evidence of the paradoxes to be entered to the credit of our traducers and slanderers.

*Lucifer*, February, 1889

## IS DENUNCIATION A DUTY?

Condemn no man in his absence; and when forced to reprove, do so to his face, but gently, and in words full of charity and compassion. For the human heart is like the Kusûli plant: it opens its cup to the sweet morning dew, and closes it before a heavy shower of rain.

—Buddhist Precept

Judge not that ye be not judged.

—Christian Aphorism

NOT a few of our most earnest Theosophists feel themselves, we are sorry to hear, between the horns of a dilemma. Small causes will at times produce great results. There are those who would jest under the cruellest operation, and remain cool while having a leg amputated, who would yet raise a storm and renounce their rightful place in the kingdom of Heaven if, to preserve it, they had to keep silent when somebody treads on their corns.

In the 13th number of *Lucifer* (September, page 63), a paper on "The Meaning of a Pledge" was published. Out of the seven articles (six only were given out) which constitute the entire Pledge, the 1st, 4th, 5th, and especially the 6th, require great moral strength of character, an iron will added to much unselfishness, quick readiness for renunciation and even self-sacrifice, to carry out such a covenant. Yet scores of Theosophists have cheerfully signed this solemn "Promise" to work for the good of Humanity forgetful of Self, without one word of protest—save on one point. Strange to say, it is rule the third which in almost every case makes the applicant hesitate and show the white feather. *Ante tubam trepidat*: the best and kindest of them feels alarmed; and he is as overawed before the blast of the trumpet of that third clause, as though he dreaded for himself the fate of the walls of Jericho!

What is then this *terrible* pledge, to carry out which seems to be above the strength of the average mortal? Simply this

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I PLEDGE MYSELF NEVER TO LISTEN WITHOUT PROTEST TO any Evil thing spoken of a Brother Theosophist, and to ABSTAIN FROM CONDEMNING OTHERS.

To practise this golden rule seems quite easy. To listen without protest to evil said of *anyone* is an action which has been despised ever since the remotest days of Paganism.

To hear an open slander is a curse,  
But not to find an answer is a worse, . . .

says Ovid. For one thing, perhaps, as pointedly remarked by Juvenal, because:

Slander, that worst of poisons, ever finds  
An easy entrance to *ignoble minds* . . .

—and because *in antiquity*, few liked to pass for such—minds. But now! . . .

In fact, the duty of defending a fellow-man stung by a poisonous tongue during his absence, and to abstain, in general, “from condemning others” is the very life and soul of practical theosophy, for such action is the handmaiden who conducts one into the narrow Path of the “higher life,” that life which leads to the goal we all crave to attain. Mercy, Charity and Hope are the three goddesses who preside over that “life.” To “abstain” from condemning our fellow beings is the tacit assertion of the presence in us of the three divine Sisters; to condemn on “hearsay” shows their absence. “Listen not to a tale bearer or slanderer,” says Socrates. “For, as he discovereth of the secrets of others, so he will thine in turn.” Nor is it difficult to avoid slandermongers. Where there is no demand, supply will very soon cease. “When people refrain from *evil-hearing*, then evil speakers will refrain from evil-talking,” says a proverb. To condemn is to glorify oneself over the man one condemns. Pharisees of every nation have been constantly doing it since the evolution of intolerant religions. Shall we do as they?



We may be told, perhaps, that we ourselves are the first to break the ethical law we are upholding. That our theosophical periodicals are full of “denunciations,” and Lucifer lowers his torch to throw light on every evil, to the best of his ability. We reply—this is quite another thing. We denounce indignantly systems and organisations, evils, social and religious—*cant* above all: we abstain from denouncing persons. The latter are the children of their century, the victims of their environment and of the Spirit of the Age. To condemn

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and dishonour a man instead of pitying and trying to help him, because, being born in a community of lepers he is a leper himself, is like cursing a room because it is dark, instead of quietly lighting a candle to disperse the gloom. “Ill deeds are doubled with an evil word”; nor can a general evil be avoided or removed by doing evil oneself and choosing a scape-goat for the atonement of the sins of a whole community. Hence, we denounce these communities not their units; we point out the rottenness of our boasted civilisation, indicate the pernicious systems of education which lead to it, and show the fatal effects of these on the masses. Nor are we more partial to ourselves. Ready to lay down our life any day for Theosophy—that great cause of the Universal Brotherhood for which we live and breathe—and willing to shield, if need be, every theosophist with our own body, we yet denounce as openly and as virulently the distortion of the original lines upon which the Theosophical Society was primarily built, and the gradual loosening and undermining of the original system by the sophistry of many of its highest officers. We bear our Karma for our lack of humility during the early days of the Theosophical Society; for our favourite aphorism: “See, how these Christians love each other” has now to be paraphrased daily, and almost hourly, into: “Behold, how our Theosophists love each other.” And we tremble at the thought that, unless many of our ways and customs, in the Theosophical Society at large, are amended or done away with, Lucifer will one day have to expose many a blot on our own scutcheon—*e.g.*, worship of Self, uncharitableness, and sacrificing to one’s personal vanity the welfare of other Theosophists—more “fiercely” than it has ever denounced the various shams and abuses of power in state Churches and Modern Society.

Nevertheless, there are theosophists, who forgetting the beam in their own eye, seriously believe it their duty to denounce every mote they perceive in the eye of their neighbour. Thus, one of our most estimable, hard-working, and noble-minded members writes, with regard to the said 3rd clause:

The "Pledge" binds the taker never to speak evil of anyone. But I believe that there are occasions when severe denunciation is a duty to truth. There are cases of treachery, falsehood, rascality in private life which should be denounced by those who are certain of them: and there are cases in public life of venality and debasement which good citizens are bound to

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lash unsparingly. Theosophic culture would not be a boon to the world if it enforced unmanliness, weakness, flabbiness of moral texture. . . .

We are sincerely sorry to find a most worthy brother holding such mistaken views. First of all, poor is that theosophic culture which fails to transform simply a "good citizen" of his own native country into a "good citizen" of the world. A true theosophist must be a cosmopolitan in his heart. He must embrace mankind, the whole of humanity in his philanthropic feelings. It is higher and far nobler to be one of those who love their fellow men, without distinction of race, creed, caste or colour, than to be merely a good patriot, or still less, a partizan. To mete one measure for all, is holier and more divine than to help one's country in its private ambition of aggrandizement, strife or bloody wars in the name of greediness and selfishness. "Severe denunciation is a duty to truth." It is; on condition, however, that one should denounce and fight against the *root* of evil and not expend one's fury by knocking down the irresponsible blossoms of its plant. The wise horticulturist uproots the parasitic herbs, and will hardly lose time in using his garden shears to cut off the heads of the poisonous weeds. If a theosophist happens to be a public officer, a judge or magistrate, a barrister or even a preacher, it is then, of course his duty to his country, his conscience and those who put their trust in him, to "denounce severely" every case of "treachery, falsehood and rascality" *even* in private life; but—*nota bene*—only if he is appealed to and called to exercise his legal authority, not otherwise. This is neither "speaking evil" nor "condemning," but truly working for humanity; seeking to preserve society, which is a portion of it, from being imposed upon, and protecting the property of the citizens

entrusted to their care as public officers, from being recklessly taken away. But even then the theosophist may assert himself in the magistrate, and show his mercy by repeating after Shakespeare's severe judge: "I show it most of all when I show justice."

But what has a "working" member of the Theosophical Society independent of any public function or office, and who is neither judge, public prosecutor nor preacher, to do with the misdeeds of his neighbours? If a member of the T.S. is found guilty of one of the above enumerated or some still worse crime, and if another member becomes possessed of irrefutable evidence to that effect, it may become his painful duty to bring the same under the notice

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of the Council of his Branch. Our Society has to be protected, as also its numerous members. This, again, would only be simple justice. A natural and truthful statement of facts cannot be regarded as "evil speaking" or as a condemnation of one's brother. Between this, however, and deliberate backbiting there is a wide chasm. Clause 3 concerns only those who being in no way responsible for their neighbour's actions or walk in life, will yet judge and condemn them on every opportunity. And in such case it becomes—"slander" and "evil speaking."

This is how we understand the clause in question; nor do we believe that by enforcing it "theosophic culture" enforces "unmanliness, weakness or flabbiness of moral texture," but the reverse. True courage has naught to do, we trust, with denunciation; and there is little manliness in criticizing and condemning one's fellow men behind their backs, whether for wrongs done to others or injury to ourselves. Shall we regard the unparalleled virtues inculcated by Gautama the Buddha, or the Jesus of the Gospels as "unmanliness"? Then the ethics preached by the former, that *moral code* which Professor Max Müller, Burnouf and even Barthélémy St. Hilaire have unanimously pronounced *the most perfect which the world has ever known*, must be no better than meaningless words, and the Sermon on the Mount had better never have been written at all. Does our correspondent regard the teaching of non-resistance to evil, kindness to all creatures, and the sacrifice of one's own self for the good of others as weakness or unmanliness? Are the commands, "Judge not that ye be not judged," and, "Put back thy sword, for they who take

the sword shall perish with the sword," to be viewed as "flabbiness of moral texture" or as *the voice of Karma?*

But our correspondent is not alone in his way of thinking. Many are the men and women, good, charitable, self-sacrificing and trustworthy in every other respect, and who accept unhesitatingly every other clause of the "Pledge," who feel uneasy and almost tremble before this special article. But why? The answer is easy: simply *because they fear an unconscious (to them), almost unavoidable* perjury.

The moral of the fable and its conclusion are suggestive. It is a direct blow in the face of Christian education and our civilized modern society in all its circles and in every *Christian* land. So deep has this moral cancer—the habit of speaking uncharitably of

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our neighbour and brother at every opportunity — eaten into the heart of all the classes of Society, from the lowest to the very highest, that it has led the best of its members to feel diffident of their tongues! They *dare not trust themselves* to abstain from condemning others—from mere force of habit. This is quite an ominous "sign of the times."

Indeed, most of us, of whatever nationality, are born and brought up in a thick atmosphere of gossip, uncharitable criticism and wholesale condemnation. Our education in this direction begins in the nursery, where the head nurse hates the governess, the latter hates the mistress, and the servants, regardless of the presence of "baby" and the children, grumble incessantly against the masters, find fault with each other, and pass impudent remarks on every visitor. The same training follows us in the class room, whether at home or at a public school. It reaches its apex of ethical development during the years of our education and practical religious instruction. We are soaked through and through with the conviction that, though ourselves "born in sin and total depravity," *our* religion is the only one to save us from eternal damnation, while the rest of mankind is predestined from the depths of eternity to inextinguishable hell-fires. We are taught that slander of every other people's Gods and religion is a sign of reverence for our own idols, and is a meritorious action. The "Lord God," himself, the "*personal Absolute*," is impressed upon

our young plastic minds as ever backbiting and condemning those he created, as cursing the stiff-necked Jew and *tempting* the Gentile.

For years the minds of young Protestants are periodically enriched with the choicest curses from the *Commination* service in their prayer-books, or the “denouncing of God’s anger and judgments against sinners,” besides eternal condemnation for most creatures; and from his birth the young Roman Catholic constantly hears threats of curse and excommunication by his Church. It is in the Bible and Church of England prayer-books that boys and girls of all classes learn of the existence of vices, the mention of which, in the works of Zola, falls under the ban of law as immoral and depraving, but to the enumeration and the *cursing* of which in the Churches, young and old are made to say “Amen,” after the minister of the meek and humble Jesus. The latter says, Swear *not*, curse *not*, condemn *not*, but “love your enemies, bless them that

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curse you, do good to them that hate and persecute you.” But the canon of the church and the clergymen tell them: Not at all. There are crimes and vices “for which ye affirm with your own mouths the curse of God to be due.” (*Vide* “Commination Service.”) What wonder that later in life, Christians piously try to emulate “God” and the priest, since their ears are still ringing with, “*Cursed be he* that removeth his neighbour’s landmark,” and, “*Cursed be he*” who does this, that or the other, even “he that putteth his trust in man” (!), and with “God’s” judgment and condemnations. They judge and condemn right and left, indulging in wholesale slander and “*comminating*” on their own account. Do they forget that in the last curse—the *anathema* against adulterers and drunkards, idolaters and extortionists “the unmerciful and slanderers” are included? And that by having joined in the solemn “amen” after this last *Christian* thunderbolt, *they have affirmed* “with their own mouths the curse of God to be due” on their own sinful heads?

But this seems to trouble our society slanderers very little. For no sooner are the religiously brought up children of church-going people off their school benches, than they are taken in hand by those who preceded them. Coached for their final examination in that school for scandal, called the world, by older and more experienced tongues, to pass Master of Arts in the science of cant and

commination, a respectable member of society has but to join a religious congregation: to become a churchwarden or lady patroness.

Who shall dare deny that in our age, modern society in its general aspect has become a vast arena for such moral murders, performed between two cups of five o'clock tea and amid merry jests and laughter? Society is now more than ever a kind of international shambles wherein, under the waving banners of drawing-room and church Christianity and the cultured tittle-tattle of the world, each becomes in turn as soon as his back is turned, the sacrificial victim, the sin-offering for atonement, whose singed flesh smells savoury in the nostrils of Mrs. Grundy. Let us pray, brethren, and render thanks to the God of Abraham and of Isaac that we no longer live in the days of cruel Nero. And, oh! let us feel grateful that we no longer live in danger of being ushered into the arena of the Colosseum, to die there a comparatively quick death under the claws of the hungry wild beasts! It is the boast of

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Christianity that our ways and customs have been wonderfully softened under the beneficent shadow of the Cross. Yet we have but to step into a modern drawing-room to find a symbolical representation, true to life, of the same wild beasts feasting on, and gloating over, the mangled carcasses of their best friends. Look at those graceful and as ferocious great cats, who with sweet smiles and an innocent eye sharpen their rose-coloured claws preparatory to playing at mouse and cat. Woe to the poor mouse fastened upon by those proud Society *felidæ*! The mouse will be made to bleed for years before being permitted to bleed to death. The victims will have to undergo unheard-of moral martyrdom, to learn through papers and *friends* that they have been guilty at one or another time of life of each and all the vices and crimes enumerated in the Commination Service, until, to avoid further persecution, the said mice themselves turn into ferocious society cats, and make other mice tremble in their turn. Which of the two arenas is preferable, my brethren — that of the old pagan or that of Christian lands?

Addison had not words of contempt sufficiently strong to rebuke this Society gossip of the worldly Cains of both sexes.

“How frequently,” he exclaims, “is the honesty and integrity of a man disposed of by a smile or a shrug? How many good and generous actions have been sunk into oblivion by a distrustful look, or stamped with the imputation of proceeding from bad motives, by a mysterious and seasonable whisper. Look . . . how large a portion of chastity is sent out of the world by distant hints—nodded away, and cruelly winked into suspicion by the envy of those who are past all temptation of it themselves. How often does the reputation of a helpless creature bleed by a report—which the party who is at the pains to propagate it beholds with much pity and fellow-feeling—that she is heartily sorry for it—hopes in God it is not true!”

From Addison we pass to Sterne’s treatment of the same subject. He seems to continue this picture by saying:

So fruitful is slander in variety of expedients to satiate as well as to disguise itself, that if those smoother weapons cut so sore, what shall we say of open and unblushing scandal, subjected to no caution, tied down to no restraints? If the one like an arrow shot in the dark, does, nevertheless, so much secret mischief, this, like pestilence, which rages at noonday, sweeps all before it, levelling without distinction the good and the bad; a thousand fall beside it, and ten thousand on its right hand; they fall, so rent and torn in this tender part of them, so

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unmercifully butchered, as sometimes never to recover [from] either the wounds or the anguish of heart which they have occasioned.

Such are the results of slander, and from the standpoint of Karma, many such cases *amount to more than murder in hot blood*. Therefore, those who want to lead the “higher life” among the “*working* Fellows,” of the Theosophical Society, must bind themselves by this solemn pledge, or, remain *droning* members. It is not to the latter that these pages are addressed, nor would they feel interested in that question, nor is it an advice offered to the F.’s T.S. at large. For the “Pledge” under discussion is taken only by those Fellows who begin to be referred in our circles of “Lodges” as the “*working*” members of the T.S. All others, that is to say those Fellows who prefer to remain ornamental, and

belong to the “mutual admiration” groups; or those who, having joined out of mere curiosity, have, without severing their connexion with the Society, quietly dropped off; or those, again, who have preserved only a skin deep interest (if any), a luke-warm sympathy for the movement—and such constitute the majority in England—need burden themselves with no such pledge. Having been for years the “Greek Chorus” in the busy drama enacted, now known as the Theosophical Society, they prefer remaining as they are. The “chorus,” considering its numbers, has only, as in the past, to look on at what takes place in the action of the *dramatis personæ* and it is only required to express occasionally its sentiments by repeating the closing gems from the monologues of the actors, or remain silent—at their option. “Philosophers of a day,” as Carlyle calls them, they neither desire, nor are they desired “to apply.” Therefore, even were these lines to meet their eye, they are respectfully begged to remember that what is said does not refer to either of the above enumerated classes of Fellows. Most of them have joined the Society as they would have bought a guinea book. Attracted by the novelty of the binding, they opened it; and, after glancing over contents and title, motto and dedication, they have put it away on a back shelf, and thought of it no more. They have a right to the volume, by virtue of their purchase, but would refer to it no more than they would to an antiquated piece of furniture relegated to the lumber-room, because the seat of it is not comfortable enough, or is out of proportion with their moral and intellectual size. A hundred to one these members will not even see Lucifer, for it has now become a matter of theosophical

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statistics, that *more than two thirds* of its subscribers are non-theosophists. Nor are the elder brothers of Lucifer—the Madras “Theosophist,” The New York “Path,” the French “Lotus,” nor even the marvellously cheap and international “T.P.S.” (of 7, Duke Street, Adelphi), any luckier than we are. Like all prophets, they are not without honour, save in their own countries, and their voices in the fields of Theosophy are truly “the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” This is no exaggeration. Among the respective subscribers of those various Theosophical periodicals, the members of the T.S., *whose organs they are*, and for whose sole benefit they were started (their editors, managers, and the whole staff of constant contributors working *gratis*, and paying furthermore out of their own generally meagre pockets, printers, publishers and occasional



contributors), are on the average 15 *per cent*. This is also a sign of the times, and shows the difference between the “working” and the “resting” theosophists.

We must not close without once more addressing the former. Who of these will undertake to maintain that clause 3 is not a fundamental principle of the code of ethics which ought to guide every theosophist aspiring *to become one in reality*? For such a large body of men and women, composed of the most heterogeneous nationalities, characters, creeds and ways of thinking, furnishing for this very reason such easy pretexts for disputes and strife, ought not this clause to become part and parcel of the obligation of each member—working or ornamental—who joins the Theosophical movement? We think so, and leave it to the future consideration of the representatives of the General Council, who meet at the next anniversary at Adyar. In a Society with pretensions to an exalted system of ethics—the essence of all previous ethical codes—which confesses openly its aspirations to emulate and put to shame by its practical example and ways of living the followers of every religion, such a pledge constitutes the *sine quâ non* of the success of that Society. In a gathering where “near the noisome nettle blooms the rose,” and where fierce thorns are more plentiful than sweet blossoms, a pledge of such a nature is *the sole salvation*. No Ethics as a science of mutual duties—whether social, religious or philosophical—*from man to man*, can be called complete or consistent unless such a rule is enforced. Not only this, but if we would not have our Society become *de facto* and *de jure* a gigantic sham parading under its banner of

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“Universal Brotherhood”—we ought to follow every time the breaking of this *law of laws*, by the expulsion of the slanderer. No honest man, still less a theosophist, can disregard these lines of Horace:

He that shall rail against his absent friends,  
Or hears them scandalised, and not defends;  
Tells tales, and brings his friends in disesteem;  
That man’s a knave—be sure beware of him.

Lucifer, December, 1888

## A YEAR OF THEOSOPHY

THE dial of Time marks off another of the world's Hours. . . . And, as the Old Year passes into Eternity, like a rain-drop falling into the ocean, its vacant place on the calendar is occupied by a successor which—if one may credit the ancient prophetic warnings of Mother Shipton and other seers—is to bring woe and disaster to some portions of the world. Let it go, with its joys and triumphs, its badness and bitterness, if it but leave behind for our instruction the memory of our experience and the lesson of our mistakes. Wise is he who lets “the dead Past bury its dead.” and turns with courage to meet the fresher duties of the New Year; only the weak and foolish bemoan the irrevocable. It will be well to take a brief retrospect of those incidents of the year 1880 (a.d.) which possess an interest for members of the Theosophical Society. The more so since, in consequence of the absence from Bombay of the President and Corresponding Secretary, the anniversary day of the Society was not publicly celebrated.

It will not be necessary to enter minutely into those details of administration which, however important in themselves as links, weak or strong, in the general chain of progress, and however they may have taxed the patience, nerve, or other resources of the chief officers, do not at all interest the public. It is not so much explanation as *results* that are demanded, and these, in our case, abound. Even our worst enemy would be forced to admit, were he to look closely into our transactions, that the Society is immeasurably stronger morally, numerically, and as regards a capacity for future usefulness, than it was a year ago. Its name has become most widely known; its fellowship has been enriched by the accession of some very distinguished men; it has planted new branch societies in India, Ceylon and elsewhere; applications are now pending for the organization of still other branches, in New South Wales, Sydney, California, India, Australia; its magazine has successfully entered the second volume; its local issues with the government of India have been finally and creditably settled; a mischievous attempt by a handful of malcontents at Bombay to

disrupt it has miserably failed.<sup>1</sup> It has made official alliances with the Sanskrit Samaj of Benares, that is to say, with the most distinguished body of orthodox

Sanskrit pandits in the world, with the other Sabha of which Pandit Rama Misra Shastri is Manager, and with the Hindu Sabha, of Cochin State; while, at the same time, strengthening its fraternal relations with the Arya Samajas of the Punjab and North-Western Provinces. Besides all this, we can point with joy and pride to the results of the late mission to Ceylon, where, within the space of fifty-seven days, seven branch societies of Buddhist laymen, one Ecclesiastical Council of Buddhist priests, and one scientific society were organized, and some hundreds of new fellows were added to our list.

All this work could not be accomplished without great labour, mental anxiety and physical discomfort. If to this be added the burden of a correspondence with many different countries, and the time required for making two journeys to Northern India and one to Ceylon, our friends at a distance will see that whatever other blame may properly attach to the Founders, who have never claimed infallibility of any sort, that of laziness is assuredly not to be cast in their teeth. Nor, when they learn that the work done since leaving America, the travelling expenses and the fitting and maintenance of the Headquarters establishment has cost some twenty thousand rupees, while the cash receipts of the Treasurer (exclusive of those from Ceylon, Rs. 2,440, which sum is set aside as a special fund to be used in the interest of Buddhism) have been only *one thousand two hundred and forty rupees*, all told, including one donation of two hundred rupees from the universally respected Maharanee Surnomoyee, and another of twenty rupees from a well-wisher in Bengal, will those who direct the Society's affairs be regarded by them as making money out of their offices. And these figures, which may most readily be verified, are our only answer to the calumnies which have been maliciously circulated by some who did not, and others who *did*, know the truth.

The trip to Ceylon occupied seventy-seven days in all, the second one to Northern India one hundred and twenty-five days. Thus the Founders have been absent from Bombay on duty twenty-nine

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<sup>1</sup> Secret letters by former members denouncing its Founders, sent to Paris and other Theosophists and pretending that the Bombay Society was virtually extinct (its *best* members having resigned), were sent back to us with new protestations of

friendship and loyalty and expressions of scorn for the conspirators.—(Ed. *Theos.*)  
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weeks out of the fifty-two; their travels extending through twenty-five degrees of latitude, from Lahore at the extreme north of India, to Matara, the southernmost point of ancient Lanka. Each of the Indian Presidencies has contributed a quota of new members; and at the former capital of the late lion-hearted Runjeet Singh, a branch was recently organized by Sikhs and Punjabis, under the title of the “Punjab Theosophical Society.” During the twelvemonth, President Olcott delivered seventy-nine lectures and addresses, a majority of which were interpreted in the Hindi, Urdu, Guzerati and Sinhalese languages.

Many misconceptions prevail as to the nature and objects of the Theosophical Society. Some—Sir Richard Temple in the number—fancy it is a religious sect; many believe it is composed of atheists; a third party are convinced that its sole object is the study of occult science and the initiation of green hands into the Sacred Mysteries. If we have had one we certainly have had a hundred intimations from strangers that they were ready to join at once if they could be sure that they would shortly be endowed with *siddhis*, or the power to work occult phenomena. The beginning of a new year is a suitable time to make one more attempt—we wish it could be the last—to set these errors right. So then, let us say again: (1) The Theosophical Society teaches no new religion, aims to destroy no old one, promulgates no creed of its own, follows no religious leader, and, distinctly and emphatically, is *not a sect*, nor ever was one. It admits worthy people of any religion to membership, on the condition of mutual tolerance and mutual help to discover truth. The Founders have never consented to be taken as religious leaders, they repudiate any such idea, and they have not taken and will not take disciples. (2) The Society is not composed of atheists, nor is it any more conducted in the interest of atheism than in that of deism or polytheism. It has members of almost every religion, and is on equally fraternal terms with each and all. (3) Not a majority, nor even a respectable minority, numerically speaking, of its fellows are students of occult science or ever expect to become adepts. All who cared for the information have been told what sacrifices are necessary in order to gain the higher knowledge, and few are in a position to make one tenth of them. He who joins our Society gains no *siddhis* by that act, nor is there any certainty that he will even see the phenomena, let alone meet with an adept. Some have enjoyed both these

opportunities, and so the possibility of the phenomena and

the existence of "Siddhas" do not rest upon our unverified assertions. Those who have seen things have perhaps been allowed to do so on account of some personal merit detected by those who showed them the siddhis, or for other reasons known to themselves and over which we have no control.

For thousands of years these things have, whether rightly or wrongly, been guarded as sacred mysteries, and Asiatics at least need not be reminded that often even after months or years of the most faithful and assiduous personal service, the disciples of a Yogi have not been shown "miracles" or endowed with powers. What folly, therefore, to imagine that by entering any society one might make a short cut to adeptship! The weary traveller along a strange road is grateful even to find a guide-post that shows him his way to his place of destination. Our Society, if it does naught else, performs this kindly office for the searcher after truth. And it is much.

Before closing, one word must be said in correction of an unfortunate impression that has got abroad. Because our pamphlet of Rules mentions a relationship between our Society and certain proficient in Occult Science, or "Mahatmas," many persons fancy that these great men are personally engaged in the practical direction of its affairs; and that, in such a case, being primarily responsible for the several mistakes that have occurred in the admission of unworthy members and in other matters, they can neither be so wise, so prudent, or so far-seeing as is claimed for them. It is also imagined that the President and Corresponding Secretary (especially the latter) are, if not actually Yogis and Mahatmas themselves, at least persons of ascetic habits, who assume superior moral excellence. Neither of these suppositions is correct, and both are positively absurd. The administration of the Society is, unless in exceptionally important crises, left to the recognized officials, and they are wholly responsible for all the errors that are made. Many may doubtless have been made, and our management may be very faulty, but the wonder is that no more have occurred, if the multiplicity of duties necessarily imposed upon the two chief officers and the world-wide range of activity be taken into account. Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky do not pretend to ascetism, nor would it be possible for them to practise it while in the thick of the struggle to win a

permanent foothold for the Society in the face of every possible obstacle that a selfish, sensuality-loving world puts in the way. What either of them has heretofore been,

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or either or both may in the future become, is quite a different affair. At present they only claim to be trying honestly and earnestly, so far as their natural infirmities of character permit, to enforce by example and precept the ideas which are embodied in the platform and Rules of the Theosophical Society. Once or twice ill-wishers have publicly taunted us with not having given practical proofs of our alleged affection for India. Our final vindication must be left to posterity, which always renders that justice that the present too often denies. But even now—if we may judge by the tone of our correspondence, as well as by the enthusiasm which has everywhere greeted us in the course of our journeyings—a palpably good effect has been produced by our appeals to the educated Indian public. The moral regeneration of India and the revival of her ancient spiritual glories *must exclusively be the work of her own sons*. All we can do is to apply the match to the train, to fan the smouldering embers into a genial warmth. And this we are trying to do. One step in the right direction, it will doubtless be conceded, is the alliance effected with the Benares pandits and attested in the subjoined document:

[Here are printed the Articles of the Union formed by the T. S. and the Sanskrit Sabha of Benares, agreeing to cooperation and brotherly union between the two societies, in the interests of the promotion of Sanskrit Literature and Vedic Philosophy and Science; the agreement being signed by the officers and members of the Benares *Samaj*, and by Col. Olcott as President of the Theosophical Society. H.P.B.'s concluding comment follows:]

These custodians of Sanskrit learning have promised to put in writing the precious treasures of Aryan philosophy, and to cooperate with us to give the facts a worldwide circulation.

The London *Spiritualist* remarked, the other day, that we were doing much for Spiritualism in India. It might rather be said we are doing much to make known the importance of mesmeric science, for wherever we have been we have spared no pains to show the close and intimate relationship that exists

between our modern discoveries in mesmerism, psychometry, and odic force, and the ancient Indian science of Yoga Vidya. We look forward with confidence to a day when the thorough demonstration of this connection will give to both Asia and Europe the basis for a perfect, because experimentally demonstrable, science of Psychology.

*Theosophist*, January, 1881

1888

PEOPLE usually wish that their friends shall have a happy new year, and sometimes "prosperous" is added to "happy." It is not likely that much happiness or prosperity can come to those who are living for the truth under such a dark number as 1888; but still the year is heralded by the glorious star Venus-Lucifer, shining so resplendently that it has been mistaken for that still rarer visitor, the star of Bethlehem. This too, is at hand; and surely something of the Christos spirit must be born upon earth under such conditions. Even if happiness and prosperity are absent, it is possible to find something greater than either in this coming year. Venus-Lucifer is the sponsor of our magazine, and as we chose to come to light under its auspices so do we desire to touch on its nobility. This is possible for us all personally, and instead of wishing our readers a happy or prosperous New Year, we feel more in the vein to pray them to make it one worthy of its brilliant herald. This can be effected by those who are courageous and resolute. Thoreau pointed out that there are artists in life, persons who can change the colour of a day and make it beautiful to those with whom they come in contact. We claim that there are adepts, masters in life who make it divine, as in all other arts. Is it not the greatest art of all, this which affects the very atmosphere in which we live? That it is the most important is seen at once, when we remember that every person who draws the breath of life affects the mental and moral atmosphere of the world, and helps to colour the day for those about him. Those who do not help to elevate the thoughts and lives of others must of necessity either paralyse them by indifference, or actively drag them down. When this point is reached, then the art of life is converted into the science of death; we see the black magician at work. And no

one can be quite inactive. Although many bad books and pictures are produced, still not everyone who is incapable of writing or painting well insists on doing so badly. Imagine the result if they were to! Yet so it is in life. Everyone lives, and thinks, and speaks. If all our readers who have any sympathy with Lucifer endeavoured to learn the art of making life not only beautiful but divine, and vowed no longer to be hampered by disbelief in the possibility of this miracle, but to commence the Herculean task at once, then

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1888, however unlucky a year, would have been fitly ushered in by the gleaming star. Neither happiness nor prosperity are always the best of bedfellows for such undeveloped mortals as most of us are; they seldom bring with them peace, which is the only permanent joy. The idea of peace is usually connected with the close of life and a religious state of mind. That kind of peace will however generally be found to contain the element of expectation. The pleasures of this world have been surrendered, and the soul waits contentedly in expectation of the pleasures of the next. The peace of the philosophic mind is very different from this and can be attained to early in life when pleasure has scarcely been tasted, as well as when it has been fully drunk of. The American Transcendentalists discovered that life could be made a sublime thing without any assistance from circumstances or outside sources of pleasure and prosperity. Ofcourse this had been discovered many times before, and Emerson only took up again the cry raised by Epictetus. But every man has to discover this fact freshly for himself, and when once he realised it he knows that he would be a wretch if he did not endeavour to make the possibility a reality in his own life. The stoic became sublime because he recognised his own absolute responsibility and did not try to evade it; the Transcendentalist was even more, because he had faith in the unknown and untried possibilities which lay within himself. The occultist fully recognises the responsibility and claims his title by having both tried and acquired knowledge of his own possibilities.

The Theosophist who is at all in earnest, sees his responsibility and endeavours to find knowledge, living, in the meantime, up to the highest standard of which he is aware. To all such, *Lucifer* gives greeting! Man's life is in his own hands, his fate is ordered by himself. Why then should not 1888 be a year of greater spiritual development than any we have lived through? It



depends on ourselves to make it so. This is an actual fact, not a religious sentiment. In a garden of sunflowers every flower turns towards the light. Why not so with us?

And let no one imagine that it is a mere fancy, the attaching of importance to the birth of the year. The earth passes through its definite phases and man with it; and as a day can be coloured so can a year. The astral life of the earth is young and strong between Christmas and Easter. Those who form their wishes now will have added strength to fulfill them consistently.

—H. P. Blavatsky

Lucifer, January, 1888

#### A PUZZLE FROM ADYAR

WHEN the cat is abroad the mice dance in the house it seems. Since Colonel Olcott sailed for Japan, the *Theosophist* has never ceased to surprise its European readers, and especially the Fellows of our Society, with most unexpected capers. It is as if the Sphinx had emigrated from the Nile and was determined to continue offering her puzzles broadcast to the Œdipuses of the Society.

Now what may be the meaning of this extraordinary, and *most tactless* “*sortie*” of the esteemed *acting* editor of our *Theosophist*? Is he, owing to the relaxing climate of Southern India, ill, or like our (and his) editor-enemies across the Atlantic, also dreaming uncanny dreams and seeing lying visions—or what? And let me remind him at once that he must not feel offended by these remarks, as he has imperatively called them forth himself. Lucifer, the Path and the *Theosophist* are the only organs of communication with the Fellows of our Society, each in its respective country. Since the acting editor of the *Theosophist* has chosen to give a wide publicity in his organ to abnormal fancies, he has no right to expect a reply through any other channel than Lucifer. Moreover, if he fails to understand all the seriousness of his implied charges *against me* and several honourable men, he may realise them

better, when he reads the present. Already his enigmatical letter to *Light* has done mischief enough. While its purport was evidently to fight some windmills of his own creation, an inimical spiritualist who signs "Colenso" has jumped at the good opportunity afforded him to misrepresent that letter. In his malicious philippic called "Koot-hoomi Dethroned" he seeks to show that Mr. Harte's letter announces that the "Masters" are thrown overboard by the T. S. and "Mme. Blavatsky dethroned." Is it this that "Richard Harte, acting editor of the *Theosophist*," sought to convey to the Spiritualists in his letter in *Light* of July 6th?

Without further enquiry as to the real meaning of the *Light* letter, what does he try to insinuate by the following in the July number of the *Theosophist*?  
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#### A Disclaimer

The Editor of the *Theosophist* has much pleasure in publishing the following extracts from a letter from Mr. Bertram Keightley, Secretary of the "Esoteric Section" of the Theosophical Society, to one of the Commissioners, which have been handed to him for publication. It should be explained that the denial therein contained refers to certain surmises and reports afloat in the Society, and which were seemingly corroborated by apparently *arbitrary* and *underhand* proceedings by certain Fellows known to be members of the Esoteric Section.

To this I, the "Head of the Esoteric Section," answer:

1. Mr. Bertram Keightley's letter, though containing the truth, and *nothing but the truth*, was never intended for publication, as a sentence in it proves. Therefore the acting Editor *had no right* to publish it.

2. Fellows of the E. S. having to be first of all Fellows of the Theosophical Society, what does the sentence "Fellows known to be members of the E. S." — who stand accused by Mr. Harte (or even by some idiotic reports afloat in the Society) of "*arbitrary and underhand proceedings*" — mean? Is not such a sentence a gross insult thrown into the face of honourable men — far better Theosophists than any of their accusers — and of myself?

3. What were the silly reports? That the “British or the American Section,” and even the “Blavatsky Lodge” of the Theosophical Society wanted to “boss Adyar.” For this is what is said in the *Theosophist* in the alleged “disclaimer”:

Mr. Keightley tells this Commissioner that he must not believe “*that the Esoteric Section has any, even the slightest, pretension to ‘boss’ the Theosophical Society or anything of the kind.*” Again he says: “*We are all, H.P.B, first and foremost, just as loyal to the Theosophical Society and to Adyar as the Colonel can possibly be.*” And yet again he says: “*I have nothing more to say, except to repeat in the most formal and positive manner my assurance that there is not a word of truth in the statement that the Esoteric Section has any desire or pretension to ‘boss’ any other part or Section of the T. S.*”

*Amen!* But before I reproduce the acting editor’s further marvellous comments thereon, I claim the right to say a few words on the subject. Since, as said, the letter was never meant to be paraded in print—chiefly, perhaps, because *qui s’ excuse s’accuse*—it is no criticism to show that it contains that which I would describe as a meaningless *flap-doodle*, or, rather, a pair of them, something

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quite pardonable in a private and hastily-written letter, but quite unpardonable and grotesque when appearing as a published *document*.

1st. That the E. S. had never any pretensions to “*boss the T. S.*” stands to reason: with the exception of Col. Olcott, the President, the Esoteric Section has nothing whatever to do with the Theosophical Society, its Council or officers. It is a Section entirely apart from the exoteric body, and independent of it, *H.P.B, alone being responsible for its members*, as shown in the official announcement over the signature of the President Founder himself. It follows, therefore, that the E. S., as a body, owes no allegiance whatever to the Theosophical Society, *as a Society*, least of all to Adyar.

2nd. It is pure nonsense to say that “*H.P.B. . . . is loyal to the Theosophical Society and to Adyar*” (!?). *H.P.B, is loyal to death to the Theosophical Cause, and those great Teachers whose philosophy can alone bind the whole of Humanity into one Brotherhood.* Together with Col. Olcott, she is the chief Founder and Builder of the Society which *was* and *is* meant to *represent* that Cause; and if she is so loyal

to H. S. Olcott, it is not at all because of his being its "President," but, firstly, because there is no man living who has worked harder for that Society, or been more devoted to it than the Colonel, and, secondly, because she regards him as a loyal friend and co-worker. Therefore the degree of her sympathies with the "Theosophical Society and Adyar" depends upon the degree of the loyalty of that Society to the Cause. Let it break away from the original lines and show disloyalty in its policy to the Cause and the original programme of the Society, and H.P.B., calling the T. S. *disloyal*, will shake it off like dust from her feet.

And what does "loyalty to Adyar" mean, in the name of all wonders? What *is* Adyar, apart from that Cause and the *two* (not *one* Founder, if you please) who represent it? Why not loyal to the compound or the bath-room of Adyar? Adyar is the present Headquarters of the Society, because these "Headquarters are wherever the President is," as stated in the rules. To be logical, the Fellows of the T. S. had to be loyal to Japan while Col. Olcott was there, and to London during his presence here. There is no longer a "Parent Society"; it is abolished and replaced by an aggregate body of Theosophical Societies, *all autonomous*, as are the States of America, and all under one Head President, who, together

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with H. P. Blavatsky, will champion the Cause against the whole world. Such is the real state of things.

What then, again, can be the meaning of the following comments by the acting Editor, who follows Mr. Keightley's letter with these profoundly wise remarks:

It is to be hoped that after this very distinct and authoritative disclaimer no further "private circulars" will be issued by any members of the Esoteric Section, calling upon the Fellows to oppose the action of the General Council, because "Madame Blavatsky does not approve of it"; and also that silly editorials, declaring that Theosophy is degenerating into obedience to the dictates of Madame Blavatsky, like that in a recent issue of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, will cease to appear.

The "private circulars" of the E.S. have nothing to do with the acting editor of the *Theosophist* nor has he any right to meddle with them.

Whenever “Madame Blavatsky does not approve” of “an action of the General Council,”<sup>1</sup> she will say so openly and to their faces. Because (a) Madame Blavatsky does not owe the slightest allegiance to a Council which is liable at any moment to issue silly and *untheosophical ukases*; and (b) for the simple reason that she recognizes but one person in the T. S. besides herself, namely Colonel Olcott, as having the right of effecting fundamental reorganizations in a Society which owes its life to them, and for which they are both *karmically* responsible. If the acting editor makes slight account of a *sacred pledge*, neither Col. Olcott nor H. P. Blavatsky are likely to do so. H. P. Blavatsky will always bow before the decision of the majority of a Section or even a simple Branch; but she will ever protest against the decision of the General Council, were it composed of Archangels and Dhyan Chohans themselves, if their decision seems to her unjust, or untheosophical, or fails to meet with the approval of the majority of the Fellows. No more than H. P. Blavatsky has the President Founder the right of exercising autocracy or *papal* powers, and Col. Olcott would be the last man in the world to attempt to do so. It is the two Founders and especially the President, who have virtually sworn allegiance to the Fellows, whom they have to protect, and teach those who want to be taught, and not to tyrannize and rule over them.

And now I have said over my own signature what I had to say

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<sup>1</sup> Or “Commissioners” of whom Mr. R. Harte is one. [Ed.]

and that which ought to have been said in so many plain words long ago. The public is all agog with the silliest stories about our doings, and the supposed and real dissensions in the Society. Let everyone know the truth at last, in which there is nothing to make any one ashamed, and which alone can put an end to a most painful and strained feeling. This truth is as simple as can be.

The acting editor of the *Theosophist* has taken it into his head that the Esoteric Section together with the British and American Sections, were either conspiring or preparing to conspire against what he most curiously calls “Adyar” and its authority. Now being a most devoted fellow of the T. S. and attached to the President, his zeal in hunting up this mare’s nest has led him to become more

Catholic than the Pope. That is all, and I hope that such misunderstandings and hallucinations will come to an end with the return of the President to India. Had he been at home, he, at any rate, would have objected to all those dark hints and cloaked sayings that have of late incessantly appeared in the *Theosophist* to the great delight of our enemies. We readily understand that owing to lack of original contributions the acting editor should reproduce a bungled up and sensational report from the *N. Y. Times* and call it "Dr. Keightley speaks." But when jumping at a sentence of Dr. Keightley's, who in speaking of some "prominent members," said that they had been "abandoned or been read out of the fold," he gravely adds in a foot-note that this is "another mistake of the reporter," as "no Fellow of the Theosophical Society has been expelled of recent years"; it is time someone should tell the esteemed acting editor plainly that for the pleasure of hitting imaginary enemies he allows the reader to think that he does not know what he is talking about. If through neglect at Adyar the names of the expelled Fellows have not been entered in the books, it does not follow that Sections and Branches like the "London Lodge" and others which *are autonomous* have not expelled, or had no right to expel, any one. Again, what on earth does he mean by pretending that the reporter has "confounded the Blavatsky Lodge with the Theosophical Society?" Is not the Blavatsky Lodge, like the London, Dublin, or any other "Lodge," a branch of, and a Theosophical Society? What next shall we read in our unfortunate *Theosophist*?

But it is time for me to close. If Mr. Harte persists still in acting in such a strange and untheosophical way, then the sooner the President settles these matters the better for all concerned.

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Owing to such undignified quibbles, Adyar and especially the *Theosophist* are fast becoming the laughing stock of Theosophists themselves as well as of their enemies; the bushels of letters received by me to that effect, being a good proof of it.

I end by assuring him that there is no need for him to pose as Colonel Olcott's protecting angel. Neither he nor I need a third party to screen us from each other. We have worked and toiled and suffered together for fifteen long years, and if after all these years of mutual friendship the President Founder were

capable of lending ear to insane accusations and turning against me, well—the world is wide enough for both. Let the new Exoteric Theosophical Society headed by Mr. Harte, play at red tape if the President lets them and let the General Council expel me for “disloyalty,” if again, Colonel Olcott should be so blind as to fail to see where the “true friend” and his duty lie. Only unless they hasten to do so, at the first sign of *their* disloyalty to the Cause—it is I who will have resigned my office of Corresponding Secretary for life and left the Society. This will not prevent me from remaining at the head of those—who will follow me.

H. P. Blavatsky

*Lucifer*, August, 1889

## THE ORGANISATION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

[In order to leave no room for equivocation, the members of the T.S. have to be reminded of the origin of the Society in 1875. Sent to the U.S. of America in 1873 for the purpose of organizing a group of workers on a psychic plane, two years later the writer received orders from her Master and Teacher to form the nucleus of a regular Society whose objects were broadly stated as follows:

- (1) Universal Brotherhood;
- (2) No distinction to be made by the members between]\* races, creeds, or social positions, but every member had to be judged and dealt by on his personal merits;
- (3) To study the philosophies of the East—those of India chiefly, presenting them gradually to the public in various works that would interpret exoteric religions in the light of esoteric teachings;

(4) To oppose materialism and theological dogmatism in every possible way, by demonstrating the existence of occult forces unknown to Science, in Nature, and the presence of psychic and spiritual powers in Man; trying, at the same time, to enlarge the views of the Spiritualists by showing them that there are other, many other agencies at work in the production of phenomena besides the “Spirits” of the dead. Superstition had to be exposed and avoided; and occult forces, *beneficent and maleficent*—ever surrounding us and manifesting their presence in various ways—demonstrated to the best of our ability.

Such was the programme in its broad features. The two chief Founders were not told what they had to do, how they had to bring about and quicken the growth of the Society and results desired; nor had they any definite ideas given them concerning the outward organisation—all this being left entirely with themselves. Thus,

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\* These opening words enclosed in brackets were presumably on the first manuscript page by H.P.B., which was lost, but they were later restored from a typed copy at Adyar and included in the August 1931 reprinting of the article in the Theosophist. —Eds.

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as the undersigned had no capacity for such work as the mechanical formation and administration of a Society, the management of the latter was left in the hands of Col. H. S. Olcott, then and there elected by the primitive founders and members—*President for life*. But if the two Founders were not told *what they had to do*, they were distinctly instructed about *what they should never do*, what they had to avoid, and what the Society should never become. Church organisations, Christian and Spiritual sects were shown as the future contrasts to our Society.<sup>1</sup>

To make it clearer:

(1) The Founders had to exercise all their influence *to oppose selfishness of any kind*, by insisting upon sincere, fraternal feelings among the Members—at least outwardly; working for it to bring

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<sup>1</sup> A liberal Christian member of the T.S. having objected to the study of Oriental religions and doubted whether there was room left for any new Society—a letter answering his objections and preference to Christianity was received and the contents copied for him; after which he denied no longer the advisability of such a Society as the professed Theosophical Association. A few extracts from this early letter will show plainly the nature of the Society as then contemplated, and that we have tried only to follow, and carry out in the best way we could the intentions of the *true* originators of the Society in those days. The pious gentleman having claimed that he was a *theosophist* and had a right of judgment over other people was told . . .

“You have no right to such a title. You are only a *philo*-theosophist; as one who has reached to the full comprehension of *the name and nature* of a theosophist will sit in judgment on no man or action. . . . You claim that your religion is the highest and final step toward divine Wisdom on this earth, and that it has introduced into the arteries of the old decaying world new blood and life and verities that had remained unknown to the heathen? If it were so indeed, then your religion would have introduced the highest truths into all the social, civil and international relations of Christendom. Instead of that, as anyone can perceive, your social as your private life is not based upon a common moral solidarity but only on constant mutual counteraction and purely mechanical equilibrium of individual powers and interests. . . . If you would be a theosophist you must not do as those around you do who call on a God of Truth and Love and serve the dark Powers of Might, Greed and Luck. We look in the midst of your Christian civilisation and see the same sad signs of old: the realities of your daily lives are diametrically opposed to your religious ideal, but you feel it not; the thought that the very laws that govern your being whether in the domain of politics or social economy clash painfully with the origins of your religion—does not seem to trouble you in the least. But if the nations of the West are so fully convinced that the ideal can never become practical and the practical will never reach the ideal—then, you have to make your choice: either it is your religion that is impracticable, and in that case it is no better than a vain-glorious delusion, or it might find a practical application, but it is you, yourselves, who do not care to apply its ethics to your daily walk in life. . . . Hence, before you invite other nations ‘to the King’s festival table’ from which your guests arise more starved than before, you should, ere you try to bring them to your own way of thinking, look into the repasts they offer to you. . . . Under the dominion and sway of exoteric creeds, the grotesque and tortured shadows of the theosophical realities, there must ever be the same oppression of the weak and the poor and the same typhonic struggle of the wealthy and the mighty among themselves. . . . *It*

*is esoteric philosophy alone*, the spiritual and psychic blending of man with Nature that, by revealing fundamental truths, can bring that much desired mediate state between the two extremes of human Egotism and divine Altruism and finally lead to the alleviation of human suffering. . . ” (See next to last page for continuation. [See p. 35.]

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about a spirit of unity and harmony, the great diversity of creeds notwithstanding; expecting and demanding from the Fellows, a great mutual toleration and charity for each other’s shortcomings; mutual help in the research of truths in every domain—moral or physical—and even in daily life.

(2) They had to oppose in the strongest manner anything approaching *dogmatic faith and fanaticism*—belief in the *infallibility* of the Masters, or even in the very existence of our invisible Teachers, having to be checked from the first. On the other hand, as a great respect for the private views and creeds of every member was demanded, any Fellow criticising the faith or belief of another Fellow, hurting his feelings, or showing a reprehensible self-assertion, unasked (mutual friendly advices were a duty unless declined)—such a member incurred expulsion. The greatest spirit of free research untrammelled by anyone or anything, had to be encouraged.

Thus, for the first year the Members of the T. Body, who representing every class in Society as every creed and belief—Christian clergymen, Spiritualists, Freethinkers, Mystics, Masons and Materialists—lived and met under these rules in peace and friendship. There were two or three expulsions for *slander and backbiting*. The rules, however imperfect in their tentative character, were strictly enforced and respected by the members. The original \$5 initiation fee was soon abolished as *inconsistent with the spirit of the Association*: members had enthusiastically promised to support the Parent Society and defray the *expenses of machines for experiments, books, the fees of the Recording Secretary,*<sup>2</sup> etc., etc. This was *Reform No. 1*. Three months after, Mr. H. Newton, the Treasurer, a rich gentleman of New York, showed that no one had paid anything or helped him to defray the current expenses for the Hall of meetings, stationery, printing, etc., and that he had to carry the burden of those expenses *alone*. He went on for a short time longer, then—*he resigned as Treasurer*. It was the President-Founder, Col. H. S. Olcott, who had to pay henceforth for all. He did so for over 18 months. The “fee” was re-established,

before the Founders left for India with the two English delegates—now their mortal enemies; but the money collected was for the Arya Samaj of Aryavarta with which Society the Theosophical became affiliated. It is the President Founder who paid the enormous travelling

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<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cobb.

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expenses from America to India, and those of installation in Bombay, and who supported the two delegates out of his own pocket for nearly 18 months. When he had no more money left, nor the Corr. Secretary either—a resolution was passed that the “initiation fee” sums should go towards supporting the Head Quarters.

Owing to the rapid increase of the Society in India, the present *Rules* and *Statutes* grew out. They are not the outcome of the deliberate thought and whim of the President Founder, but the result of the yearly meetings of the General Council at the Anniversaries. If the members of that G. C. have framed them so as to give a wider authority to the Pres. Founder, it was the result of their absolute confidence in him, in his devotion and love for the Society, and not at all—as implied in “A Few Words”—a proof of *his love for power and authority*. Of this, however, later on.

It was never denied that the Organisation of the T.S. was *very* imperfect. *Errare humanum est*. But, if it can be shown that the President has done what he could under the circumstances and in the best way he knew how—no one, least of all a theosophist, can charge him with the sins of the whole community, as now done. From the founders down to the humblest member, the Society is composed of imperfect mortal men—not gods. This was always claimed by its leaders. “He who feels *without sin*, let him cast the first stone.” It is the duty of every Member of the Council to offer advice and to bring for the consideration of the whole body any incorrect proceedings. One of the *plaintiffs* is a Councillor. Having never used his privileges as one, in the matter of the complaints now proffered—and thus, having no excuse to give that his just representations were not listened to, he, by bringing out publicly what he had to state first privately—sins against Rule XII. The whole paper

now reads like a defamatory aspersion, being full of untheosophical and unbrotherly insinuations—which the writers thereof could never have had in view.

This Rule XIIth was one of the first and the wisest. It is by neglecting to have it enforced when most needed, that the President-Founder has brought upon himself the present penalty.<sup>3</sup> It is his

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<sup>3</sup> For years the wise rule by which any member accused of backbiting or slander was expelled from the Society after sufficient evidence—has become obsolete. There have been two or three solitary cases of expulsion for the same in cases of members of *no* importance. Europeans of position and name were allowed to cover the Society literally with mud and slander their Brothers with perfect impunity. This is the President's *Karma*—and it is just.

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too great indulgence and unwise carelessness that have led to all such charges of abuse of power, love of authority, show, of vanity, etc., etc. Let us see how far it may have been deserved.

As shown for 12 years the Founder has toiled *almost alone* in the interests of the Society and the general good—hence, not his own, and, the only complaint he was heard to utter was, that *he was left no time for self-development and study*. The results of this too just complaint are, that those for whom he toiled, are the first to fling at him the reproach of being ignorant of certain Hindu terms, of using one term for another, for inst. of having applied the word “Jivanmukta” to a Hindu chela, on one occasion! The crime is a terrible one, indeed. . . . We know of “chelas” who being Hindus, are sure never to confuse such well known terms in *their* religion; but who, on the other hand, pursue Jivanmuktaship and the highest Theosophical Ethics through the royal road of selfish ambition, lies, slander, ingratitude and backbiting. Every road leads to Rome; this is evident; and there is such a thing in Nature as “*Mahatma*”-*Dugpas*. . . . It would be desirable for the cause of Theosophy and truth, however, were all the critics of our President in general, less learned, yet found reaching more to the level of his all-forgiving good nature, his thorough sincerity and unselfishness; as the rest of the members less inclined to lend a willing ear to

those, who, like the said “Vicars of Bray” have developed a hatred for the Founders—for reasons unknown.

The above advice is offered to the two Theosophists who have just framed their “Few Words on the Theosophical Organisation.” That they are not alone in their complaints (which, translated from their diplomatic into plain language look a good deal in the present case like a mere “*querelle*<sup>4</sup> *d’Allemand*”) and that the said complaints are in a great measure just,—is frankly admitted. Hence, the writer must be permitted to speak in this, her answer, of Theosophy and theosophists in general, instead of limiting the *Reply* strictly to the complaints uttered. There is not the slightest desire to be personal; yet, there has accumulated of late such a mass of incandescent material in the Society, by that eternal friction of precisely such “selfish personalities,” that it is certainly wise to try to smother the sparks in time, by pointing out their true nature.

Demands, and a feeling of necessity for reforms have not originated

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<sup>4</sup> This may be a reference to the legal term, *querela*, for “bill of complaint”; Gebhard being in Germany, the “Allemand” is clear.—Eds. Theosophy.

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with the two complainants. They date from several years, and there has never been a question of *avoiding* reforms, but rather a failure of finding such means as would satisfy *all* the theosophists. To the present day, we have yet to find that “wise man” from the East or from the West, who could not only *diagnosicate* the disease in the T. Society, but offer advice and a remedy likewise to cure it. It is easy to write: “It would be out of place to suggest any *specific measures*” (for such reforms, which do seem more difficult to *suggest* than to be vaguely hinted at)—“for no one who has any faith in Brotherhood and in the power of Truth will fail to perceive what is necessary,”—concludes the critic. One may, perhaps, have such faith and yet fail to perceive what is *most* necessary. Two heads are better than one; and if any practical reforms have suggested themselves to our severe judges their refusal to give us the benefit of their discovery would be most *unbrotherly*. So far, however, we have received only most impracticable suggestions for reforms whenever these came to be specified. The Founders, and the whole

Central Society at the Headquarters, for instance, are invited to demonstrate their theosophical natures by living like “fowls in the air and lilies of the field,” which neither sow nor reap, toil not, nor spin and “take no thought for the morrow.” This being found hardly practicable, even in India, where a man may go about in the garment of an Angel, but has, nevertheless, to pay rent and taxes, another proposition, then a third one and a fourth —each less practicable than the preceding—were offered . . . the unavoidable rejection of which led finally to the criticism now under review.

After carefully reading “A Few Words, etc.,” no very acute intellect is needed to perceive that, although no “specific measures” are offered in them, the drift of the whole argument tends but to one conclusion, a kind of syllogism more Hindu than metaphysical. Epitomised, the remarks therein plainly say: “Destroy the bad *results* pointed out by destroying the *causes* that generate them.” Such is the apocalyptic meaning of the paper, although both causes and results are made painfully and flagrantly objective and that they may be rendered in this wise: Being shown that the Society is the result and fruition of a bad President; and the latter being the outcome of such an “untheosophically” organized Society—and, its *worse than useless* General Council—“make away with all these *Causes* and the results will disappear”; *i.e.*, the Society will have

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ceased to exist. Is this the heart-desire of the two *true* and *sincere* Theosophists?

The complaints—“submitted to those interested in the progress of *true* Theosophy”—which seems to mean “theosophy divorced from the *Society*”—may now be noticed in order and answered. They specify the following objections:

I. To the language of the *Rules* with regard to the powers invested in the President-Founder by the General Council. This objection seems very right. The sentence . . . The duties of the Council “shall consist in *advising* the P.F. *in regard to all matters referred to them by him*” may be easily construed as implying that on all matters *not* referred to the Council by the Pres.-Founder . . . its members will hold their tongues. The Rules are changed, at any rate they are corrected and altered yearly. This sentence can be taken out. The harm, so far, is not so terrible.

II. It is shown that many members *ex-officio* whose names are found on the list of the General Council *are not known* to the Convention; that they are, very likely, not even interested in the Society “under their special care”; a body they had joined at one time, then probably *forgotten* its existence in the meanwhile to withdraw themselves from the Association. The argument implied is very valid. Why not point it out *officially* to the Members residing at, or visiting the Head Quarters, the impropriety of such a parading of names? Yet, in what respect can this administrative blunder, or carelessness, interfere with, or *impede* “the progress of *true* Theosophy.”<sup>5</sup>

III. “The members are appointed by the President-Founder. . . .” it is complained; “the Gen. Council only *advises* on what is submitted to it” . . . and “in the meantime” that P.F. is empowered to *issue “special orders”* and “provisional rules,” on behalf of that (“dummy”) Council. (Rule IV, p. 20.) Moreover, it is urged that out of a number of 150 members of the G. Council, a quorum of 5 and even 3 members present, may, should it be found necessary *by the President*, decide upon any question of vital importance, etc., etc., etc.

Such an “untheosophical” *display* of authority, is objected to by Messrs. M. M. Chatterji and A. Gebhard on the ground that it

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<sup>5</sup>Furthermore the writer of the complaints in “A Few Words, etc.,” is himself a member on the General Council for over two years (see Rules 1885). Why has he not spoken earlier?

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leads the Society to Caesarism, to “tyranny” and “papal infallibility,” etc., etc. However right the two complainants may be *in principle* it is impossible to fail seeing the absurd exaggerations of the epithets used; for, having just been accused on one page of “tyrannical authority,” of “centralization of power” and a “papal institution” (p. 9)—on page 11, the President-Founder is shown “issuing *special orders*” from that “centre of Caesarism” —*which no one is bound to obey, unless he so wishes!* “It is well known” remarks the principal writer— “that not only individuals but even Branches have refused to pay this (annual) subscription . . . of . . . two shillings” (p. 11); without any bad effect for themselves, resulting out of it, as appears. Thus, it would seem it is not to a *non-*

*existent* authority that objections should be made, but simply to a vain and useless *display* of power that no one cares for.

The policy of issuing “special orders” with such sorry results is indeed objectionable; only, *not on the ground of a tendency to Caesarism*, but simply because it becomes *highly ridiculous*. The undersigned for one, has many a time objected to it, moved however, more by a spirit of *worldly* pride and an *untheosophical* feeling of self-respect than anything like Yogi humility. It is admitted with regret that the world of scoffers and *non-theosophists* might, if they heard of it, find in it a capital matter for fun. But the real wonder is, how can certain *European* Theosophists, who have bravely defied the world to make them wince under any amount of ridicule, once they acted in accordance with the dictates of their conscience and duty—make a crime of what is at the worst a *harmless*, even if ridiculous, bit of vanity; a desire of giving importance—not to the Founder, but to his Society *for which he is ready to die any day*. One kind of ridicule is worth another. The Western theosophist, who for certain magnetic reasons wears his hair long and shows otherwise eccentricity in his dress, will be spared no more than his President, with his “special orders.” Only the latter, remaining as kindly disposed and brotherly to the “individual Theosophist and even a Branch”—that snub *him* and his “order,” by refusing to pay what others do—shows himself *ten-fold more Theosophical and true to the principle of Brotherhood*, than the former, who traduces and denounces him in such uncharitable terms, instead of kindly warning him of the bad effect produced. Unfortunately, it is not those who speak the loudest of virtue and theosophy, who are the best exemplars of both. Few of them, if any, have tried to cast out the beam from their own eye, before they

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raised their voices against the mote in the eye of a brother. Furthermore, it seems to have become quite the theosophical rage in these days, to denounce vehemently, yet never to offer to help pulling out *any* such *motes*.

The Society is bitterly criticized for asking every well-to-do theosophist (the poor are exempt from it, from the first) to pay annually two shillings to help defraying the expenses at Head-Quarters. It is denounced as “untheosophical,”



“unbrotherly,” and the “admission fee” of £1, is declared no better than “a sale of Brotherhood.” In this our “Brotherhood” may be shown again on a far higher level than any other association past or present. The Theosophical Society has never shown the ambitious pretension to outshine in *theosophy* and *brotherliness*, the primitive Brotherhood of Jesus and his Apostles,<sup>6</sup> and that “Organisation,” besides *asking* and being occasionally refused, helped itself *without asking*, and as a matter of fact in a *real* community of Brothers. Nevertheless, such actions, that would seem highly untheosophical and prejudicial in our day of culture when nations alone are privileged to pocket each other’s property and expect to be honoured for it—do not seem to have been an obstacle in the way of deification and sanctification of the said early “Brotherly” group. Our Society had never certainly any idea of rising superior to the *brotherliness* and *ethics* preached by Christ, but only to those of the *sham* Christianity of the Churches—as originally ordered to by our Masters. And if we do no worse than the Gospel Brotherhood did, and far better than any Church, which would expel any member refusing too long to pay his Church rates, it is really hard to see why our “Organisation” should be ostracized by its own members. At any rate, the pens of the latter ought to show themselves less *acerb*, in these days of trouble when every one seems bent on finding fault with the Society, and few to help it, and that the President-Founder is alone to work and toil with a few devoted theosophists at Adyar to assist him.

IV. “There is no such institution in existence as the Parent Society” —we are told (pp. 2 and 3). “It has disappeared from the Rules and . . . has no *legal* existence” . . . The Society being unchartered, *it has not*—legally; but no more has any Theosophist

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<sup>6</sup> Yet, the Theosophical Brotherhood does seem doomed to outrival the group of Apostles in the number of its *denying* Peters, its unbelieving Thomases, and even Iscariots occasionally, ready to sell their Brotherhood for less than thirty *sheckels* of silver!  
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a legal existence, for the matter of that. Is there one single member throughout the whole globe who would be recognised *by law* or before a Magistrate—as a *theosophist*? Why then do the gentlemen “complainants” call themselves

“theosophists” if the latter qualification has no better legal standing than the said “Parent Society” of the Head Quarters itself? But the Parent-body *does* exist, and will, so long as the last man or woman of the primitive group of Theosophist *Founders* is alive. This—as a body; as for its moral characteristics, the Parent-Society means that small nucleus of theosophists who hold sacredly through storm and blows to the *original programme* of the T.S., as established under the direction and orders of those, whom they recognise—and will, to their last breath—as the real originators of the Movement, their *living*, Holy Masters and Teachers.<sup>7</sup>

V. The complaints then, that the T.S. “has Laws without sanction,” a “legislative body without legality,” a “Parent Society without existence,” and, worse than all—a President *above all rules*—are thus shown only *partially* correct. But even were they all absolutely true, it would be easy to abolish such rules with one stroke of the pen, or to modify them. But now comes the curious part of that severe *philippic* against the T.S. by our eloquent Demosthenes. After six pages (out of twelve) had been filled with the said charges, the writer admits on the 7th,—that they have been so modified!—“The above” we learn (rather late) “was written under *misapprehension* that the ‘Rules’ bearing date 1885—were the latest. It has since been found that there is a later version of the Rules dated 1886 which *have modified the older rules on a great many points.*” So much the better.—Why recall, in such case, mistakes in the past if these exist no longer? But the accusers do not see it in this light. They are determined to act as a theosophical Nemesis; and in no way daunted by the discovery, they add that

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<sup>7</sup>The members of the T.S. know, and those who do not should be told, that the term “Mahatma,” now so subtly analysed and controverted, for some mysterious reasons had never been applied to our Masters before our arrival in India. For years they were known as the “Adept-Brothers,” the “Masters,” etc. It is the Hindus themselves who began applying the term to the two Teachers. This is no place for an etymological disquisition on the fitness or unfitness of the qualification, in the case in hand. As a *state Mahatmaship* is one thing, as a double noun, *Maha-atma* (Great Soul) quite another one. Hindus ought to know the value of metaphysical Sanskrit names used; and it is they the first, who have used it to designate the Masters.

nevertheless “it is *necessary* to examine the earlier rules to ascertain *the underlying principle*, which rules through the present ones as well.” This reminds of the fable of “the Wolf and the Lamb.” But—you see—“the chief point is, that the Convention *has no power to make any rules*, as such a power is *opposed to the spirit of Theosophy*,” . . . etc., etc.

Now this is the most extraordinary argument that could be made. At this rate no Brotherhood, no Association, no Society is possible. More than this; no theosophist, however holy his present life may be, would have the right to call himself one; for were it always found *necessary* to examine *his earlier life*, “to ascertain the *underlying principle*” which rules through the nature of the present man—ten to one, he would be found unfit to be called a theosophist! The experiment would hardly be found pleasant to the majority of those whom association with the T.S. has reformed; and of such there are a good many.

After such virulent and severe denunciations one might expect some good, friendly and theosophically *practical* advice. Not at all, and none is offered, since we have been already told (p. 9) that it would be “out of place to suggest any specific measures, as no one who has any faith in Brotherhood—and in the power of Truth *will fail* to perceive what is necessary.” The President-Founder has *no faith* in either “Brotherhood,” or “the power of Truth”—apparently. This is made evident by his having *failed* to perceive (*a*) that the Head Quarters—opened to *all* Theosophists of any race or social position, board and lodging free of charge the whole year round—was an *unbrotherly* Organisation; (*b*) that “the central office at Adyar for keeping records and concentrating information” with its European and Hindu inmates working *gratuitously* and some helping it with their own money whenever they have it—ought to be carried on, according to the method and principle of George Miller of Bristol, namely, the numerous households and staff of officers at Adyar headed by the Pres.-Founder ought to kneel every morning in prayer for their bread and milk, appealing for their meals to “miracle”; and that finally, and (*c*) all the good the Society is doing, is no good whatever but “a spiritual wrong,” because it presumes to call a *limited* line of good work—(theosophy) Divine Wisdom.”

The undersigned is an ever patient theosophist, who has hitherto laboured under the impression that no amount of subtle scholasticism

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and tortured casuistry but would find like the Rosetta stone its Champollion—some day. The most acute among theosophists are now invited to make out in “A Few Words” — what the writers or writer—is driving at—unless in plain and unvarnished language, it be—“Down with the Theosophical Society, President-Founder and its Head-Quarters!” This is the only possible explanation of the twelve pages of denunciations to which a reply is now attempted. What can indeed be made out of the following jumble of contradictory statements:

(a) The President Founder having been shown throughout as a “tyrant,” a “*would be* Caesar,” “aiming at *papal* power” and a “Venetian Council of Three,” and other words to that effect implied in almost every sentence of the paper under review, it is confessed in the same breath that the “London Lodge” of the Theosophical Society has *completely ignored* the *Rules* (of the Pope Caesar) published at Adyar! (p. 4) And yet, the “L.L. of the T.S.” still lives and breathes and one has heard of no *anathema* pronounced against it, so far. . . .

(b) Rule XIV stating that the Society has “to deal *only* with scientific and philosophical subjects,” hence, “it is quite *evident* [?] that the power and position claimed in the *Rules* for the P’t Founder and the Gen. Council and Convention are opposed to the spirit of the declared Objects.”

It might have been as well perhaps to quote the entire paragraph in which these words appear<sup>8</sup> once that hairs are split about the possibly faulty reaction of the *Rules*? Is it not self-evident, that the words brought forward “only with scientific and philosophical subjects” are inserted as a necessary caution to *true* theosophists, who by dealing with politics *within* any Branch Society might bring disgrace and ruin on the whole body—in India to begin

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<sup>8</sup>XIV “The Society having to deal only with scientific and philosophical subjects, and having Branches in divergent parts of the world under various forms of Government, does not permit its members, as such, to interfere with politics, and repudiates any

attempt on the part of any one to commit it in favor of or against any political party or measure. Violation of this rule will meet with expulsion."

This rather alters the complexion put on the charge, which seems to conveniently forget that "scientific and philosophical subjects" are not the *only* declared objects of the Society. Let us not leave room for a doubt that there is more *animus* underlying the charges than would be strictly *theosophical*

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with? Has the Society or has it not over 140 Societies scattered through four parts of the world to take care of? As in the case of "Mahatmas" and "Mahatmaship"—active work of the Theosophical Society is confused—willingly or otherwise, it is not for the writer to decide—with Theosophy. No need of entering here upon the difference between the jar that contains a liquid and the nature of, or that liquid itself.

"Theosophy teaches *self-culture* . . . and not control," we are told. Theosophy teaches *mutual-culture* before *self-culture* to *begin* with. Union is strength. It is by gathering many theosophists of the same way of thinking into one or more groups, and making them closely united by the same magnetic bond of fraternal unity and sympathy that the objects of *mutual* development and progress in Theosophical thought may be best achieved. "Self-culture" is for isolated *Hatha Yogis*, independent of any Society and having to avoid association with human beings; and this is a *triply distilled* Selfishness. For real moral advancement—there "where two or three are gathered" in the name of the Spirit of Truth—there that Spirit or Theosophy *will be in the midst of them*.

To say that theosophy has no need of a Society—a vehicle and centre thereof—is like affirming that the Wisdom of the Ages collected in thousands of volumes, at the British Museum has no need of either the edifice that contains it, nor the works in which it is found. Why not advise the British Gov't on its lack of discrimination and its *worldliness* in not destroying Museum and all its vehicles of Wisdom? Why spend such sums of money and pay so many officers to watch over its treasures, the more so, since many of its guardians may be quite out of keeping with, and opposed to the Spirit of that Wisdom? The Directors of such Museums may or may not be very perfect men, and some of their assistants may have never opened a philosophical work: yet, it is they who

take care of the library and preserve it for future generations who are indirectly entitled to their thanks. How much more gratitude is due to those who like our self-sacrificing theosophists at Adyar, devote their lives to, and give their services gratuitously to the good of Humanity!

Diplomas, and Charters are objected to, and chiefly the “admission fee.” The latter is a “taxation,” and therefore “*inconsistent* with the principle of Brotherhood”. . . . A “forced gift is *unbrotherly*,” *etc., etc.*

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It would be curious to see where the T.S. would be led to, were the P't. F. to religiously follow the proffered advices. “Initiation” on admission, has been made away with already in Europe, and has *led to that* which will very soon become known; no use mentioning it at present. Now the “Charters” and Diplomas would follow. Hence no document to show for any group, and no diploma to prove that one is affiliated to the Society. Hence also perfect liberty to anyone to either call himself a theosophist, or deny he is one. The “admission fee”? Indeed, it has to be regarded as a terrible and *unbrotherly* “extortion,” and a “forced gift,” in the face of those thousands of Masonic Lodges, of Clubs, Associations, Societies, Leagues, and even the “Salvation Army.” The former, extort yearly *fortunes* from their Members; the latter — throttle in the name of Jesus the masses and appealing to *voluntary* contributions make the converts pay, and pay in their turn every one of their “officers,” none of whom will serve the “Army” for nothing.

Yet it would be well, perchance, were our members to follow the example of the Masons in their solidarity of thought and action and at least *outward* Union, notwithstanding that receiving a thousand times more from their members they give them in return still less than we do, whether spiritually or morally. This solitary single guinea expected from every new member is spent in less than one week, as was calculated, on postage and correspondence with theosophists. Or are we to understand that all correspondence with members — now left to “*self-culture*” — is also to cease and has to follow diplomas, Charters and the rest? Then, truly, the Head Quarters and Office had better be closed. A simple *Query* — however: Have the £ — the yearly contribution to the L.L. of the T.S., and the further sum of 2/6d. to the Oriental Group been abolished as “acts

of unbrotherly extortion,” and how long, if so, have they begun to be regarded as “a *sale* of Brotherhood”?

To continue: the charges wind up with the following remarks, so profound, that it requires a deeper head than ours to fathom all that underlies the words contained in them. “Is the T.S. a Brotherhood, or not?” queries the plaintiff— “If the former, is it possible to have any *centre of arbitrary power*?<sup>9</sup> To hold that there is

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<sup>9</sup>It is the *first time* since the T.S. exists that such an accusation of “*arbitrary power*,” is brought forward. Not many will be found of this way of thinking.

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necessity for such a centre is only a roundabout way of saying that no Brotherhood is possible,<sup>10</sup> but in point of fact *that necessity itself is by no means* proved [!]. There have been no doubt Brotherhoods under high Masters. . . .” [there “have been” and *still are*. H.P.B.] “but in such cases the Masters were never elected for *geographical* or other considerations [?]. The natural leader of men was always recognised by his embodying the spirit of Humanity. To institute comparisons would be little short of blasphemy. The greatest among men is always the readiest to serve and yet is unconscious of the service. Let us pause before finally tying the millstone of worldliness around the neck of Theosophy. Let us not forget that Theosophy does not grow in our midst *by force and control* but by *sunshine of brotherliness* and the *dew of self-oblivion*. If we do not believe in Brotherhood and Truth let us put ashes on our head and *weep in sack-cloth* and not rejoice in the purple of authority and in the festive garments of pride and worldliness. It is by far better that the name of Theosophy should never be heard, than that it should be used as the Motto of a *papal authority*.” . . .

Who, upon reading this, and being ignorant that the above piece of rhetorical flowers of speech is directed against the luckless Pres’t Founder—would not have in his “mind’s eye”—an Alexander Borgia, a Caligula, or to say the least—General Booth in his latest metamorphosis! When, how, or by doing what, has our good-natured, unselfish, ever kind President merited such a Ciceronian tirade? The state of things denounced exists now for almost twelve years, and

our accuser knew of it and even took an active part in its organisation, Conventions, Councils, Rules, etc., etc., at Bombay, and at Adyar. This virulent *sortie* is no doubt due to "self-culture"? The critic has outgrown the Movement and turned his face from the original programme; hence his severity. But where is the *true theosophical charity*, the tolerance and the "*sunshine of brotherliness*" just spoken of, and so insisted upon?

Verily—it is easy to preach the "dew of self-oblivion" when one has nothing to think about except to evolve such finely rounded phrases; were every theosophist at Adyar to have his daily wants and even comforts, his board, lodging and all, attended to by a wealthier theosophist; and were the same "sunshine of brotherliness"

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<sup>10</sup>No need taking a *roundabout* way. to say that no Brotherhood would ever be possible if many theosophists shared the very original views of the writer.

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to be poured upon him, as it is upon the critic who found for himself an endless brotherly care, a fraternal and self-sacrificing devotion in two other noble-minded members, then—would there be little need for the President Founder to call upon and humble himself before our theosophists. For, if he has to *beg* for 2 annual shillings—it is, in order that those—Europeans and Hindus—who work night and day at Adyar, giving their services free and receiving little thanks or honour for it, should have at least *one meal a day*. The fresh "dew of self-oblivion" must not be permitted to chill one's heart, and turn into the lethal *mold of forgetfulness* to such an extent as that. The severe critic seems to have lost sight of the fact that for months, during the last crisis, the whole staff of our devoted Adyar officers, from President down to the youngest brother in the office, have lived on 5d. a day each, having reduced their meals to the *minimum*. And it is *this mite*, the proceeds of the "2 shill, contribution," conscientiously paid by some, that is now called *extortion*, a desire to live "in the purple of authority and the festive garments of pride and worldliness"!

Our "Brother" is right. Let us "weep in sack cloth and ashes on our head" if the T.S. has many more such *unbrotherly* criticisms to bear. Truly "it would be far better that the name of Theosophy should never be heard than that it should be used as a motto"—not of *papal authority* which exists nowhere at Adyar



outside the critic's imagination—but as a motto of a “self-developed fanaticism.” All the great services otherwise rendered to the Society, all the noble work done by the complainant will pale and vanish before such an appearance of cold-heartedness. Surely he cannot desire the *annihilation* of the Society? And if he did it would be useless: the T.S. *cannot be destroyed as a body*. It is not in the power of either Founders or their critics; and neither friend nor enemy can ruin that which is *doomed to exist*, all the blunders of its leaders notwithstanding. That which was generated through and founded by the “High Masters” and under their authority if not their instruction—must and will live. Each of us and all will receive his or her *Karma* in it, but the *vehicle* of Theosophy will stand indestructible and undestroyed by the hand of whether man or fiend.

No; “truth does not depend on show of hands”; but in the case of the much abused President-Founder it must depend on the show of *facts*. Thorny and full of pitfalls was the steep path he had to

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climb up alone and unaided for the first years. Terrible was the opposition outside the Society he had to build—sickening and disheartening the treachery he often encountered within the Head Quarters. Enemies gnashing their teeth in his face around, those whom he regarded as his staunchest friends and co-workers betraying him and the Cause on the slightest provocation. Still, where hundreds in his place would have collapsed and given up the whole undertaking in despair, he, unmoved and unmovable, went on climbing up and toiling as before, unrelenting and undismayed, supported by that one thought and conviction that he was doing his duty. What other inducement has the Founder ever had, but his theosophical pledge and the sense of his duty toward those he had promised to serve to the end of his life? There was but one beacon for him—the hand that had first pointed to him his way up: the hand of the Master he loves and reveres so well, and serves so devotedly though occasionally, perhaps, unwisely. As President elected for life, he has nevertheless offered more than once to resign in favour of any one found worthier than him, but was never permitted to do so by the majority—not of “show of hands” but *show of hearts*, literally—as few are more beloved than he is even by most of those, who may criticize occasionally his actions. And this is

only natural: for, cleverer in administrative capacities, more learned in philosophy, subtler in casuistry, in metaphysics or daily life policy, there may be many around him; but the whole globe may be searched through and through and no one found stauncher to his friends, truer to his word, or more devoted to real, practical theosophy—than the President-Founder; and these are the chief requisites in a leader of such a movement—one that aims to become a Brotherhood of men. The Society needs no Loyolas; it has to shun anything approaching casuistry; nor ought we to tolerate too subtle casuists. There, where every individual has to work out his own Karma, the judgment of a casuist who takes upon himself the duty of pronouncing upon the state of a brother's soul, or of guiding his conscience, is of no use, and may become positively injurious. The Founder claims no more rights than everyone else in the Society: the *right of private judgment*, which, whenever it is found to disagree with Branches or individuals is quietly set aside and *ignored*—as shown by the complainants themselves.

This, then, is the sole crime of the would-be culprit, and no worse than this can be laid at his door. And yet what is the reward

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of that kind man? He, who has never refused a service, outside what he considers his official duties—to any living being; he who has redeemed dozens of men, young and old, from dissipated, often immoral lives and saved others from terrible scrapes by giving them a safe refuge in the Society; he, who has placed others again, on the pinnacle of Saintship *through their status in that Society*, when otherwise they would have indeed found themselves now in the meshes of “worldliness” and perhaps worse;—he, that true friend of every theosophist, and verily “the readiest to serve and as unconscious of the service”—he is now taken to task for what? —for insignificant blunders, for useless “special orders,” a *childish*, rather than untheosophical love of display, out of pure devotion to his Society.

Is, then, *human nature* to be viewed so uncharitably by us, as to call *untheosophical*, worldly and sinful the natural impulse of a mother to dress up her child and parade it to the best advantages? The comparison may be laughed at, but if it is, it will be only by him who would, like the fanatical Christian of old, or the naked, dishevelled Yogi of India—have no more charity

for the smallest human weakness. Yet, the simile is quite correct, since the Society is the child, the beloved creation of the Founder; he may be well forgiven for this too exaggerated love for that for which he has suffered and toiled more than all other theosophists put together. He is called "worldly," "ambitious of power" and *untheosophical* for it. Very well; let then any impartial judge compare the life of the Founder with those of most of his critics, and see which was *the most theosophical*, ever since the Society sprang into existence. If no better results have been achieved, it is not the President who ought to be taken to task for it, but the Members themselves, as he has been ever trying to promote its growth, and the majority of the "Fellows" have either done nothing, or created obstacles in the way of its progress through sins of omission as of commission. Better unwise *activity*, than an overdose of too wise *inactivity*, apathy or indifference which are always the death of an undertaking.

Nevertheless, it is the members who now seek to sit in Solomon's seat; and they tell us that the Society is useless, its President positively mischievous, and that the Head-Quarters ought to be done away with, as "the organisation called Theosophical *presents many features seriously obstructive to the progress of Theosophy.*"

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Trees, however, have to be judged by their fruits. It was just shown that no "special orders" issuing from the "Centre of Power" called Adyar, could affect in any way whatever either Branch or individual; and therefore any theosophist bent on "self culture," "self-involution" or any kind of *selfness*, is at liberty to do so; and if, instead of using his rights he will apply his brain-power to criticize other people's actions then it is he who becomes the *obstructionist* and not at all the "Organisation called Theosophical." For, if theosophy is anywhere practised on this globe, it is at Adyar, at the Head-Quarters. Let "those interested in the progress of true theosophy" appealed to by the writers look around them and judge. See the Branch Societies and compare them with the group that works in that "Centre of Power." Admire the "progress of theosophy" at Paris, London and even America. Behold, in the great "Brotherhood," a true *Pandemonium* of which the Spirit of Strife and Hatred himself might be proud! Everywhere—quarreling, fighting for supremacy;

backbiting, slandering, scandal-mongering for the last two years; a veritable battlefield, on which several members have so disgraced themselves and their Society by trying to disgrace others, that they have actually become more like hyenas than human beings by digging into the graves of the Past, in the hopes of bringing forward old forgotten slanders and scandals!

At Adyar alone, at the Head-Quarters of the Theosophical Society, the Theosophists are that which they ought to be everywhere else: *true theosophists* and not merely *philosophers* and Sophists. In that *centre* alone are now grouped together the few solitary, practically working Members, who labour and toil, quietly and uninterruptedly, while those Brothers for whose sake they are working, sit in the *dolce far niente* of the West and criticize them. Is this “true theosophical and brotherly work,” to advise to put down and disestablish the only “centre” where real brotherly, humanitarian work is being accomplished?

“Theosophy first, and organisation after.” Golden words, these. But where would Theosophy be heard of now, had not its Society been organised before its spirit and a desire for it had permeated the whole world? And would Vedanta and other Hindu philosophies have been ever taught and studied in England outside the walls of Oxford and Cambridge, had it not been for that organization that fished them like forgotten pearls out of the Ocean of Oblivion and Ignorance and brought them forward before the profane world? Nay, kind Brothers and critics, would the Hindu exponents

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of that sublime philosophy themselves have ever been known outside the walls of Calcutta, had not the Founders, obedient to the Orders received, forced the remarkable learning and philosophy of those exponents upon the recognition of the two most civilized and cultured centres of Europe—London and Paris?

Verily it is easier *to destroy* than to build. The words “untheosophical” and “unbrotherly” are ever ringing in our ears; yet, truly theosophical acts and words are not to be found in too unreasonable a super-abundance among those who use the reproof the oftener. However insignificant, and however *limited the line* of good deeds, the latter will have always more weight than empty and vainglorious talk, and will be *theosophy*, whereas theories without any practical

realisation are at best philosophy. Theosophy is an all-embracing Science; many are the ways leading to it, as numerous in fact as its definitions, which began by the sublime, during the day of Ammonius Saccas, and ended by the ridiculous—in Webster's Dictionary. There is no reason why our critics should claim the right for themselves alone to *know* what is theosophy and to define it. There were theosophists and Theosophical Schools for the last 2,000 years, from Plato down to the mediæval Alchemists, who knew the value of the term, it may be supposed. Therefore, when we are told that "The question is not whether the T.S. *is doing good*, but whether it is doing *that kind of good which is entitled to the name of Theosophy*"—we turn round and ask: "And who is to be the judge in this mooted question?" We have heard of one of the greatest Theosophists who ever lived, who assured his audience that whosoever *gave a cup of cold water to a little one* in his [Theosophy's] name, would have a greater reward than all the learned Scribes and Pharisees. "Woe to the world because of offences!"

Belief in the Masters was never made an article of faith in the T.S. But for its Founders, the commands received from Them when it was established have ever been sacred. And this is what one of them wrote in a letter preserved to this day:

"Theosophy must not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical Ethics epitomized in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy must be made practical, and has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless discussion. . . . It has to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated with its spirit—the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity

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and love. Its followers have to set the example of a firmly outlined and as firmly applied morality before they get the right to point out, even in a spirit of kindness, the absence of a like ethic Unity and singleness of purpose in other associations and individuals. As said before—no Theosophist should blame a brother whether within or outside of the association, throw a slur upon his actions or denounce him<sup>11</sup> lest he should himself lose the right of being considered a theosophist. Ever turn away your gaze from the imperfections of your neighbor and centre rather your attention upon your own shortcomings

in order to correct them and become wiser. . . . Show not the disparity between claim and action in another man but—whether he be brother or neighbour—rather help him in his arduous walk in life. . . .

“The problem of true theosophy and its great mission is the working out of clear, unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties which would satisfy most and best the altruistic and right feelings in us; and the modeling of these conceptions for their adaptation into such forms of daily life where they may be applied with most equitableness. . . . Such is the common work in view for all who are willing to act on these principles. It is a laborious task and will require strenuous and persevering exertion, but it must lead you insensibly to progress and leave no room for any selfish aspirations outside the limits traced. . . . Do not indulge in unbrotherly comparisons between the task accomplished by yourself and the work left undone by your neighbor or brother, in the field of Theosophy, *as none is held to weed out a larger plot of ground than his strength and capacity will permit him.* . . . Do not be too severe on the merits or demerits of one who seeks admission among your ranks, as the truth about the actual state of the inner man can only be known to, and dealt with justly by Karma alone. Even the simple presence amidst you of a well-intentioned and sympathizing individual may help you magnetically. . . . You are the Free-workers in the Domain of Truth, and as such, must leave no obstructions on the paths leading to it.” . . . [The letter closes with the following lines which have now become quite plain, as they give the key to the whole situation] . . . *“The degrees of success or failure are the landmark we shall have to follow, as they will constitute the barriers placed with your own hands between yourselves and those whom you have asked to be your teachers. The*

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<sup>11</sup> It is in consequence of this letter that Art. XII was adopted in *Rules* and a fear of lacking the charity prescribed, that led so often to neglect its enforcement.

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nearer your approach to the goal contemplated—the shorter the distance between the student and the Master.” . . .

A complete answer is thus found in the above lines to the paper framed by the two Theosophists. Those who are now inclined to repudiate the Hand that

traced it and feel ready to turn their backs upon the whole Past and the original programme of the T.S. are at liberty to do so. The Theosophical body is neither a Church or a Sect and every individual opinion is entitled to a hearing. A Theosophist may progress and develop, and his views may outgrow those of the Founders, grow larger and broader in every direction, without for all that abandoning the fundamental soil upon which they were born and nurtured. It is only he who changes diametrically his opinions from one day to another and shifts his devotional views from white to black—who can be hardly trusted in his remarks and actions. But surely, this can never be the case of the two Theosophists who have now been answered. . . . Meanwhile, peace and fraternal good will to all.

H. P. Blavatsky

Corres. Sec'ty, T.S.

*Ostende*, Oct. 3rd, 1886

*Theosophist*, June, 1924

## THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY: ITS MISSION AND ITS FUTURE

[AS EXPLAINED BY M. EMILE BURNOUF, THE FRENCH ORIENTALIST]

By H. P. Blavatsky

It is another's fault if he be ungrateful; but it is mine if I do not give. To find one thankful man I will oblige many who are not. —Seneca.

. . . . The veil is rent  
Which blinded me! I am as all these men  
Who cry upon their gods and are not heard,  
Or are not heeded—yet there must be aid!  
For them and me and all there must be help!  
Perchance the gods have need of help themselves,  
Being so feeble that when sad lips cry  
They cannot save! I would not let one cry

Whom I could save! . . . .

The Light of Asia.

IT has seldom been the good fortune of the Theosophical Society to meet with such courteous and even sympathetic treatment as it has received at the hands of M. Emile Burnouf, the well-known Sanskritist, in an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (July 15, 1888)—“*Le Bouddhisme en Occident.*”

Such an article proves that the Society has at last taken its rightful place in the thought-life of the XIXth century. It marks the dawn of a new era in its history, and, as such, deserves the most careful consideration of all those who are devoting their energies to its work. M. Burnouf’s position in the world of Eastern scholarship entitles his opinions to respect; while his name, that of one of the first and most justly honoured of Sanskrit scholars (the late M. Eugène Burnouf), renders it more than probable that a man bearing such a name will make no hasty statements and draw no premature conclusions, but that his deductions will be founded on careful and accurate study.

His article is devoted to a triple subject: the origins of three religions or associations, whose fundamental doctrines M. Burnouf

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regards as identical, whose aim is the same, and which are derived from a common source. These are Buddhism, Christianity, and—the Theosophical Society.

As he writes, page 341:

This source which is oriental, was hitherto contested; today it has been fully brought to light by scientific research, notably by the English scientists and the publication of original texts. Amongst these sagacious scrutinizers it is sufficient to name Sayce, Pool, Beal, Rhys-David, Spencer-Hardy, Bunsen. . . . It is a long time, indeed, since they were struck with resemblances, let us say, rather, identical elements, offered by the Christian religions and that of Buddha. . . . During the last century these analogies were explained by a pretended Nestorian influence; but since then the Oriental chronology has been established, and it was shown that Buddha was anterior by several centuries to Nestorius, and even to Jesus



Christ. . . . The problem remained an open one down to the recent day when the paths followed by Buddhism were recognized, and the stages traced on its way to finally reach Jerusalem. . . . And now we see born under our eyes a new association, created for the propagation in the world of the Buddhistic dogmas. It is of this triple subject that we shall treat.

It is on this, to a degree erroneous, conception of the aims and object of the Theosophical Society that M. Burnouf's article, and the remarks and opinions that ensue therefrom, are based. He strikes a false note from the beginning, and proceeds on this line. The T.S. was not created to propagate any dogma of any exoteric, ritualistic church, whether Buddhist, Brahmanical, or Christian. This idea is a wide-spread and general mistake; and that of the eminent Sanskritist is due to a self-evident source which misled him. M. Burnouf has read in the *Lotus*, the journal of the Theosophical Society of Paris, a polemical correspondence between one of the Editors of *Lucifer* and the Abbé Roca. The latter persisting—very unwisely—in connecting theosophy with Papism and the Roman Catholic Church—which, of all the dogmatic world religions, is the one his correspondent loathes the most—the philosophy and ethics of Gautama Buddha, not his later church, whether northern or southern, were therein prominently brought forward. The said Editor is undeniably a Buddhist—*i.e.*, a follower of the esoteric school of the great “Light of Asia,” and so is the President of the Theosophical Society, Colonel H. S. Olcott. But this does not pin the theosophical body as a whole to ecclesiastical Buddhism. The Society was founded to become the Brotherhood of Humanity—a

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centre, philosophical and religious, common to all—not as a propaganda for Buddhism merely. Its first steps were directed toward the same great aim that M. Burnouf ascribes to Buddha Sakyamuni, who “opened his church to all men, without distinction of origin, caste, nation, colour, or sex” (*Vide* Art. I. in the *Rules* of the T.S.), adding “My law is a law of Grace for all.” In the same way the Theosophical Society is open to all, without distinction of “origin, caste, nation, colour, or sex,” and what is more—of creed....

The introductory paragraphs of this article show how truly the author has grasped, with this exception, within the compass of a few lines, the idea that all religions have a common basis and spring from a single root. After devoting a

few pages to Buddhism, the religion and the association of men founded by the Prince of Kapilavastu; to Manicheism, miscalled a “heresy,” and its relation to both Buddhism and Christianity, he winds up his article with—the Theosophical Society. He leads up to the latter by tracing (a) the life of Buddha, too well known to an English speaking public through Sir Edwin Arnold’s magnificent poem to need recapitulation; (b) by showing in a few brief words that Nirvana is *not annihilation*;<sup>1</sup> and (c) that the Greeks, Romans and even the Brahmans regarded the *priest* as the intermediary between men and God, an idea which involves the conception of a *personal God*, distributing his favours according to his own good pleasure—a sovereign of the universe, in short.

The few lines about Nirvana must find place here before the last proposition is discussed. Says the author:

It is not my task here to discuss the nature of Nirvana. I will only say that the idea of annihilation is absolutely foreign to India, that the Buddha’s object was to deliver humanity from the miseries of earth life and its successive reincarnations; that, finally, he passed his long existence in battling against Mâra and his angels, whom he himself called Death and the army of death. The word *Nirvâna* means, it is true, extinction, for instance, that of a lamp blown out but it means also the absence of wind. I think, therefore, that Nirvana is nothing else but that *requies æterna*, that *lux perpetua* which Christians also desire for their dead.

With regard to the conception of the priestly office the author

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<sup>1</sup> The fact that Nirvana does *not* mean *annihilation* was repeatedly asserted in *Isis Unveiled*, where its author discussed its etymological meaning as given by Max Müller and others and showed that the “blowing out of a lamp” does not even imply the idea that Nirvana is the “extinction of consciousness.” (See vol. i, p. 290 and vol. ii, pp. 117, 286, 320, 566, etc.)

shows it entirely absent from Buddhism. Buddha is no God, but a *man* who has reached the supreme degree of wisdom and virtue. “Therefore Buddhist metaphysics conceives the absolute Principle of all things which other religions

call God, in a totally different manner and does not make of it a being separate from the universe.”

The writer then points out that the equality of all men among themselves is one of the fundamental conceptions of Buddhism.

He adds moreover and demonstrates that it was from Buddhism that the Jews derived their doctrine of a *Messiah*.

The Essenes, the Therapeuts and the Gnostics are identified as a result of this fusion of Indian and Semitic thought, and it is shown that, on comparing the lives of Jesus and Buddha, both biographies fall into two parts: the ideal legend and the real facts. Of these the legendary part is identical in both; as indeed must be the case from the theosophical standpoint, since both are based on the Initiatory cycle. Finally this “legendary” part is contrasted with the corresponding features in other religions, notably with the Vedic story of Visvakarman.<sup>2</sup> According to his view, it was only at the council of Nicea that Christianity broke officially with the ecclesiastical Buddhism, though he regards the Nicene Creed as simply the development of the formula: “the Buddha, the Law, the Church” (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha).

The Manicheans were originally *Samans* or Sramanas, Buddhist ascetics whose presence at Rome in the third century is recorded by St. Hippolytus. M. Burnouf explains their dualism as referring to the double nature of man—good and evil—the evil principle being the *Mâra* of Buddhist legend. He shows that the Manicheans derived their doctrines more immediately from Buddhism than did Christianity and consequently a life and death struggle arose between the two, when the Christian Church became a body which claimed to be the sole and exclusive possessor of Truth. This idea is in direct contradiction to the most fundamental conceptions of Buddhism and therefore its professors could not but be bitterly opposed to the Manicheans. It was thus the Jewish spirit of exclusiveness which armed against the Manicheans the secular arm of the Christian states.

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<sup>2</sup> This identity between the *Logoi* of various religions and in particular the identity between the legends of Buddha and Jesus Christ, was again proven years ago in *Isis Unveiled*, and the legend of Visvakarman more recently in the *Lotus* and other Theosophical publications. The whole story is analyzed at length in the *Secret Doctrine*, in some chapters which were written more than two years ago.

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Having thus traced the evolution of Buddhist thought from India to Palestine and Europe, M. Burnouf points out that the Albigenses on the one hand, and the Pauline school (whose influence is traceable in Protestantism) on the other, are the two latest survivals of this influence. He then continues —

Analysis shows us in contemporary society two essential elements: the idea of a *personal God* among believers and, among the philosophers, the almost complete disappearance of charity. The Jewish element has regained the upper hand, and the Buddhistic element in Christianity has been obscured.

Thus one of the most interesting, if not the most unexpected, phenomena of our day is the attempt which is now being made to revive and create in the world a new society, resting on the same foundations as Buddhism. Although only in its beginnings, its growth is so rapid that our readers will be glad to have their attention called to this subject. This society is still in some measure in the condition of a mission, and its spread is accomplished noiselessly and without violence. It has not even a definite name; its members grouping themselves under eastern names, placed as titles to their publications: *Isis*, *Lotus*, *Sphinx*, *Lucifer*. The name common to all which predominates among them for the moment is that of *Theosophical Society*.

After giving a very accurate account of the formation and history of the Society—even to the number of its working branches in India, namely, 135—he then continues:

The society is very young, nevertheless it has already its history. . . . It has neither money nor patrons; it acts solely with its own eventual resources. It contains no worldly element. It flatters no private or public interest. It has set itself a moral ideal of great elevation, it combats vice and

egoism. It tends toward the unification of religions, which it considers as identical in their philosophical origin; but it recognizes the supremacy of truth only. . . .

With these principles, and in the time in which we live, the society could hardly impose on itself more trying conditions of existence. Still it has grown with astonishing rapidity. . .

Having summarized the history of the development of the T.S. and the growth of its organization, the writer asks: "What is the spirit which animates it?" To this he replies by quoting the three objects of the Society, remarking in reference to the second and third of these (the study of literatures, religions and sciences of the Aryan nations and the investigation of latent psychic faculties, &c), that, although these might seem to give the Society a sort of academic colouring, remote from the affairs of actual life, yet in reality

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this is not the case; and he quotes the following passage from the close of the Editorial in Lucifer for November, 1887:

He who does not practice altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or a poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother Theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defense as he would undertake his own—is no Theosophist.—(Lucifer No. 3.)

This declaration [continues M. Burnouf] is not Christian because it takes no account of belief, because it does not proselytise for any communion, and because, in fact, the Christians have usually made use of calumny against their adversaries, for example, the Manicheans, Protestants and Jews.<sup>3</sup> It is even less Mussulman or Brahminical. It is purely Buddhistic: the practical publications of the Society are either translations of Buddhist books, or original works inspired by the teaching of Buddha. Therefore the Society has a Buddhist character.

Against this it protests a little, fearing to take on an exclusive and sectarian character. It is mistaken: the true and original Buddhism is not a sect, it is hardly a religion. It is rather a moral and intellectual reform, which excludes no belief, but adopts none. This is what is done by the Theosophical Society.

We have given our reasons for protesting. We are pinned to no faith.

In stating that the T.S. is “Buddhist,” M. Burnouf is quite right, however, from one point of view. It has a Buddhist colouring simply because that religion, or rather philosophy, approaches more nearly to the Truth (the secret wisdom) than does any other exoteric form of belief. Hence the close connexion between the two. But on the other hand the T.S. is perfectly right in protesting against being mistaken for a merely Buddhist propaganda, for the reasons given by us at the beginning of the present article, and by our critic himself. For although in complete agreement with him as to the *true* nature and character of primitive Buddhism, yet the Buddhism of today is none the less a rather dogmatic religion, split into many and heterogeneous sects. We follow the Buddha alone. Therefore, once it becomes necessary to go behind the actually existing form, and who will deny this necessity in respect to Buddhism?—once this

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<sup>3</sup> And—the author forgets to add—“the Theosophists.” No Society has ever been more ferociously calumniated and persecuted by the *odium theologicum* since the Christian Churches are reduced to use their tongues as their sole weapon—than the Theosophical Association and its Founders.—[ED.]

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is done, is it not infinitely better to go back to the pure and unadulterated source of Buddhism itself, rather than halt at an intermediate stage? Such a half and half reform was tried when Protestantism broke away from the elder Church, and are the results satisfactory?

Such then is the simple and very natural reason why the T.S. does not raise the standard of exoteric Buddhism and proclaim itself a follower of the *Church* of the Lord Buddha. It desires too sincerely to remain with that *unadulterated* “light” to allow itself to be absorbed by its distorted shadow. This is well understood by M. Burnouf, since he expresses as much in the following passage:

From the doctrinal point of creed, Buddhism has no mysteries; Buddha preached in parables; but a parable is a developed simile, and has nothing symbolical in it. The Theosophists have seen very clearly that, in religions, there have always been two teachings; the one very simple in appearance

and full of images or fables which are put forward as realities; this is the public teaching, called exoteric. The other, esoteric or inner, reserved for the more educated and discreet adepts, the initiates of the second degree. There is, finally, a sort of science, which may formerly have been cultivated in the secrecy of the sanctuaries, a science called *hermetism*, which gives the final explanation of the symbols. When this science is applied to various religions, we see that their symbolisms, though in appearance different, yet rest upon the same rock of ideas, and are traceable to one single manner of interpreting nature.

The characteristic feature of Buddhism is precisely the absence of this hermetism, the exiguity of its symbolism, and the fact that it presents to men, in their ordinary language, the truth without a veil. This it is which the Theosophical Society is repeating. . . .

And no better model could the Society follow: but this is not all. It is true that no *mysteries* or esotericism exists in the two chief Buddhist Churches, the Southern and the Northern. Buddhists may well be content with the dead letter of Siddârtha Buddha's teachings, as fortunately no higher or nobler ones in their effects upon the ethics of the masses exist, to this day. But herein lies the great mistake of all the Orientalists. There *is* an esoteric doctrine, a soul-ennobling philosophy, behind the outward body of ecclesiastical Buddhism. The latter, pure, chaste and immaculate as the virgin snow on the ice-capped crests of the Himalayan ranges, is, however, as cold and desolate as they with regard to the *post-mortem* condition of man. This secret system was taught to the *Arhats* alone, generally in the Saptaparna (Mahavansa's *Sattapani*) cave, known to

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Ta-hian as the *Chetu* cave near the Mount Baibhâr (in Pali Web-hâra), in Rajagriha, the ancient capital of Maghada, by the Lord Buddha himself, between the hours of *Dhyana* (or mystic contemplation). It is from this cave—called in the days of Sakyamuni, Saraswati or “Bamboo-cave”—that the Arhats initiated into the Secret Wisdom carried away their learning and knowledge beyond the Himalayan range, wherein the Secret Doctrine is taught to this day. Had not the South Indian invaders of Ceylon “heaped into piles as high as the top of the cocoanut trees” the *ollas* of the Buddhists, and burnt them, as the

Christian conquerors burnt all the secret records of the Gnostics and the Initiates, Orientalists would have the proof of it, and there would have been no need of asserting now this well-known fact.

Having fallen into the common error, M. Burnouf continues:

Many will say: It is a chimerical enterprise; it has no more a future before it than has the New Jerusalem of the Rue Thouin, and no more *raison d'être* than the Salvation Army. This may be so; it is to be observed, however, that these two groups of people are *Biblical Societies*, retaining all the paraphernalia of the expiring religions. The Theosophical Society is the direct opposite; it does away with figures, it neglects or relegates them to the background, putting in the foreground Science, as we understand it today, and the moral reformation, of which our old world stands in such need. What, then, are today the social elements which may be for or against it? I shall state them in all frankness.

In brief, M. Burnouf sees in the public *indifference* the first obstacle in the Society's way. "Indifference born from weariness; weariness of the inability of religions to improve social life, and the ceaseless spectacle of rites and ceremonies which the priest never explains." Men demand today "scientific formulæ stating laws of nature, whether physical or moral. . . ." And this indifference the Society must encounter; "its name, also, adding to its difficulties: for the word *Theosophy* has no meaning for the people, and, at best, a very vague one for the learned." "It seems to imply a personal god," M. Burnouf thinks, adding: "Whoever says personal god, says creation and miracle," and he concludes that "the Society would do better to become frankly Buddhist or to cease to exist."

With this advice of our friendly critic it is rather difficult to agree. He has evidently grasped the lofty ideal of primitive Buddhism, and rightly sees that this ideal is identical with that of the T.S. But he has not yet learned the lesson of its history, nor perceived

that to graft a young and healthy shoot on to a branch which has lost—less than any other, yet much of—its inner vitality, could not but be fatal to the new growth. The very essence of the position taken up by the T.S. is that it asserts



and maintains the truth common to all religions; the truth which is true and undefiled by the concretions of ages of human passions and needs. But though Theosophy means Divine Wisdom, it implies nothing resembling belief in a personal god. It is *not* "the wisdom of God," but *divine* wisdom. The Theosophists of the Alexandrian Neo-Platonic school believed in "gods" and "demons" and in one *impersona* absolute Deity. To continue:

Our contemporary habits of life [says M. Burnouf] are not severe; they tend year by year to grow more gentle, but also more boneless. The moral stamina of the men of today is very feeble; the ideas of good and evil are not, perhaps, obscured, but the *will* to act rightly lacks energy. What men seek above all is pleasure and that somnolent state of existence called comfort. Try to preach the sacrifice of one's possessions and of oneself to men who have entered on this path of selfishness! You will not convert many. Do we not see the doctrine of the "struggle for life" applied to every function of human life? This formula has become for our contemporaries a sort of revelation, whose pontiffs they blindly follow and glorify. One may say to them, but in vain, that one must share one's last morsel of bread with the hungry; they will smile and reply by the formula: "the struggle for life." They will go further: they will say that in advancing a contrary theory, you are yourself struggling for your existence and are not disinterested. How can one escape from this sophism, of which all men are full today? . . .

This doctrine is certainly the worst adversary of Theosophy, for it is the most perfect formula of egoism. It seems to be based on scientific observation, and it sums up the moral tendencies of our day. . . . Those who accept it and invoke justice are in contradiction with themselves; those who practice it and who put God on their side are blasphemers. But those who disregard it and preach charity are considered wanting in intelligence, their kindness of heart leading them into folly. If the T.S. succeeds in refuting this pretended law of the "struggle for life" and in extirpating it from men's minds, it will have done in our day a miracle greater than those of Sakyamuni and of Jesus.

And this miracle the Theosophical Society *will* perform. It will do this, not by disproving the relative existence of the law in question, but by assigning to it

its due place in the harmonious order of the universe; by unveiling its true meaning and nature and by showing that this *pseudo* law is a “pretended” law indeed, as far as the

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human family is concerned, and a fiction of the most dangerous kind. “Self-preservation,” on these lines, is indeed and in truth a sure, if a slow, suicide, for it is a policy of mutual homicide, because men by descending to its practical application among themselves, merge more and more by a retrograde reinvolution into the animal kingdom. This is what the “struggle of life” is in reality, even on the purely materialistic lines of political economy. Once that this axiomatic truth is proved to all men; the same instinct of self-preservation only directed into its true channel will make them turn to *altruism*—as their surest policy of salvation.

It is just because the real founders of the Society have ever recognized the wisdom of truth embodied in one of the concluding paragraphs of M. Burnouf’s excellent article, that they have provided against that terrible emergency in their fundamental teachings. The “struggle for existence” applies only to the physical, never to the moral plane of being. Therefore when the author warns us in these awfully truthful words: “Universal charity will appear out of date; the rich will keep their wealth and will go on accumulating more; the poor will become impoverished in proportion, until the day when, propelled by hunger, they will demand bread, not of theosophy but of revolution. Theosophy shall be swept away by the hurricane. . . .”

The Theosophical Society replies: “*It surely will, were we to follow out his well-meaning advice, yet one which is concerned but with the lower plane.*” It is not the policy of self-preservation, not the welfare of one or another personality in its finite and physical form that will or can ever secure the desired object and screen the Society from the effects of the social “hurricane” to come; but only the weakening of the feeling of separateness in the units which compose its chief element. And such a weakening can only be achieved by a process of *inner enlightenment*. It is not violence that can ever insure bread and comfort for all; nor is the kingdom of peace and love, of mutual help and charity and “food for all,” to be conquered by a cold, reasoning, diplomatic policy. It is only by the close brotherly union of men’s inner selves, of soul-solidarity, of the growth

and development of that feeling which makes one suffer when one thinks of the suffering of others, that the reign of Justice and equality for all can ever be inaugurated. This is the first of the three fundamental objects for which the Theosophical Society was established, and called the "Universal Brotherhood of Man," with-out distinction of *race, colour or creed*.

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When men will begin to realize that it is precisely that ferocious personal selfishness, the chief motor in the "struggle for life," that lies at the very bottom and is the one sole cause of human starvation; that it is that other—national egoism and vanity which stirs up the States and rich individuals to bury enormous capitals in the unproductive erecting of gorgeous churches and temples and the support of a swarm of social drones called Cardinals and Bishops, the true parasites on the bodies of their subordinates and their flocks—that they will try to remedy this universal evil by a healthy change of policy. And this salutary revolution can be *peacefully* accomplished only by the Theosophical Society and its teachings.

This is little understood by M. Burnouf, it seems, since while striking the true key-note of the situation elsewhere he ends by saying:

The Society will find allies, if it knows how to take its place in the civilized world today. Since it will have against it all the positive cults, with the exception perhaps of a few dissenters and bold priests, the only other course open to it is to place itself in accord with the men of science. If its dogma of charity is a complementary doctrine which it furnishes to science, the society will be obliged to establish it on scientific data, under pain of remaining in the regions of sentimentality. The oft-repeated formula of the struggle for life is true, but not universal; it is true for the plants; it is less true for the animals in proportion as we climb the steps of the ladder, for the law of sacrifice is seen to appear and to grow in importance; in man, these two laws counter-balance one another, and the law of sacrifice, which is that of charity, tends to assume the upper hand, through the empire of the reason. It is reason which, in our societies, is the source of right, of justice, and of charity; through it we escape the inevitableness of the struggle for life, moral slavery, egoism and

barbarism, in one word, that we escape from what Sakya-muni poetically called the power and the army of Mâra.

And yet our critic does not seem satisfied with this state of things but advises us by adding as follows:

If the Theosophical Society [he says] enters into this order of ideas and knows how to make them its fulcrum, it will quit the limbus of inchoate thought and will find its place in the modern world; remaining none the less faithful to its Indian origin and to its principles. It may find allies; for if men are weary of the symbolical cults, unintelligible to their own teachers, yet men of heart (and they are many) are weary also and terrified at the egoism and the corruption, which tend to engulf our civilization

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and to replace it by a learned barbarism. Pure Buddhism possesses all the breadth that can be claimed from a doctrine at once religious and scientific. Its tolerance is the cause why it can excite the jealousy of none. At bottom, it is but the proclamation of the supremacy of reason and of its empire over the animal instincts, of which it is the regulator and the restrainer. Finally it has itself summed up its character in two words which admirably formulate the law of humanity, science and virtue.

And this formula the society has expanded by adopting that still more admirable axiom: *"There is no religion higher than truth."*

At this juncture we shall take leave of our learned, and perhaps, too kind critic, to address a few words to Theosophists in general.

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Has our Society, as a whole, deserved the flattering words and notice bestowed upon it by M. Burnouf? How many of its individual members, how many of its branches, have carried out the precepts contained in the noble words of a Master of Wisdom, as quoted by our author from No. 3 of Lucifer? "He who does not practice" this and the other *"is no Theosophist,"* says the quotation. Nevertheless, those who have never shared even their superfluous—let alone their last morsel—with the poor; those who

continue to make a difference in their hearts between a coloured and a white brother; as all those to whom malicious remarks against their neighbours, uncharitable gossip and even slander under the slightest provocation, are like heavenly dew on their parched lips—call and regard themselves as *Theosophists!*

It is certainly not the fault of the minority of *true* Theosophists, who do try to follow the *path* and who make desperate efforts to reach it, if the majority of their fellow members do not. It is not to them therefore that this is addressed, but to those who, in their fierce love of Self and their vanity, instead of trying to carry out the original programme to the best of their ability, sow broadcast among the members the seeds of dissension; to those whose personal vanity, discontentment and love of power, often ending in ostentation, give the lie to the original programme and to the Society's motto.

Indeed, these original aims of the First Section of the Theosophical Society under whose advice and guidance the second and third merged into one were first founded, can never be too often recalled to the minds of our members.<sup>4</sup> The Spirit of these aims is

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<sup>4</sup> *Vide* Rules in the 1st vol. of the "Theosophist," pp. 179 and 180.

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clearly embodied in a letter from one of the Masters quoted in the "Occult World," on pages 71 and 73. Those Theosophists then,—who in the course of time and events would, or have, departed from those original aims, and instead of complying with them have suggested new policies of administration from the depths of their inner consciousness, *are not true to their pledges.*

"But we have always worked on the lines originally traced to us" —some of them proudly assert.

"You have not" comes the reply from those who know more of the true Founders of the T.S. *behind the scenes* than they do—or ever will if they go on working in this mood of Self-illusion and self-sufficiency.

What are the lines traced by the “Masters”? Listen to the authentic words written by one of them in 1880 to the author of the “Occult World”: “. . . To our minds these motives sincere and worthy of every serious consideration *from the worldly standpoint, appear selfish. . . .* They are selfish, because you must be aware that the chief object of the Theosophical Society is *not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow men . . .* and in our view the highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness, if, in the mind of the philanthropist, there lurks the shadow of a desire *for self-benefit, or a tendency to do injustice even there where these exist unconsciously to himself.* Yet, you have ever discussed, but to put down, the idea of a Universal Brotherhood, questioned its usefulness, and advised to remodel the Theosophical Society on the principle of a college for the special study of occultism. . . .” —(*Occult World*, p. 72.)

But another letter was written, also in 1880, which is not only a direct reproof to the Theosophists who neglect the main idea of Brotherhood, but also an anticipated answer to M. Emile Burnouf’s chief argument. Here are a few extracts from it. It was addressed again to those who sought to make away with the “sentimental title,” and make of the Society but an arena for “cup-growing and astral bell-ringing”:

“. . . In view of the ever-increasing triumph and, at the same time, misuse of free thought and liberty, how is the combative natural instinct of man to be restrained from inflicting hitherto unheard-of cruelties, enormities, tyranny, injustice, if not through the soothing influence of a Brotherhood, and of the practical application of Buddha’s esoteric doctrines? . . . Buddhism is the surest  
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path to lead men towards the one esoteric truth. As we find the world now, whether Christian, Mussulman, or Pagan, justice is disregarded and honour and mercy both flung to the winds. In a word, how, since that the main objects of the Theosophical Society are misinterpreted by those who are most willing to serve us personally, are we to deal with the rest of mankind, with that curse known as ‘the struggle for life,’ which is the real and most prolific parent of most woes and sorrows, and all crimes? Why has that struggle become the almost universal scheme of the universe? We answer: because no religion, with the exception of Buddhism, has hitherto taught a practical contempt for this

earthly life, while each of them, always with that one solitary exception, has through its hells and damnations inculcated the greatest dread of death. Therefore do we find that 'struggle for life' raging most fiercely in Christian countries, most prevalent in Europe and America. It weakens in pagan lands, and is nearly unknown among Buddhist populations. . . . Teach the people to see that life on this earth, even the happiest, is but a burden and an illusion, that it is but our own Karma, the cause producing the effect, that is our own judge, our saviour in future lives—and the great struggle for life will soon lose its intensity. . . . The world in general and Christendom especially left for two thousand years to the regime of a personal God, as well as its political and social systems based on that idea, has now proved a failure. If Theosophists say: 'We have nothing to do with all this, the lower classes and inferior races [those of India for instance, in the conception of the British] cannot concern us and must manage as they can,' what becomes of our fine professions of benevolence, reform, etc.? Are these professions a mockery? and, if a mockery, can ours be the true path? . . . Should we devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans, fed on the fat of the land, many of them loaded with the gifts of blind fortune, the rationale of bell-ringing, cup-growing, spiritual telephone, etc., etc., and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, of the poor and the despised, the lowly and the oppressed, to take care of themselves, and of their hereafter, the best they know how? Never! Perish rather the Theosophical Society . . . than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic and a hall of Occultism. That we, the devoted followers of the spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy and divine kindness as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha,

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should ever allow the Theosophical Society to represent the embodiment of selfishness, to become the refuge of the few with no thought in them for the many, is a strange idea. . . . And it is we, the humble disciples of the perfect Lamas, who are expected to permit the Theosophical Society to drop its noblest title, that of the Brotherhood of Humanity, to become a simple school of Psychology. No! No! our brothers, you have been labouring under the mistake too long already. Let us understand each other. He who does not feel competent enough to grasp the noble idea sufficiently to work for it, need not undertake a task too heavy for him. . . .

“To be true, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem. That the world is in such a bad condition morally is a conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies —those of the civilized races less than any other—have ever possessed the Truth. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles, right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism, are as impossible to them now as they were 1880 years ago. They are as far from the solution as they ever were, but. . . .

“To these there must be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines will show their competence to offer it, then the world will be the first one to confess, that ours must be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives truth and nothing but the Truth. . . .”

And this Truth is not Buddhism, but esoteric Buddhism. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. . . .”

*Lucifer*, August, 1888

### A SOCIETY WITHOUT A DOGMA

TIMES have greatly changed since the winter of 1875-6, when the establishment of the Theosophical Society caused the grand army of American Spiritualists to wave banners, clang steel, and set up a great shouting. How well we all remember the putting forth of “Danger Signals,” the oracular warnings and denunciations of numberless mediums! How fresh in memory the threats of “angel-friends” to Dr. Gardiner, of Boston, that they would kill Colonel Olcott if he dared call them “Elementaries” in the lectures he was about delivering! The worst of the storm has passed. The hail of imprecations no longer batters around our devoted heads; it is raining now, and we can almost see the rainbow of promised peace spanning the sky.

Beyond doubt, much of this subsidence of the disturbed elements is due to our armed neutrality. But still I judge that the gradual spread of a desire to learn something more as to the cause of the phenomena must be taken into account.



And yet the time has not quite come when the lion (Spiritualism) and the lamb (Theosophy) are ready to be down together—unless the lamb is willing to lie inside the lion. While we held our tongues we were asked to speak, and when we spoke—or rather our President spoke—the hue and cry was raised once more. Though the pop-gun fusillade and the dropping shots of musketry have mostly ceased, the defiles of your spiritual Balkans are defended by your heaviest Krupp guns. If the fire were directed only against Colonel Olcott there would be no occasion for me to bring up the reserves. But fragments from both of the bombs which your able gunner and our mutual friend, “M. A. Oxon,” has exploded, in his two letters of January 4th and 11th, have given me contusions. Under the velvet paw of his rhetoric I have felt the scratch of challenge.

At the very beginning of what must be a long struggle, it is imperatively demanded that the Theosophical position shall be unequivocally defined. In the last of the above two communications, it is stated that Colonel Olcott transmits “the teaching of the learned author of *Isis Unveiled*” —the “master key to all problems.” (?)

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Who has ever claimed that the book was that, or anything like it? Not the author, certainly. The title? A misnomer for which the publisher is unpremeditatedly responsible, and, if I am not mistaken, “M. A. Oxon” knows it. My title was *The Veil of Isis*, and that headline runs through the entire first volume. Not until that volume was stereotyped did anyone recollect that a book of the same name was before the public. Then, as a *dernière ressource*, the publisher selected the present title.

“If he [Olcott] be not the rose, at any rate he has lived near it,” says your learned correspondent. Had I seen this sentence apart from the context, I would never have imagined that the unattractive old party, superficially known as H. P. Blavatsky, was designated under this poetical Persian simile. If he had compared me to a bramble-bush, I might have complimented him upon his artistic realism. He says:

Colonel Olcott of himself would command attention; he commands it still more on account of the store of knowledge to which he has had access.

True, he has had such access, but by no means is it confined to my humble self. Though I may have taught him a few of the things that I had learned in other countries (and corroborated the theory in every case by practical illustration), yet a far abler teacher than I could not in three brief years have given him more than the alphabet of what there is to learn, before a man can become wise in spiritual and psycho-physiological things. The very limitations of modern languages prevent any rapid communication of ideas about Eastern Philosophy. I defy the great Max Müller himself to translate Kapila's Sutras so as to give their real meaning. We have seen what the best European authorities can do with the Hindu metaphysics; and what a mess they have made of it, to be sure! The Colonel corresponds directly with Hindu scholars, and has from them a good deal more than he can get from so clumsy a preceptor as myself.

Our friend, "M. A. Oxon," says that Colonel Olcott "comes forward to enlighten us" — than which scarce anything could be more inaccurate. He neither comes forward, nor pretends to enlighten anyone. The public wanted to know the views of the Theosophists, and our President attempted to give, as succinctly as possible in the limits of a single article, some little glimpse of so much of the truth as he had learned. That the result would not be

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wholly satisfactory was inevitable. Volumes would not suffice to answer all the questions naturally presenting themselves to an enquiring mind; a library of quartos would barely obliterate the prejudices of those who ride at the anchor of centuries of metaphysical and theological misconceptions — perhaps even errors. But, though our President is not guilty of the conceit of "pretending to enlighten" Spiritualists, I think he has certainly thrown out some hints worthy of the thoughtful consideration of the unprejudiced.

I am sorry that "M. A. Oxon" is not content with mere suggestions. Nothing but the whole naked truth will satisfy him. We must "square" our theories with his facts, we must lay our theory down "on exact lines of demonstration." We are asked:

Where are the seers? What are their records? And, far more important, how do they verify them to us?

I answer: Seers are where “Schools of the Prophets” are still extant, and they have their records with them. Though Spiritualists are not able to go in search of them, yet the Philosophy they teach commends itself to logic, and its principles are mathematically demonstrable. If this be not so, let it be shown.

But, in their turn, Theosophists may ask, and do ask: Where are the proofs that the medial phenomena are exclusively attributable to the agency of departed “Spirits”? Who are the “Seers” among mediums blessed with an infallible lucidity? What “tests” are given that admit of no alternative explanation? Though Swedenborg was one of the greatest of Seers, and churches are erected in his name, yet except to his adherents what proof is there that the “Spirits” objective to his vision—including Paul—promenading in hats, were anything but the creatures of his imagination? Are the spiritual potentialities of the living man so well comprehended that mediums can tell when their own agency ceases, and that of outside influence begins? No; but for all answer to our suggestions that the subject is open to debate, “M. A. Oxon” shudderingly charges us with attempting to upset what he designates as “a cardinal dogma of our faith,” *i.e.*, the faith of the Spiritualists.

Dogma? Faith? These are the right and left pillars of every soul-crushing Theology. Theosophists have no dogmas, exact no blind faith. Theosophists are ever ready to abandon every idea that is proved erroneous upon strictly logical deductions; let Spiritualists do the same. Dogmas are the toys that amuse, and can

satisfy, but unreasoning children. They are the offspring of human speculation and prejudiced fancy. In the eye of true Philosophy it seems an insult to common sense, that we should break loose from the idols and dogmas of either Christian or heathen exoteric faith to catch up those of a church of Spiritualism. Spiritualism must either be a true Philosophy, amenable to the test of the recognized criterion of logic, or be set up in its niche beside the broken idols of hundreds of antecedent Christian sects. Realizing, as they do, the boundlessness of the absolute truth, Theosophists repudiate all claim to infallibility. The most cherished preconceptions, the most “pious hope,” the strongest “master passion,” they sweep aside like dust from their path, when their error is pointed out. Their highest hope is to approximate to the truth. That

they have succeeded in going a few steps beyond the Spiritualists, they think proved in their conviction that they know nothing in comparison with what is to be learned; in their sacrifice of every pet theory and prompting of emotionalism at the shrine of fact; and in their absolute and unqualified repudiation of everything that smacks of “dogma.

With great rhetorical elaboration “M. A. Oxon” paints the result of the supersedure of spiritualistic by Theosophic ideas. In brief, he shows Spiritualism a lifeless corpse: A body from which the soul has been wrenched, and for which most men will care nothing. We submit that the reverse is true. Spiritualists wrench the soul from true Spiritualism by their degradation of Spirit. Of the infinite they make the finite; of the divine subjective they make the human and limited objective. Are Theosophists Materialists? Do not their hearts warm with the same “pure and holy love” for their “loved ones” as those of Spiritualists? Have not many of us sought long years “through the gate of mediumship to have access to the world of Spirit” —and vainly sought? The comfort and assurance modern Spiritualism could not give us we found in Theosophy. As a result we believe far more firmly than many Spiritualists—for our belief is based on knowledge—in the communion of our beloved ones with us; but not as materialized Spirits with beating hearts and sweating brows. Holding such views as we do as to logic and fact, you perceive that when a Spiritualist pronounces to us the words dogma and fact, debate is impossible, for there is no common ground upon

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which we can meet. We decline to break our heads against shadows. If fact and logic were given the consideration they should have, there would be no more temples in this world for exoteric worship, whether Christian or heathen, and the *method* of the Theosophists would be welcomed as the only one insuring action and progress — a progress that cannot be arrested, since each advance shows yet greater advances to be made.

As to our producing our “Seers” and “their records” —one word. In *The Spiritualist* of Jan. 11th, I find Dr. Peebles saying that in due time he—will publish such facts about the Dravida Brahmans as I am [he is] permitted. I say

permitted, because some of these occurred under the promise and seal of secrecy.

If even the casual wayfarer is put under an obligation of secrecy before he is shown some of the less important psycho-physiological phenomena, is it not barely possible that the Brotherhood to which some Theosophists belong has also doctrines, records, and phenomena, that cannot be revealed to the profane and the indifferent, without any imputation lying against their reality and authoritativeness? This, at least, I believe, "M. A. Oxon" knows. As we do not offensively obtrude ourselves upon an unwilling public, but only answer under compulsion, we can hardly be denounced as contumacious if we produce to a promiscuous public neither our "Seers" nor "their records." When Mohammed is ready to go to the mountain, it will be found standing in its place.

And that no one who makes this search may suppose that we Theosophists send him to a place where there are no pitfalls for the unwary, I quote from the famous commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita* of our brother Hurrichund Chintamon, the unqualified admission that,

In Hindustan, as in England, there are doctrines for the learned, and dogmas for the unlearned; strong meat for men, and milk for babes; facts for the few, and fictions for the many; realities for the wise, and romances for the simple; esoteric truth for the philosopher, and exoteric fable for the fool.

Like the Philosophy taught by this author in the work in question, the object of the Theosophical Society "is the cleansing of spiritual truth."

—H. P. Blavatsky

New York, Jan. 20th, 1877.

*Spiritualist*, February 8, 1878

## RECENT PROGRESS IN THEOSOPHY

By Madame Blavatsky

WHATEVER else may be thought of theosophy and its movement, time has at least proved that it is not the ephemeron which the American and foreign press called it upon its first appearance. It seems to have come to occupy a permanent place in modern thought, thus vindicating the truth of Sir John Herschel's observation that "the grand, and, indeed, the only, character of truth is its capability of enduring the test of universal experience, and coming unchanged out of every possible form of fair discussion."

Unfortunately, theosophy has never yet had a "fair" chance; but that must come. It has been represented in a most grotesque light, travestied out of all resemblance. With few exceptions, even its friends have shown in their published writings an imperfect grasp of the subject. If it had been discussed upon its merits, apart from the personalities with which the movement has been associated, we cannot doubt that it would have had by this time a much wider vogue than it has. All the signs point that way. The most strenuous efforts of bigots, theological and scientific, and the employment of ridicule, sarcasm, misrepresentations, and denunciations by its opponents, have failed to check the growth of the Theosophical Society or its influence, or even to impede the expansion of the theosophical idea throughout the world. Scarcely the most optimistic among the society's organizers dreamt of such success as has rewarded their labors. The little coterie of thoughtful men and women who met in an Irving-Place parlor one summer evening in the year 1875 builded better than they (with their undeveloped foresight) knew, when they resolved to organize such an association.

We are often asked, "What is the general object of the Theosophical Society? *Cui bono* all this outlay of labor, all that energy expended from its beginning to swim against the strong tide of public prejudice, sectarian hatred, and unpopularity? Of the three

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well-known objects of the society<sup>1</sup> not one but had, and has its teachers and followers in the past as in the present. Your first object, namely, brotherhood of man, lies at the very basis of Christianity; your second is promoted by the Asiatic societies, the national museums, and all the Orientalists; your third may

be allowed to remain in the hands of the men of science, who have already dissected spiritualism and exploded mesmerism, and now, under the lead of the Society of Psychical Research, are disposing of the question of thought-transference, the phantasm of the living, and the Theosophical Society."

We note the exception that the *cuckoo* S.P.R. hatched its first eggs in the nests of theosophy and spiritualism;<sup>2</sup> it evidently has the same relation to the scientific body as to its two foster-mothers, and can enjoy a superior intimacy only as a reward for its treachery to the latter and its sycophancy to materialistic science. In rejoinder to the first two assertions, the Theosophists would ask Christians and Orientalists what they were doing in their respective departments to realize practically our first two objects? Under correction, I must say that it has been all talk and theory. Has the Sermon on the Mount, all its moral beauty notwithstanding, caused so-called Christian nations to treat each other in the ideal Christian spirit, or to offer brotherhood to Asiatic and African nations and tribes, whom they have subdued by force of arms or wiles? And has the philosophical acumen of Professor Max Muller, who has been showing us for thirty years past that the same Aryan blood runs in the brown body of the Indian sepoy as under the blanched skin of the English lord and British grocer, prevented the dominant Anglo-Indian from giving the Queen-Empress's Asiatic subjects cumulative proofs of his supreme disdain?

The Theosophical Society has been called the Royal Asiatic Society *plus* philanthropy; and as the latter body lacks the instinct of brotherliness, and too often shows a disposition to sacrifice truth for theological predilection, its nearly a century of work has shed darkness instead of light upon the Aryan philosophies, religions,

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<sup>1</sup> Brotherhood of man; 2. Study of Oriental philosophies; 3. Investigation of the hidden forces in nature and man. *Vide infra*.

<sup>2</sup> The real originator and founder of the S.P.R. was "M. A. Oxon" (Mr. W. Stainton Moses), now the editor of *Light*. It was he who, being then a member of the T. S., first proposed the formation of a society on the lines of the long-defunct *Dialectical Society* of London, for the investigation of abnormal phenomena. This gentleman must have regretted more than once his idea. The S.P.R., the progeny of spiritualism and theosophy, has proved itself a would-be parricide, though rather an unsuccessful one so far.

and sciences. As to the third object, it must be said of the work of the S.P.R., and the superior labor of the French hypnotists of Paris and Nancy, that these agencies, while accumulating a mass of important facts for future philosophers, have, with a very few honorable exceptions, tried their best to give a false interpretation to those phenomena that they could not dispose of on the theory of fraud. Their obligations have all been offered on the altar of the Moloch of materialism.

Since it is undeniable that this materialistic bias has been rapidly culminating under university influence during the past half-century, it is too evident that the creation of the Theosophical Society at the time when it arose was most timely, and a step toward the defense of *true* science and *true* religion against a sciolism that was becoming more and more arrogant. The experiments of Charcot at the *Salpêtrière* have been so unsatisfactorily explained by the professors of his materialistic school that the appearance of the ancient esoteric philosophy in the arena of Western thought was a vital necessity. The conviction has already dawned upon the minds of some of the cleverest Western experimentalists that the “impassable chasm” and the “unknowable” of Messrs. Tyndall and Spencer can never be bridged or known by anything short of the Aryan esoteric doctrine. The cultured interest and popular curiosity that are shown in every country when a Theosophist or theosophy comes to the fore, and the universal popularity of theosophical and mystical literature, which has enriched many publishers and writers, are indications of the despair and hope of Christendom—despair that science will ever read this puzzle of life; hope that the solution may be found in the secret doctrine.

The theosophical movement was a necessity of the age, and it has spread under its own inherent impulsion, and owes nothing to adventitious methods. From the first it has had neither money, endowment, nor social or governmental patronage to count upon. It appealed to certain human instincts and aspirations, and held a certain lofty ideal of perfectibility, with which the vested extraneous interests of society conflicted, and against which these were foredoomed to battle. Its strongest allies were the human yearnings for light upon the problem of life, and for a nobler conception of the origin, destiny, and potentialities of the human being. While materialism and its congener,



secularism, were bent upon destroying not only theology and sectarian dogmatism, but even the religious conception

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of a diviner Self, theosophy has aimed at uniting all broad religious people for research into the actual basis of religion and scientific proofs of the existence and permanence of the higher Self. Accepting thankfully the results of scientific study and exposure of theological error, and adopting the methods and maxims of science, its advocates try to save from the wreck of cults the precious admixture of truth to be found in each. Discarding the theory of miracle and supernaturalism, they endeavor to trace out the kinship of the whole family of world-faiths to each other, and their common reconciliation with science.

The growing inclination of the public mind toward theosophy seems to mark a reaction from the iconoclastic influence of Colonel Ingersoll's and Mr. Bradlaugh's school. Undoubtedly there are thousands of so-called Free-thinkers who sincerely believe in personal annihilation at the death of the body; but it would seem from the fact of the recent conversion of Mrs. Annie Besant from secularism to theosophy, and the discussions to which it has given rise, that there are also many persons enrolled as followers of the two great leaders above mentioned who are so from ignorance of the views included in the term theosophy. We officers and fellows of the Theosophical Society are, therefore, encouraged to hope that, with the wider dissemination of the facts, we shall see very large accessions to our cause from the secularist ranks. Surely this must be considered a gain by the friends of spirituality as opposed to materialism,—those, at any rate, who think that morals, peace, and prosperity will be promoted by the universal belief in a life after death (whether eternal or broken up by a series of reincarnations on the same earth), and in man's possession of a higher, undying self, latent spiritual powers, and consciousness.

It is the worse for the public, particularly for the religious feelings of the public, that the organs of sectarian bigotry should have succeeded so well by perversion of fact, frenzied calumny, and downright falsehood, in making our cause and the society appear in such a false light during the past fourteen years. Nor are the clerical organs alone in this undignified and useless work; for the weeklies of the Spiritualists in the United States are just as bitter and as untruthful in their ceaseless denunciation of theosophy. The virulence and

vituperations of the intellectual apostles of the “spirit-guides” and “controls” from the “Summer-land” have grown proportionately to the growth of the Theosophical Society. The effects of the

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last convention held by the American Theosophists at Chicago, on April 29 and 30 of the present year [1890],<sup>3</sup> furnish a brilliant example of this blind and ferocious hatred. Such was the decided and unprecedented success of the last gathering that even the leading papers of Chicago and other cities had to admit the fact, finding almost for the first time naught but words of sympathy for the Theosophists.

Alone the organs of disembodied “angels” poured as unsuccessfully as ever their vials of wrath, mockery, and brutal slander upon us. But we heeded them not. Why should we? The utmost malignity and basest treachery have not been able either to controvert our ideas, belittle our objects, disprove the reasonableness of our methods, or fasten upon us a selfish or dishonest motive. And as our declared principles are not merely unobjectionable, but admirably calculated to do good to mankind, these conspirators and calumniators have simply kept a multitude of religiously-inclined persons from enjoying the happiness they would have had by understanding theosophy as it really is, and making it the guiding rule of their conduct.

If justice be the law of nature, and injustice a transitory evil, direful must indeed be the retribution these misguided people have invoked upon their own heads. The suffering we have been made to endure has but served as discipline, and taught us to turn the more loyally toward the esoteric doctrine for comfort and encouragement.

My present theme being the recent progress of our movement, the situation may best be illustrated by reference to statistics. To avoid prolixity we may begin with the year 1884, when the raid upon us was made by the London Society for Psychical Research. From the official report of that year it appears that on the 31st of December, 1884, there were in existence, in all parts of the world, 104 chartered branches of the Theosophical Society. In the year 1885, as an answer to our calumniators, seventeen new charters were issued; in 1886, fifteen; in 1887, twenty-two; in 1888, twenty-one; and up to the 1st of

September, 1889, seventeen. To the 31st of December, 1888, six charters had been rescinded, leaving 173 still valid; and if the new ones of 1889 be added, there would be a gross total of 190 chartered branches, from which have to be deducted

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<sup>3</sup>There are at the present day *thirty-eight* chartered branches of the Theosophical Society in the United States, and the activity on the Pacific Coast in this direction is very remarkable.

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any cancellations reported during the last twelve-month. But we have heard of none. On the contrary, up to June, 1890, we find on our books upward of 200 branches.

In England, a country where theosophy has to work up-hill more than in any other place, three years ago there was but one solitary branch—the “London Lodge” of the Theosophical Society, with about 150 members in it. Since the arrival of the present writer in England, and the establishment of the “Blavatsky Lodge,” in June, 1887 (which has now upward of 300 members and associates), twelve branches of the Theosophical Society have been established in various centers of Great Britain, and the number of members is daily increasing. The growth of our society in this conservative country has been more marvellous in comparison than even in the United States of America. The growth since the raid of 1884 has, therefore, been at the rate of about nineteen new charters per annum, and the final computation of 1889 will show as great an increment. Dividing 104—the sum total up to the close of 1884—by 10, the number of years since the society’s foundation, we get an average annual growth of 10.4 branches; whence it appears that, so far from being crushed out of existence, as the organizers of the raid had fondly hoped might be the result, the Theosophical Society has very largely increased its average rate of expansion, geographically and numerically.

It is useless to remind the American reader of the unrelenting, systematic persecution to which the writer of these lines—and through her, theosophy—is, and has been for years, subjected in the American press, by enemies as persevering as they are base. And if no conspiracy, no attack, could ever seriously shake the society or impede its movement, nothing ever will. We can

only thankfully repeat, slightly paraphrasing it, the Christian adage now so applicable to our movement, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of theosophy." Its society has done too much good work, the good grain is much too evident even in the piles of admitted chaff, not to have built a secure foundation for the temple of truth in the immediate, as in the distant, future.

For, see, the literature of theosophy is growing rapidly. We have seven principal centers of publication—Madras, Bombay, Ceylon (Colombo), Stockholm, London, Paris, and New York. The Stockholm branch, founded hardly a year ago, has far over one hundred members, and our literature in Sweden is spreading rapidly. Little

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Ceylon had twenty-one branches three months ago, and may have more now. Madras is the general headquarters of the society, the official residence of the president and executive staff, and the office of *The Theosophist* there. At Bombay we have a "Theosophical Publication Fund," created and managed by Mr. Tookeram Tatyra, a Hindoo Theosophist, which brings out important works in Sanskrit and English; an enterprise spoken of with great praise by Professor Max Müller in a letter published both in *The Theosophist* and *Lucifer*. In London there is a "Theosophical Publishing Society," which brings out the magazine *Lucifer* (edited by Mrs. Annie Besant and myself) and a series of pamphlets called the "T.P.S.," issued fortnightly, and many new theosophical works.

Following the good example set to us by the Aryan Theosophical Society of New York—the headquarters of the theosophical movement in America—a committee was formed in London last May for the wide distribution through the post of leaflets on theosophical doctrines, each member taking charge of a definite district. During the first months of the establishment of the "tract-mailing scheme" at New York, the Aryan Theosophical Society has distributed over 150,000 papers on theosophy and its doctrines. In Paris another monthly was started a year ago, the *Revue Théosophique*, edited by myself, and managed by the Countess d'Adhémar; and now another theosophical magazine has appeared—*Le Lotus Bleu*—since March, also edited by myself, and managed by Arthur Arnould, a well-known journalist in Paris, and the president of the Theosophical Society in Paris, "l'Hermès." In New York we have *The*

*Path*, whose editor, Mr. W. Q. Judge, publishes also a number of books and pamphlets. The existence of these centres shows undeniably that our movement is constantly on the increase, and that all interested and malicious reports to the contrary are without foundation.

But it is our Adyar Library, founded by the loving labor of our president, Colonel H. S. Olcott, which is the crown and glory of the Theosophical Society. Though only three years old, it has already acquired a large collection of Oriental works of the greatest value,—3,046 volumes—besides over 2,000 works in European languages, and a number of rare palm-leaf manuscripts. In the words of our learned librarian, Pundit N. Bhashyacharya<sup>4</sup>:

“In the department of Buddhistic literature it is richer than any

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<sup>4</sup>Unfortunately just dead.

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library in India, and probably equal to most in Western countries.<sup>5</sup> Prominent among these works are: (1) The generous present of Mrs. Dias Ilangakoon, a Buddhist lady Theosophist, of Matara, Ceylon, a ‘complete set of the Pali version of the *Tripitakas* engraved on palm leaves, and comprising sixty volumes, with nearly 5,000 pages. Twelve stylus-writers were employed during two years in copying the volumes from the unique collection at Merissa,’ — a collection that cost the donor rupees 3,500. (2) The Jodo sect of Japanese Buddhists presented Colonel Olcott ‘with a complete set of the Chinese versions of the *Tripitakas* in 418 volumes, on silk paper.’ . . . Other ‘Japanese sects presenting him with 1,057 volumes’ in all. (3) Twenty-two scroll paintings on silk and paper, . . . among which are two on silk that are said to be over 800 years old, and a MS. 350 years old, written in fine gold ink upon a scroll of some very smooth black paper, 33 feet in length, and mounted on a roller.”<sup>6</sup>

Such are a few of the unique treasures in books and antiquities of the Adyar Library of the T.S., “got together under the greatest difficulties of total lack of pecuniary endowment and public patronage,” and which “has received from no government as yet so much as a single book or one rupee.” And that noble library will survive the founders and all present members of the Theosophical

Society, and go on speaking of the work done when many other things are forgotten.

Having cast a hasty glance at the general aspect of the society as it stands at the present moment, I may be permitted to state very briefly the three broad principles upon which it is building up, and then recapitulate the results actually achieved under each heading.

The three officially-declared objects of our society are:

1. To form the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color.

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<sup>5</sup>For particulars *vide* the learned and interesting article of Pundit N. Bhashyacharya, director of the Oriental Section of the Adyar Library, in *The Theosophist*, August, 1889.

<sup>6</sup>“There is also,” writes the learned Brahmin librarian, “a large picture upon which, painted in vivid colors, . . . are 137 scenes in the life of the founder of the Jodo sect; . . . and an ancient biography of the Adept-Founder of the Yamabusi, or fraternity of phenomena-workers, and a scroll portrait of himself attended by some fire-elementals whom he seems to have subjugated to his trained will. Doctor Bigelow (late of Boston), now of Tokio, kindly gave a photograph of a bronze group representing Kobo-daishi, the Adept-Founder of Shin-zor sect, attended by two little elementals, who are serving him as messengers and domestics.” All of which shows that the theosophical scapegoat, H. P. Blavatsky, has *invented* neither Adept fraternities nor “elementals,” their existence having been known in Japan, China, and India for long centuries.

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2. To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies, and sciences.
3. A third object, pursued by a portion of the fellows of the society, is to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers of man.

Two general objects, one restricted object, of attention. Every one entering the society is supposed to sympathize with the theory of essential brotherhood: a kinship which exists on the plane of the higher self, not on that of the racial, social, and mental dissimilarities and antipathies. These elements of discord pertain to the physical man and are the result of unequal development under the law of evolution. We believe the human body to be but the shell, cover, or

veil of the real entity; and those who accept the esoteric philosophy and the theory of "Karma" (the universal law of ethical causation) believe that the entity, as it travels around certain major and minor cycles of existence with the whole mass of human beings, takes on a different body at birth, and shells it off at death, under the operation of this Karmic law. Yet though it may thus clothe and reclothe itself a thousand times in a series of reincarnations, the entity is unchanged and unchangeable, being of a divine nature, superior to all environments on the earthly plane. It is the physical body only which has racial type, color, sex, hatreds, ambitions, and loves. So then, when we postulate the idea of universal brotherhood, we wish it understood that it is held in no Utopian sense, though we do not dream of realizing it at once on the ordinary plane of social or national relations. Most assuredly, if this view of the kinship of all mankind could gain universal acceptance, the improved sense of moral responsibility it would engender would cause most social evils and international asperities to disappear; for a true altruism, instead of the present egoism, would be the rule the world over. So we have written down as the first of our declared objects this altruistic asseveration, and have been working practically to bring about a beginning of the better law.

The second of our declared objects speaks so plainly for itself that I need not dwell upon it, save in the most casual way. The founders of the Theosophical Society thought they had the best reason to believe that there existed, locked up in the ancient literatures of India, Ceylon, Tibet, China, Japan, and other Eastern countries, a very large body of truth which would be most important and valuable to the present generation, if it could be got at. The

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best agents to employ in this work were the Oriental scholars who knew the ancient languages, especially those—if any could be found—who had learned the concealed meaning of the names, figures, and expressions with which Asiatic writings teem, and which are the despair of our Western Orientalists. These savants are priests of various religions and pandits, or professors, in a number of philosophical Eastern schools of thought. They had never before worked together in the interest of the whole family of mankind, so antagonistic are their personal views and so mutually contradictory their several religions and philosophical books. No scheme of cooperation between them could be

carried out save upon the lines defined in our first declared object—that is to say, upon the theory of the universal relationship of all mankind on the plane of the higher self, and the policy of not meddling with what concerns only the mutual relations of the lower self, the physical man. It shall be shown presently how this part of our scheme has worked.

Observe the third declaration, that only a portion of our fellows occupy themselves with the study of the occult properties of matter and the psychical powers of man. The society as a whole, then, is not concerned in this branch of research. And naturally; for out of every ten thousand people one may meet, the chances are that but a very small minority have the time, taste, or ability to take up such delicate and baffling studies. Those who do are born mystics, and, of course, natural Theosophists; a Theosophist being one who seeks after divine wisdom—*i.e.*, the comprehension of the ultimate causes of force, correlation, and psychic development, the method of solving all life's riddles. Persons of this temperament cannot be bigots; they chafe under the sectarian yoke, and their hearts warm with sympathy for all who suffer, who groan under social burdens resulting from ignorance, for all of any race, creed, or color, who aspire after knowledge. These men are true Theosophists, the brothers of humanity, and, in their complete development, the spiritual exemplars, guides, teachers, benefactors, of our race. We thought it a good thing to proclaim this line of research and self-discovery as the third of our three objects. For those who are interested in it, and all inquirers whom they can reach and encourage, have the mystical philosophical books of the present and former times been written. To the general public these books are caviare.

Taking the three divisions of our objects in order, let us see

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what has actually been accomplished during the fourteen years of the Theosophical Society's existence. The compilation shall be made from official documents and be capable of verification at any time. First, as regards object number one, let it be noticed that we have done things on the broadest possible scale, dealing with nations in the mass as well as with individuals or small groups. Colonel Olcott and I removed from New York to Bombay at the beginning of the year 1878, at which time we had just established relations between Western students of Oriental mysticism, and a few educated Hindus



and Sinhalese. In the East we found division between sects, castes, and races; the ancient religions neglected, and by the educated classes unappreciated; the pride of race, reverence for ancestors, and patriotic spirit almost extinguished. Now the traveller will be struck with the brotherliness which has begun to prevail; the resuscitation of interest in ancestral character, achievements, and literature; and a fervor of patriotism which has culminated in the formation of the Indian National Congress—a political body with which our society has no connection, though it was organized by our fellows, Indian and Anglo-Indian.

Soon after our arrival at Bombay our society began to grow, branches rapidly sprang up, and it became necessary to hold annual conventions of delegates representing the now widely-expanded society. Responsive to the president's call, thirty-odd branches sent as their representatives Hindu, Parsi, Buddhist, Mohammedan, Hebrew, and Christian fellows to the first convention at Bombay. The spectacle was unique in Indian history, and provoked wide journalistic comment. At the public meeting in Framji Cavasji Institute the platform was successively occupied by speakers of the above-named religions, who vied with each other in fervent declarations of mutual tolerance and goodwill, to the accompaniment of tumultuous applause from the audience. Thus the clear note of universal brotherhood was struck and the evangel of religious tolerance declared in a part of the world where previously there had been only sectarian hatred and selfish class egotism.

This was in 1882. Annually since then the convention has met as a parliamentary body to transact the society's business, and not the least sectarian or race discord has occurred. The whole of India became leavened with the benign influence emanating from these meetings, through the agency of the delegates in their respective states and nations; and when the political agitation began, the National

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Congress that was called was modelled upon our lines, and officered and managed mainly by our own fellows who had served as delegates in our conventions.

Besides helping to weave this golden web of brotherhood throughout India, our society has extended its filaments from that centre to Ceylon, Burmah, Siam, and Japan, bringing these peoples into fraternal relations with the Hindus though of a different religion, and creating channels for international intercourse upon religious and educational subjects. In those countries also, we have sown the same seed of goodwill, and in Ceylon we are already reaping the harvest. In that evergreen, paradisaical isle of the sea we have revived and begun to purify Buddhism, established high-schools, taken some fifty minor schools under our supervision, circulated literature in all parts of the island, induced the government to proclaim Buddha's birthday a public holiday, founded two journals, created a printing-office, and brought the Sinhalese Buddhists into direct relations with their Japanese co-religionists.

This is what we have done in India and the far East. As to Europe, as we began to work in earnest here only three years ago, the effects hardly begin to be perceived as yet. Still in London, in the very centre of the most luxurious materialism, we have founded in the East End the first Working-Woman's Club wholly free from theological creeds and conditions. Hitherto all such efforts have been sectarian, and have imposed special religious beliefs: ours is based on *brotherhood* alone, and recognizes no difference in creed as a barrier. When the club opens, a few weeks hence, the members will find themselves in a bright and pleasant home, with books, papers, and music at hand, and a band of their better-educated sisters will take in rotation, night after night, the duty of helping and guiding—not controlling—the evening recreation.

Only those who know the dreary lives of our poor East-End girls, with temptation lurking in every form of amusement within their reach, will understand the brotherly nature of the service thus rendered to them. We (the cultured classes) make outcasts of these less fortunate members of our family, set them in a special part of the town, amid squalid surroundings and coarsening influences; and we then complain that their roughness shocks our refinement, their brutality jars on our delicacy! Here, then, against class division, as in India against caste division, the Theosophical Society proclaims the Brotherhood of Man.

and Japan unqualifiedly give us the credit of having done more in that direction than any other agency of modern times. We have not only helped to revive in India the ancient *Tols*, or pandit-schools of Sanskrit literature and philosophy, and to reawaken reverence for the class of real Yogis, or saintly devotees, but we have created a demand for reprints and translations of ancient Sanskrit classics, which is being met by the frequent issue of works of this class at Calcutta, Bombay, Benares, Lucknow, Lahore, Madras, and other Indian literary centres.

Among the most important are the Vedas, Bhagavad Gita, the writings of Sankara, Patanjali, and other renowned Aryan philosophers and mystics. The Asiatic people have publicly testified most unqualifiedly their gratitude and respect to us for what we have done on the lines of the second of our declared objects. Nor should it be overlooked that the prevalent interest in theosophy and mystical Oriental philosophy in general, which the most casual observer is forced to see throughout Europe and America, is directly or indirectly the result of our society's activity. With thirty-eight branches in the United States, and others in various European countries, among whose members are men and women of high culture, including many writers for the press, it is easy enough to comprehend the justness of the above claim. Of course it is not for me to say how much, if anything, the books I have myself written, and the magazines I have edited and am editing in English and French, have helped to cause this new bent of the Western mind. Suffice it that it exists. For Theosophists it is the presage of the dawn of a new religious day for the world, the harbinger of a new marriage between science and religion, and of peace between the good people of the most incongruous sects—as the world thinks them.

Now as to the third object on our list. Properly speaking, the term “psychical research” should include the whole of the great movement known as modern spiritualism. But the subject is too vast to be dealt with in the closing paragraphs of an article. Suffice it to say that many investigators have been led to discriminate much more closely between the various classes of phenomena, while much has been done to weaken the sentimental, but unphilosophical, superstition which made the “Spirits” of the departed the suffering spectators of the follies and crimes of the living. For details as to

the conclusions we have arrived at on this subject, the reader must be referred to "The Key to Theosophy," wherein the question is dealt with at length.

At least we may claim to have placed before the thinking public a logical, coherent, and philosophical scheme of man's origin, destiny, and evolution—a scheme pre-eminent above all for its rigorous adherence to justice. And, that we may broaden our criterion of truth, our research extends to an inquiry into the nature of the less known forces, cosmic and psychical. Upon such themes many of our books have been written, and many of our reprints of ancient works, with or without commentaries, have been selected with reference to the light they throw upon these *quaestiones vexatae*.

In one word, our whole aim and desire are to help, in at least some degree, toward arriving at correct scientific views upon the nature of man, which carry with them the means of reconstructing for the present generation the deductive metaphysical or transcendental philosophy which alone is the firm, unshakable foundation of every religious philosophy. Theosophy, the universal solvent, is fulfilling its mission; the opalescent tints of the dawn of modern psychology are blending together, and will all be merged into the perfect daylight of truth, when the sun-orb of Eastern esotericism has mounted to its noon-stage.

For many a long year the "great orphan," Humanity, has been crying aloud in the darkness for guidance and for light. Amid the increasing splendors of a progress purely material, of a science that nourished the intellect, but left the spirit to starve, Humanity, dimly feeling its origin and presaging its destiny, has stretched out towards the East empty hands that only a *spiritual* philosophy can fill. Aching from the divisions, the jealousies, the hatreds, that rend its very life, it has cried for some sure foundation on which to build the solidarity it senses, some metaphysical basis from which its loftiest social ideals may rise secure. Only the Masters of the Eastern wisdom can set that foundation, can satisfy at once the intellect and the spirit, can guide Humanity safely through the night to "the dawn of a larger day."

Such is the goal which theosophy has set itself to attain; such is the history of the modern movement; such is the work which theosophy has already accomplished in this nineteenth century.

—H. P. Blavatsky

*No. Am. Review*, August, 1890

“TO THE READERS OF ‘LUCIFER’ ”

OUR magazine is only four numbers old, and already its young life is full of cares and trouble. This is all as it should be; *i.e.*, like every other publication, it must fail to satisfy *all* its readers, and this is only in the nature of things and the destiny of every printed organ. But what seems a little strange in a country of culture and free thought is that *Lucifer* should receive such a number of *anonymous*, spiteful, and often abusive letters. This, of course, is but a casual remark, the waste-basket in the office being the only addressee and sufferer in this case; yet it suggests strange truths with regard to human nature.<sup>1</sup>

Sincerity is true wisdom, it appears, only to the mind of the moral philosopher. It is rudeness and insult to him who regards dissimulation and deceit as culture and politeness, and holds that the shortest, easiest, and safest way to success is to let sleeping dogs and old customs alone. But, if the dogs are obstructing the highway to progress and truth, and Society will, as a rule, reject the wise words of (St.) Augustine, who recommends that “no man should prefer custom before reason and truth,” is it a sufficient cause for the philanthropist to walk out of, or even deviate from, the track of truth, because the selfish egoist chooses to do so? Very true, as remarked somewhere by Sir Thomas Browne, that not every man is a proper champion for the truth, nor fit to take up the gauntlet in its cause. Too many of such defenders are apt, from inconsideration and too much zeal, to charge the troops of error so rashly that they “remain themselves as trophies to the enemies of truth.” Nor ought all of us (members of the Theosophical Society) to do so personally, but rather leave it only to those among our members who have voluntarily and beforehand sacrificed their personalities for the cause of Truth. Thus teaches us one of the Masters of Wisdom in some fragments of advice which are published further on for the benefit of the Theosophists (see the article that follows this<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> "Verbum Sap." It is not our intention to notice anonymous communications, even though they should emanate in a round-about way from Lambeth Palace. The matter "Verbum Sap" refers to is not one of taste; the facts must be held responsible for the offence; and, as the Scripture hath it, "Woe to them by whom the offence cometh!"

<sup>2</sup> "Some Words on Daily Life". —Eds.

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While enforcing upon such public characters in our ranks as editors, and lecturers, etc., the duty of telling fearlessly "the Truth to the face of lie," he yet condemns the habit of private judgment and criticism in every individual Theosophist.

Unfortunately, these are not the ways of the public and readers. Since our journal is entirely unsectarian, since it is neither theistic nor atheistic, Pagan nor Christian, orthodox nor heterodox, therefore, its editors discover eternal verities in the most opposite religious systems and modes of thought. Thus *Lucifer* fails to give full satisfaction to either infidel or Christian. In sight of the former—whether he be an Agnostic, a Secularist, or an Idealist—to find divine or occult lore underlying "the rubbish" in the Jewish Bible and Christian Gospels is sickening; in the opinion of the latter, to recognise the same truth as in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures in the Hindu, Parsi, Buddhist, or Egyptian religious literature, is vexation of spirit and blasphemy. Hence, fierce criticism from both sides, sneers and abuse. Each party would have us on its own sectarian side, recognising as truth, only that which its particular *ism* does.

But this cannot nor shall it be. Our motto was from the first, and ever shall be: "There is no Religion Higher than—Truth." Truth we search for, and, once found, we bring it forward before the world, whencesoever it comes. A large majority of our readers is fully satisfied with this our policy, and that is plainly sufficient for our purposes.

It is evident that when toleration is not the outcome of indifference it must arise from wide-spreading charity and large-minded sympathy. Intolerance is pre-eminently the consequence of ignorance and jealousy. He who fondly believes that he has got the great ocean in his family water-jug is naturally intolerant of his neighbour, who also is pleased to imagine that he has poured

the broad expanse of the sea of truth into his own particular pitcher. But anyone who, like the Theosophist, knows how infinite is that ocean of eternal wisdom, to be fathomed by no one man, class, or party, and realizes how little the largest vessel made by man contains in comparison to what lies dormant and still unperceived in its dark, bottomless depths, cannot help but be tolerant. For he sees that others have filled their little water-jugs at the same great reservoir in which he has dipped his own, and if the water in the various pitchers seems different to the eye, it can only be because it is discoloured by impurities that were in the vessel before the pure crystalline element

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—a portion of the one eternal and immutable truth—entered into it.

There is, and can be, but one absolute truth in Kosmos. And little as we, with our present limitations, can understand it in its essence, we still know that if it is absolute it must also be omnipresent and universal; and that in such case, it must be underlying every world-religion—the product of the thought and knowledge of numberless generations of thinking men. Therefore, that a portion of truth, great or small, is found in every religious and philosophical system, and that if we would find it, we have to search for it at the origin and source of every such system, at its roots and first growth, not in its later overgrowth of sects and dogmatism. Our object is not to destroy any religion but rather to help to filter each, thus ridding them of their respective impurities. In this we are opposed by all those who maintain, against evidence, that their particular pitcher alone contains the whole ocean. How is our great work to be done if we are to be impeded and harassed on every side by partisans and zealots? It would be already half accomplished were the intelligent men, at least, of every sect and system, to feel and to confess that the little wee bit of truth they themselves own must necessarily be mingled with error, and that their neighbours' mistakes are, like their own, mixed with truth.

Free discussion, temperate, candid, undefiled by personalities and animosity, is, we think, the most efficacious means of getting rid of error and bringing out the underlying truth; and this applies to publications as well as to persons. It is open to a magazine to be tolerant or intolerant; it is open to it to err in almost every way in which an individual can err; and since every publication of the kind has a responsibility such as falls to the lot of few individuals, it behooves

it to be ever on its guard, so that it may advance without fear and without reproach. All this is true in a special degree in the case of a theosophical publication, and *Lucifer* feels that it would be unworthy of that designation were it not true to the profession of the broadest tolerance and catholicity, even while pointing out to its brothers and neighbours the errors which they indulge in and follow. While thus keeping strictly, in its editorials, and in articles by its individual editors, to the spirit and teachings of pure theosophy, it nevertheless frequently gives room to articles and letters which diverge widely from the esoteric teachings accepted by the editors, as also by the majority of theosophists. Readers, therefore, who are accustomed to find in magazines and party publications

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only such opinions and arguments as the editor believes to be unmistakably orthodox—from his peculiar standpoint—must not condemn any article in *Lucifer* with which they are not entirely in accord, or in which expressions are used that may be offensive from a sectarian or a *prudish* point of view, on the ground that such are unfitted for a theosophical magazine. They should remember that precisely because *Lucifer* is a theosophical magazine, it opens its columns to writers whose views of life and things may not only slightly differ from its own, but even be diametrically opposed to the opinion of the editors. The object of the latter is to elicit truth, not to advance the interest of any particular *ism*, or to pander to any hobbies, likes or dislikes, of any class of readers. It is only snobs and prigs who, disregarding the truth or error of the idea, cavil and strain merely over the expressions and words it is couched in.

Theosophy, if meaning anything, means truth; and truth has to deal indiscriminately and in the same spirit of impartiality with vessels of honour and of dishonour alike. No theosophical publication would ever dream of adopting the coarse—or shall we say terribly sincere—language of a Hosea or a Jeremiah; yet so long as those holy prophets are found in the Christian Bible, and the Bible is in every respectable, pious family, whether aristocratic or plebeian; and so long as the Bible is read with bowed head and in all reverence by young, innocent maidens and school-boys, why should our Christian critics fall foul of any phrase which may have to be used—if truth be spoken at all—in an occasional article upon a scientific subject? It is to be feared that the same



sentences now found objectionable, because referring to Biblical subjects, would be loudly praised and applauded had they been directed against any gentile system of faith (*Vide certain missionary organs*). A little charity, gentle readers—charity, and above all—*fairness* and justice.

Justice demands that when the reader comes across an article in this magazine which does not immediately approve itself to his mind by chiming in with his own peculiar ideas, he should regard it as a problem to solve rather than as a mere subject of criticism. Let him endeavour to learn the lesson which only opinions differing from his own can teach him. *Let him be tolerant, if not actually charitable*, and postpone his judgment till he extracts from the article the truth it must contain, adding this new acquisition to his store. One ever learns more from one's enemies than from one's

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friends; and it is only when the reader has credited this hidden truth to *Lucifer*, that he can fairly presume to put what he believes to be the errors of the article he does not like to the debit account.

—H. P. Blavatsky

*Lucifer*, January, 1888

### WHY THE “VAHAN”?

BECAUSE, the word means a *Vehicle*. In Theosophical metaphysics this term denotes a *basis*, something, as a bearer, more *substantial* than that which it bears; *e.g.*, *Buddhi*, the spiritual Soul, is the *Vahan of Atmâ*—the purely immaterial “principle.” Or again, as in physiology, our brain is the supposed physical vehicle or *Vahan* of superphysical thought.

Thus, this little fortnightly paper is destined to serve as the bearer of Theosophical thought, and the recorder of all Theosophical activities.

The enterprise is no financial speculation, but most decidedly an additional expense which our meagre funds can ill afford, but which our duty urges us to undertake. The journal is to go free of charge to our British Branches and “unattached” Fellows. It is also meant for those who are unable to subscribe to our regular magazines, but the wealthier will profit along with the poorer, for the following reasons. The Karma of those who could, but *will not* subscribe for the organs of their Society, whether from indifference or any other cause, *is their own*; but the duty of keeping all the Fellows in touch with us, and *au courant* with Theosophical events—is ours. For, many of those who being virtually cut off from almost everything that goes on in the Theosophical centres, lose very soon their interest in the movement and continue henceforward “Fellows” but in name.

It has been always held that a true Theosophist must have no personal ends to serve, no favourite hobby to propagate, no special doctrine to enforce or to defend. For, to merit the honourable title of Theosophist one must be an altruist, above all; one ever ready to help equally foe or friend; to act, rather than to speak; and urge others to action, while never losing an opportunity to work himself. But, if no true Theosophist will ever dictate to his fellow, brother or neighbor, what this one should believe or disbelieve in, nor force him to act on lines which may be distasteful to him, however proper they may appear to himself, there are other duties which he has to

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attend to: (a) to warn his brother of any danger the latter may fail to see; and (b) to share his knowledge—if he has acquired such—with those who have been less fortunate than himself in opportunities for acquiring it.

Now, though we are painfully aware that a good number of members have joined the T.S. out of simple curiosity, while others, remaining for some time out of touch with the movement, have lost their interest in it, we must never lose the hope of reviving that interest. Many are the Fellows who, having failed at first to help on the cause, have now become earnest “working members,” as they are called. Therefore, we say to-day to all: “If you would really help the noble cause—you must do so now; for, *a few years more and your, as well as our efforts, will be in vain*” The world moves in cycles, which proceed under the impetus of two mutually antagonistic and destroying Forces, the one striving

to move Humanity onward, toward Spirit, the other forcing Mankind to gravitate downward, into the very abysses of matter. It remains with men to help either the one or the other. Thus, also, it is our present task, as Theosophists, to help in one or the other direction. We are in the very midst of the Egyptian darkness of *Kali-yuga*, the "Black Age," the first 5,000 years of which, its dreary first cycle, is preparing to close on the world between 1897 and 1898. Unless we succeed in placing the T.S. before this date on the safe side of the spiritual current, it will be swept away irretrievably into the Deep called "Failure," and the cold waves of oblivion will close over its doomed head. Thus will have ingloriously perished the *only* association whose aims, rules and original purposes answer in every particular and detail—if strictly carried out—to the innermost, fundamental thought of every great Adept Reformer, the beautiful dream of a Universal Brotherhood Of Man.

Verily, of philanthropical, political, and religious bodies we have many. Clubs, congresses, associations, unions, refuges, societies, each of them a social protector of special men and nations, special arts and sciences, or a bulwark against this or that evil, spring up daily, each of these moved by its own party or sectarian spirit. But which of them is strictly *universal*, good for all and prejudicial to none? Which of them answers fully to the noble injunction of the Buddhist Arhats and also of King Asoka? "When thou plantest trees along the roads, allow their shade to protect the wicked as the good. When thou buildest a Rest-House, let its doors be thrown

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open to men of all religions, to the opponents of thine own creed, and to thy personal enemies as well as to thy friends." None, we say, none save our own Society, a purely unsectarian, unselfish body; the only one which has no party object in view, which is open to all men, the good and the bad, the lowly and the high, the foolish and the wise—and which calls them all "Brothers," regardless of their religion, race, colour, or station in life.

To all these we now say: As "there is no religion higher than Truth," no deity greater than the latter, no duty nobler than self-sacrifice, and that the time for action is so short—shall not each of you put his shoulder to the wheel of the heavy car of our Society and help us to land it safely across the abyss of matter, on to the safe side?

— — H.P.B.

*Vahan*, December, 1890

### LODGES OF MAGIC

When fiction rises pleasing to the eye,  
Men will believe, because they love the lie;  
But Truth herself, if clouded with a frown,  
Must have some solemn proofs to pass her down.

Churchill.

ONE of the most esteemed of our friends in occult research, propounds the question of the formation of “working Lodges” of the Theosophical Society, for the development of adeptship. If the practical impossibility of forcing this process has been shown once, in the course of the theosophical movement, it has scores of times. It is hard to check one’s natural impatience to tear aside the veil of the Temple. To gain the divine knowledge, like the prize in a classical tripas, by a system of coaching and cramming, is the ideal of the average beginner in occult study. The refusal of the originators of the Theosophical Society to encourage such false hopes, has led to the formation of bogus Brotherhoods of *Luxor* (and Armley Jail?) as speculations on human credulity. How enticing the bait for gudgeons in the following specimen prospectus, which a few years ago caught some of our most earnest friends and Theosophists.

“Students of the Occult Science, searchers after truth, and Theosophists who may have been disappointed in their expectations of Sublime Wisdom being freely dispensed by Hindu Mahatmas, are cordially invited to send in their names to . . . . , when, if found suitable, they can be admitted, after a short probationary term, as Members of an Occult Brotherhood, who do not boast of their knowledge or attainments, but teach freely” (at £1 to £5 *per* letter?), “and without reserve” (the nastiest portions of P. B. Randolph’s “Eulis”), “all they find worthy to receive” (read: teachings on a commercial basis; the cash going

to the teachers, and the extracts from Randolph and other “love-philter” sellers to the pupils!)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Documents on view at Lucifer Office, viz., Secret MSS. written in the handwriting of ——— (name suppressed for past considerations), “Provincial Grand Master of the Northern Section.” One of these documents bears the heading, “A brief Key to the Eulian Mysteries,” *i.e.* *Tantric* black magic on a phallic basis. No; the members of *this* Occult Brotherhood “do not boast of their knowledge.” Very sensible on their part: least said soonest mended.

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If rumour be true, some of the English rural districts, especially Yorkshire, are overrun with fraudulent astrologers and fortune-tellers, who pretend to be Theosophists, the better to swindle a higher class of credulous patrons than their legitimate prey, the servant-maid and callow youth. If the “lodges of magic,” suggested in the following letter to the Editors of this Magazine, were founded, without having taken the greatest precautions to admit only the best candidates to membership, we should see these vile exploitations of sacred names and things increase an hundredfold. And in this connection, and before giving place to our friend’s letter, the senior Editor of Lucifer begs to inform her friends that she has never had the remotest connection with the so-called “H (ermetic) B (rotherhood) of L (uxor),” and that all representations to the contrary are false and dishonest. There is a secret body—whose diploma, or Certificate of Membership, is held by Colonel Olcott alone among modern men of white blood—to which that name was given by the author of “Isis Unveiled” for convenience of designation,<sup>2</sup> but which is known among Initiates by quite another one, just as the personage known to the public under the pseudonym of “Koot Hoomi,” is called by a totally different name among his acquaintance. What the real name of that society is, it would puzzle the “Eulian” phallicists of the “H. B. of L.” to tell. The real names of Master Adepts and Occult Schools are never, *under any circumstances*, revealed to the profane; and the names of the personages who have been talked about in connection with modern Theosophy, are in the possession only of the two chief founders of the Theosophical Society. And now, having said so much by way of preface, let us pass on to our correspondent’s letter. He writes:

A friend of mine, a natural mystic, had intended to form, with others, a Branch T.S. in his town. Surprised at his delay, I wrote to ask the reason. His reply was that he had heard that the T.S. only met and talked, and did nothing practical. I always did think the T.S. ought to have Lodges in which something

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<sup>2</sup> In "Isis Unveiled," vol. ii, p. 308. It may be added that the "Brotherhood of Luxor" mentioned by Kenneth Mackenzie (*vide his Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*) as having its seat in America, had, after all, nothing to do with the Brotherhood mentioned by, and known to us, as was ascertained after the publication of "Isis" from a letter written by this late Masonic author to a friend in New York. The Brotherhood Mackenzie knew of was simply a Masonic Society on a rather more secret basis, and, as he stated in the letter, he had *heard of, but knew nothing of our* Brotherhood, which having had a branch at Luxor (Egypt), was thus purposely referred to by us under this name alone. This led some schemers to infer that there was a regular Lodge of Adepts of that name, and to assure some credulous friends and Theosophists that the "H. B. of L." was either identical or a branch of the same, supposed to be near Lahore! !— which was the most flagrant untruth

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practical should be done. Cagliostro understood well this craving of humans for something before their eyes, when he instituted the Egyptian Rite, and put it in practice in various Freemason lodges. There are many readers of Lucifer in— —shire. Perhaps in it there might be a suggestion for students to form such lodges for themselves, and to try, by their united wills, to develop certain powers in one of the number, and then through the whole of them in succession. I feel sure numbers would enter such lodges, and create a great interest for Theosophy.

"A."

In the above note of our venerable and learned friend is the echo of the voices of ninety-nine hundredths of the members of the Theosophical Society: one-hundredth only have the correct idea of the function and scope of our Branches. The glaring mistake generally made is in the conception of adeptship and the path thereunto. Of all thinkable undertakings that of trying for adeptship is the most difficult. Instead of being obtainable within a few years or one lifetime, it

exacts the unremittent struggles of a series of lives, save in cases so rare as to be hardly worth regarding as exceptions to the general rule. The records certainly show that a number of the most revered Indian adepts became so despite their births in the lowest, and seemingly most unlikely, castes. Yet it is well understood that they had been progressing in the upward direction throughout many previous incarnations, and, when they took birth for the last time, there was left but the merest trifle of spiritual evolution to be accomplished, before they became great living adepts. Of course, no one can say that one or all of the possible members of our friend "A." 's ideal Cagliostroian lodge might not also be ready for adeptship, but the chance is not good enough to speculate upon: Western civilization seems to develop fighters rather than philosophers, military butchers rather than Buddhas. The plan "A." proposes would be far more likely to end in mediumship than adeptship. Two to one there would not be a member of the lodge who was chaste from boyhood and altogether untainted by the use of intoxicants. This is to say nothing of the candidates' freedom from the polluting effects of the evil influences of the average social environment. Among the indispensable pre-requisites for psychic development, noted in the mystical Manuals of all Eastern religious systems, are a pure place, pure diet, pure companionship, and a pure mind. Could "A." guarantee these? It is certainly desirable that there should be some school of instruction for members of our Society; and had the purely exoteric work and duties of the

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Founders been less absorbing, probably one such would have been established long ago. Yet not for practical instruction, on the plan of Cagliostro, which, by-the-by, brought direful suffering upon his head, and has left no marked traces behind to encourage a repetition in our days. "When the pupil is ready, the teacher will be found waiting," says an Eastern maxim. The Masters do not have to hunt up recruits in special — —shire lodges, nor drill them through mystical non-commissioned officers: time and space are no barriers between them and the aspirant; where thought can pass they can come. Why did an old and learned Kabbalist like "A." forget this fact? And let him also remember that the potential adept may exist in the Whitechapels and Five Points of Europe and America, as well as in the cleaner and more "cultured" quarters; that some poor ragged wretch, begging a crust, may be "whiter-souled" and more

attractive to the adept than the average bishop in his robe, or a cultured citizen in his costly dress. For the extension of the theosophical movement, a useful channel for the irrigation of the dry fields of contemporary thought with the water of life, Branches are needed everywhere; not mere groups of passive sympathisers, such as the slumbering army of church-goers, whose eyes are shut while the "devil" sweeps the field; no, not such. Active, wide-awake, earnest, unselfish Branches are needed, whose members shall not be constantly unmasking their selfishness by asking "What will it profit us to join the Theosophical Society, and how much will it harm us?" but be putting to themselves the question "Can we not do substantial good to mankind by working in this good cause with all our hearts, our minds, and our strength?" If "A." would only bring his — — shire friends, who pretend to occult leanings, to view the question from this side, he would be doing them a real kindness. The Society can get on without them, but they cannot afford to let it do so.

Is it profitable, moreover, to discuss the question of a Lodge receiving even theoretical instruction, until we can be sure that all the members will accept the teachings as coming from the alleged source? Occult truth cannot be absorbed by a mind that is filled with preconception, prejudice, or suspicion. It is something to be perceived by the intuition rather than by the reason; being by nature spiritual, not material. Some are so constituted as to be incapable of acquiring knowledge by the exercise of the spiritual faculty; *e.g.* the great majority of physicists. Such are slow, if not wholly incapable

of grasping the ultimate truths behind the phenomena of existence. There are many such in the Society; and the body of the discontented are recruited from their ranks. Such persons readily persuade themselves that later teachings, received from exactly the same source as earlier ones, are either false or have been tampered with by chelas, or even third parties. Suspicion and inharmony are the natural result, the psychic atmosphere, so to say, is thrown into confusion, and the reaction, even upon the stauncher students, is very harmful. Sometimes vanity blinds what was at first strong intuition, the mind is effectually closed against the admission of new truth, and the aspiring student is thrown back to the point where he began. Having jumped at some particular conclusion of



his own without full study of the subject, and before the teaching had been fully expounded, his tendency, when proved wrong, is to listen only to the voice of his self-adulation, and cling to his views, whether right or wrong, The Lord Buddha particularly warned his hearers against forming beliefs upon tradition or authority, and before having thoroughly inquired into the subject.

An instance. We have been asked by a correspondent why he should not “be free to suspect some of the so-called ‘precipitated’ letters as being forgeries,” giving as his reason for it that while some of them bear the stamp of (to him) undeniable genuineness, others seem from their contents and style, to be imitations. This is equivalent to saying that he has such an unerring spiritual insight as to be able to detect the false from the true, though he has never met a Master, nor been given any key by which to test his alleged communications. The inevitable consequence of applying his untrained judgment in such cases, would be to make him as likely as not to declare false what was genuine, and genuine what was false. Thus what *criterion* has any one to decide between one “precipitated” letter, or another such letter? Who except their authors, or those whom they employ as their *amanuenses* (the *chelas* and disciples), can tell? For it is hardly one out of a hundred “occult” letters that is ever written by the hand of the Master, in whose name and on whose behalf they are sent, as the Masters have neither need nor leisure to write them; and that when a Master says, “I wrote that letter,” it means only that every word in it was dictated by him and impressed under his direct supervision. Generally they make their chela, whether near or far away, write (or precipitate) them, by impressing upon his mind the ideas they wish expressed, and if

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necessary aiding him in the picture-printing process of precipitation. It depends entirely upon the *chela's* state of development, how accurately the ideas may be transmitted and the writing-model imitated. Thus the *non-adept* recipient is left in the dilemma of uncertainty, whether, if one letter is false, all may not be; for, as far as intrinsic evidence goes, all come from the same source, and all are brought by the same mysterious means. But there is another, and a far worse condition implied. For all that the recipient of “occult” letters can possibly know, and on the simple grounds of probability and common honesty, the

unseen correspondent who would tolerate one *single fraudulent line in his name*, would wink at an unlimited repetition of the deception. And this leads directly to the following. All the so-called *occult* letters being supported by identical proofs, *they have all to stand or fall together*. If one is to be doubted, then all have, and the series of letters in the "Occult World," "Esoteric Buddhism," etc., etc., may be, and there is no reason why they should not be in such a case—*frauds*, "clever impostures," and "forgeries," such as the ingenuous though stupid agent of the "S.P.R." has made them out to be, in order to raise in the public estimation the "scientific" acumen and standard of his "Principals."

Hence, not a step in advance would be made by a group of students given over to such an unimpressible state of mind, and without any guide *from the occult side* to open their eyes to the esoteric pitfalls. And where are such guides, so far, in our Society? "They be blind leaders of the blind," both falling into the ditch of vanity and self-sufficiency. The whole difficulty springs from the common tendency to draw conclusions from insufficient premises, and play the oracle before ridding oneself of that most stupefying of all psychic anaesthetics—Ignorance.

*Lucifer*, October, 1888

## MAHATMAS AND CHELAS

A MAHATMA is a personage, who, by special training and education, has evolved those higher faculties and has attained that spiritual knowledge, which ordinary humanity will acquire after passing through numberless series of reincarnations during the process of cosmic evolution, provided, of course, that they do not go, in the meanwhile, against the purposes of Nature and thus bring on their own annihilation. This process of the self-evolution of the Mahatma extends over a number of "incarnations," although, comparatively speaking, they are very few. Now, what is it that incarnates? The occult doctrine, so far as it is given out, shows that the first three principles die more or less with what is called the physical death. The fourth principle,

together with the lower portions of the fifth, in which reside the animal propensities, has *Kama Loka* for its abode, where it suffers the throes of disintegration in proportion to the intensity of those lower desires; while it is the higher *Manas*, the pure man, which is associated with the sixth and seventh principles, that goes into *Devachan* to enjoy there the effects of its good *Karma*, and then to be reincarnated as a higher individuality. Now, an entity, that is passing through the occult training in its successive births, gradually has less and less (in each incarnation) of that lower *Manas* until there arrives a time when its whole *Manas*, being of an entirely elevated character, is centered in the higher individuality, when such a person may be said to have become a Mahatma. At the time of his physical death, all the lower four principles perish without any suffering, for these are, in fact, to him like a piece of wearing apparel which he puts on and off at will. The real Mahatma is then not his physical body but that higher *Manas* which is inseparably linked to the *Atma* and its vehicle (the sixth principle)—a union effected by him in a comparatively very short period by passing through the process of self-evolution laid down by the Occult Philosophy. When, therefore, people express a desire to “see a Mahatma,” they really do not seem to understand what it is they ask for. How can they, by their physical eyes, hope to see that which transcends that sight? Is it the body — a mere shell or mask — they crave or hunt after? And supposing they see the body of a Mahatma, how can they know that behind

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that mask is concealed an exalted entity? By what standard are they to judge whether the *Maya* before them reflects the image of a true Mahatma or not? And who will say that the physical is not a *Maya*? Higher things can be perceived only by a sense pertaining to those higher things. And whoever therefore wants to see the real Mahatma, must use his *intellectual* sight. He must so elevate his *Manas* that its perception will be clear and all mists created by *Maya* must be dispelled. His vision will then be bright and he will see the Mahatmas wherever he may be, for, being merged into the sixth and the seventh principles, which are ubiquitous and omnipresent, the Mahatmas may be said to be everywhere. But, at the same time, just as we may be standing on a mountain top and have within our sight the whole plain, and yet not be cognisant of any particular tree or spot, because from that elevated position all

below is nearly identical, and as our attention may be drawn to something which may be dissimilar to its surroundings—so in the same manner, although the whole of humanity is within the mental vision of the Mahatmas, they cannot be expected to take special note of every human being, unless that being by his special acts draws their particular attention to himself. The highest interest of humanity, as a whole, is their special concern, for they have identified themselves with that Universal Soul which runs through Humanity, and he, who would draw their attention, must do so through that Soul which pervades everywhere. This perception of the *Manas* may be called “faith” which should not be confounded with *blind belief*. “Blind faith” is an expression sometimes used to indicate belief without perception or understanding; while the true perception of the *Manas* is that enlightened belief, which is the real meaning of the word “faith.” This belief should at the same time be accompanied by *knowledge, i.e.,* experience, for “true *knowledge* brings with it faith.” Faith is the perception of the *Manas* (the fifth principle), while knowledge, in the true sense of the term, is the capacity of the Intellect, *i.e.,* it is spiritual perception. In short, the higher individuality of man, composed of his higher *Manas*, the sixth and the seventh principles, should work as a unity, and then only can it obtain “divine wisdom,” for divine things can be sensed only by divine faculties. Thus the desire, which should prompt one to apply for *chelas*hip, is to so far understand the operations of the Law of Cosmic Evolution as will enable him to work in harmonious accord with Nature, instead of going against its purposes through ignorance.

*Theosophist*, July, 1884

### ARE CHELAS “MEDIUMS”?

ACCORDING to the newest edition of the *Imperial Dictionary*, by John Ogilvie, L.L.D., “A *medium* is a person through whom the action of another being is said to be manifested and transmitted by animal magnetism, or a person through whom spiritual manifestations are claimed to be made; especially one who is said to be capable of holding intercourse with the spirits of the deceased.”

As Occultists do not believe in any communication with the “spirits of the deceased” in the ordinary acceptance of the term, for the simple reason that they know that the *spirits* of “the deceased” cannot and do not come down and communicate with us; and as the above expression “*by animal magnetism*” would probably have been modified, if the editor of the *Imperial Dictionary* had been an Occultist, we therefore are only concerned with the first part of the definition of the word “*Medium*,” which says: “*A Medium is a person, through whom the action of another being is said to be manifested and transmitted*”; and we should like to be permitted to add: “*By the either consciously or unconsciously active will of that other being.*”

It would be extremely difficult to find on earth a human being, who could not be more or less influenced by the “*Animal Magnetism*” or by the active *Will* (which sends out that “*Magnetism*”) of another. If the beloved General rides along the front, the soldiers become all “*Mediums*.” They become filled with enthusiasm, they follow him without fear, and storm the death-dealing battery. One common impulse pervades them all; each one becomes the “*Medium*” of another, the coward becomes filled with heroism, and only he, who is *no medium* at all and therefore insensible to epidemic or endemic moral influences, will make an exception, assert his independence and run away.

The “revival preacher” will get up in his pulpit, and although what he says is the most incongruous nonsense, still his actions and the lamenting tone of his voice are sufficiently impressive to

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produce “a change of heart” amongst, at least, the female part of his congregation, and if he is a powerful man, even sceptics “that come to scoff, remain to pray.” People go to the theatre and shed tears or “split their sides” with laughter according to the character of the performance, whether it be a pantomime, a tragedy or a farce. There is no man, except a genuine block-head, whose emotions and consequently whose actions cannot be influenced in some way or other, and thereby *the action of another be manifested or transmitted through him*. All men and all women and children are therefore *Mediums*, and a person who is not a *Medium* is a monster, an abortion of nature; because he stands without the pale of humanity.

The above definition can therefore hardly be considered sufficient to express the meaning of the word "Medium" in the popular acceptance of the term, unless we add a few words, and say: "A medium is a person through whom the action of another being is said to be manifested and transmitted *to an abnormal extent* by the consciously or unconsciously active will of that other being." This reduces the number of "Mediums" in the world to an extent proportionate to the space around which we draw the line between the normal and abnormal, and it will be just as difficult to determine who is a medium and who is not a medium, as it is to say where sanity ends and where insanity begins. Every man has his little "weaknesses," and every man has his little "mediumship"; that is to say, some vulnerable point by which he may be taken unawares. The one may therefore not be considered really insane; neither can the other be called a "medium." Opinions often differ, whether a man is insane or not, and so they may differ as to his medium-ship. Now in practical life a man may be very eccentric, but he is not considered insane, until his insanity reaches such a degree that he does not know any more what he is doing, and is therefore unable to take care of himself or his business.

We may extend the same line of reasoning to Mediums, and say that only such persons shall be considered mediums, who allow other beings to influence them in the above described manner *to such an extent that they lose their self-control* and have no more power or will of their own to regulate their own actions. Now such a relinquishing of self-control may be either active or passive, conscious or unconscious, voluntary or involuntary, and differs according to the nature of the beings, who exercise the said active influence over the medium.

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A person may consciously and voluntarily submit his will to another being and become his slave. This other being may be a human being, and the medium will then be his obedient servant and may be used by him for good or for bad purposes. This other "being" may be an *idea*, such as love, greediness, hate, jealousy, avarice, or some other passion, and the effect on the medium will be proportionate to the strength of the idea and the amount of self-control left in the medium. This "other being" may be an elementary or an elemental, and the poor medium become a epileptic, a maniac or a criminal. This "other being"

may be the man's own higher principle, either alone or put into rapport with another ray of the collective universal spiritual principle, and the "medium" will then be a great genius, a writer, a poet, an artist, a musician, an inventor, and so on. This "other being" may be one of those exalted beings, called Mahatmas, and the conscious and voluntary medium will then be called their "Chela."

Again, a person may never in his life have heard the word "Medium" and still be a strong Medium, although entirely unconscious of the fact. His actions may be more or less influenced unconsciously by his visible or invisible surroundings. He may become a prey to Elementaries or Elementals, even without knowing the meaning of these words, and he may consequently become a thief, a murderer, a ravisher, a drunkard or a cut-throat, and it has often enough been proved that crimes frequently become epidemic; or again he may by certain invisible influences be made to accomplish acts which are not at all consistent with his character such as previously known. He may be a great liar and for once by some unseen influence be induced to speak the truth; he may be ordinarily very much afraid and yet on some great occasion and on the spur of the moment commit an act of heroism; he may be a street-robber and vagabond and suddenly do an act of generosity, etc.

Furthermore, a medium may know the sources from which the influence comes, or in more explicit terms, "*the nature of the being, whose action is transmitted through him,*" or he may not know it. He may be under the influence of his own seventh principle and imagine to be in communication with a personal Jesus Christ, or a saint; he may be in rapport with the "intellectual" ray of Shakespeare and write Shakespearean poetry, and at the same time imagine that the personal spirit of Shakespeare is writing through him, and the simple fact of his believing this or that, would make his poetry

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neither better nor worse. He may be influenced by some Adept to write a great scientific work and be entirely ignorant of the source of his inspiration, or perhaps imagine that it was the "spirit" of Faraday or Lord Bacon that is writing through him, while all the while he would be acting as a "Chela," although ignorant of the fact.

From all this it follows that the exercise of mediumship consists in the more or less complete giving up of self-control, and whether this exercise is good or bad, depends entirely on the use that is made of it and the purpose for which it is done. This again depends on the degree of knowledge which the mediumistic person possesses, in regard to the nature of the being to whose care he either voluntarily or involuntarily relinquishes for a time the guardianship of his physical or intellectual powers. A person who entrusts indiscriminately those faculties to the influence of every unknown power, is undoubtedly a “crank,” and cannot be considered less insane than the one who would entrust his money and valuables to the first stranger or vagabond that would ask him for the same. We meet occasionally such people, although they are comparatively rare, and they are usually known by their idiotic stare and by the fanaticism with which they cling to their ignorance. Such people ought to be pitied instead of blamed, and if it were possible, they should be enlightened in regard to the danger which they incur; but whether a Chela, who consciously and willingly lends for a time his mental faculties to a superior being, whom he knows, and in whose purity of motives, honesty of purpose, intelligence, wisdom and power he has full confidence, can be considered a “Medium” in the vulgar acceptance of the term, is a question which had better be left to the reader—after a due consideration of the above—to decide for himself.

*Theosophist*, June, 1884

## CHELAS

NOTWITHSTANDING the many articles which have appeared in this magazine upon the above subject, much misunderstanding and many false views seem still to prevail. What are Chelas, and what are their powers? Have they faults, and in what particular are they different from people who are not Chelas? Is every word uttered by a Chela to be taken as gospel truth?

These questions arise because many persons have entertained very absurd views for a time about Chelas, and when it was found that those views should be changed, the reaction has been in several cases quite violent.



The word "Chela" simply means *a disciple*; but it has become crystallized in the literature of Theosophy, and has, in different minds, as many different definitions as the word "God" itself. Some persons have gone so far as to say that when a man is a Chela he is at once put on a plane when each word that he may unfortunately utter is taken down as *ex cathedra*, and he is not allowed the poor privilege of talking like an ordinary person. If it be found out that any such utterance was on his own account and responsibility, he is charged with having misled his hearers.

Now this wrong idea must be corrected once for all. There are Chelas and Chelas, just as there are Mahatmas and Mahatmas. There are Mahatmas in fact who are themselves the Chelas of those who are higher yet. But no one, for an instant, would confound a Chela who has just begun his troublous journey with that greater Chela who is a Mahatma.

In fact the Chela is an unfortunate man who has entered upon "a path not manifest," and Krishna says that "that is the most difficult path."

Instead of being the constant mouthpiece of his Guru, he finds himself left more alone in the world than those who are not Chelas, and his path is surrounded by dangers which would appall many an aspirant, were they depicted in natural colors, so that instead of accepting his Guru and passing an entrance examination with a view to becoming Bachelor of the Art of Occultism under his master's constant and friendly guidance, he really forces his way into

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a guarded enclosure, and has from that moment to fight and conquer—or die. Instead of accepting he has to be worthy of acceptance. Nor must he offer himself. One of the Mahatmas has, within the year, written—"Never thrust yourself upon us for Chelaship; wait until it descends upon you."

And having been accepted as a Chela, it is not true that he is merely the instrument of his Guru. He speaks as ordinary men then as before, and it is only when the master sends by means of the Chela's Magnetism an actual written letter, that the lookers-on can say that through him a communication came.

It may happen with them, as it does with any author occasionally, that they evolve either true or beautiful utterances, but it must not be therefore concluded that during that utterance the Guru was speaking through the Chela. If there was the germ of a good thought in the mind, the Guru's influence, like the gentle rain upon the seed, may have caused it to spring into sudden life and abnormally blossom, but that is not the master's voice. The cases in fact are rare in which the masters speak through a Chela.

The powers of Chelas vary with their progress; and every one should know that if a Chela has any "powers," he is not permitted to use them save in rare and exceptional cases, and never may he boast of their possession. So it must follow that those who are only beginners have no more or greater power than an ordinary man. Indeed the goal set before the Chela is not the acquisition of psychological power; his chief task is to divest himself of that overmastering sense of personality which is the thick veil that hides from sight our immortal part—the real man. So long as he allows this feeling to remain, just so long will he be fixed at the very door of Occultism, unable to proceed further.

Sentimentality then, is not the equipment for a Chela. His work is hard, his road stony, the end far away. With sentimentality merely he will not advance at all. Is he waiting for the master to bid him show his courage by precipitating himself from a precipice, or by braving the cold Himalayan steeps? False hope; they will not call him thus. And so, as he is not to clothe himself in sentiment, the public must not, when they wish to consider him, throw a false veil of sentimentality over all his actions and words.

Let us therefore, henceforth, see a little more discrimination used in looking at Chelas.

*Theosophist*, October, 1884

“THE THEOSOPHICAL MAHATMAS”

IT is with sincere and profound regret—though with no surprise, prepared as I am for years for such declarations—that I have read in the Rochester *Occult Word*, edited by Mrs. J. Cables, the devoted president of the T.S. of that place, her joint editorial with Mr. W. T. Brown. This sudden revulsion of feeling is perhaps quite natural in the lady, for she has never had the opportunities given her as Mr. Brown has; and her feeling when she writes that after “a great desire . . . to be put into communication with the Theosophical Mahatmas we (they) have come to the conclusion that it is useless to strain the psychical eyes towards the Himalayas . . .” is undeniably shared by many theosophists. Whether the complaints are justified, and also whether it is the “Mahatmas” or theosophists themselves who are to blame for it is a question that remains to be settled. It has been a pending case for several years and will have to be now decided, as the two complainants declare over their signatures that “we (they) need not run after Oriental Mystics, *who deny their ability to help us.*” The last sentence, in italics, has to be seriously examined. I ask the privilege to make a few remarks thereon.

To begin with, the tone of the whole article is that of a true *manifesto*. Condensed and weeded of its exuberance of Biblical expressions it comes to this paraphractical declaration: “We have knocked at their door, and they have not answered us; we have prayed for bread, they have denied us even a stone.” The charge is quite serious; nevertheless, that it is neither just nor fair—is what I propose to show.

As I was the first in the United States to bring the existence of our Masters into publicity; and, having exposed the holy names of two members of a Brotherhood hitherto unknown to Europe and America (save to a few mystics and Initiates of every age), yet sacred and revered throughout the East, and especially India, causing vulgar speculation and curiosity to grow around those blessed names, and finally leading to a public rebuke, I believe it my duty to contradict the fitness of the latter by explaining the whole situation, as I feel myself the chief culprit. It may do good to some, perchance, and will interest some others

Let no one think withal, that I come out as a champion or a defender of those who most assuredly need no defense. What I intend, is to present

simple *facts*, and let after this the situation be judged on its own merits. To the plain statement of our brothers and sisters that they have been “living on husks,” “hunting after strange gods” without receiving admittance, I would ask in my turn, as plainly: “Are you sure of having knocked at the right door? Do you feel certain that you have not lost your way by *stopping so often on your journey at strange doors, behind which lie in wait the fiercest enemies of those you were searching for?*” Our Masters are not “a jealous god”; they are simply holy mortals, nevertheless, however, higher than any in this world, morally, intellectually and spiritually. However holy and advanced in the science of the Mysteries — they are still men, members of a Brotherhood, who are the first in it to show themselves subservient to its time-honored laws and rules. And one of the first rules in it demands that those who start on their journey *Eastward*, as candidates to the notice and favors of those who are the custodians of those Mysteries, should proceed by the straight road, without stopping on every sideway and path, seeking to join other “Masters” and professors often of the Left-Hand Science; that they should have confidence and show trust and patience, besides several other conditions to fulfill. Failing in all of this from first to last, what right has any man or woman to complain of the liability of the Masters to help them?

Truly “ ‘The Dwellers of the threshold’ are within!”

Once that a theosophist would become a candidate for either *chelaship* or favors, he must be aware of the mutual pledge, tacitly, if not formally offered and accepted between the two parties, and, *that such a pledge is sacred*. It is a bond of *seven* years of probation. If during that time, notwithstanding the many human shortcomings and mistakes of the candidate (save two which it is needless to specify in print) he remains throughout every temptation *true to the chosen Master*, or Masters (in the case of *lay* candidates), and as faithful to the Society founded at their wish and under their orders, then the theosophist will be initiated into ---thenceforward allowed to communicate with his *guru* unreservedly, all his failings, save this one, as specified, may be overlooked: they belong to his future *Karma*, but are left for the present, to the discretion and judgment of the Master. He alone has the power of judging whether even during those long seven years the *chela* will

be favoured regardless of his mistakes and sins, with occasional communications with, and from, the guru. The latter thoroughly posted as to the causes and motives that led the candidate into sins of omission and commission is the only one to judge of the advisability or inadvisability of bestowing encouragement; as he alone is entitled to it, seeing that he is himself under the inexorable law of Karma, which no one from the Zulu savage up to the highest archangel can avoid—and that he has to assume the great responsibility of the causes created by himself.

Thus, the chief and the only indispensable condition required in the candidate or chela on probation, is simply unswerving fidelity to the chosen Master and his purposes. This is a condition *sine qua non*; not as I have said, on account of any jealous feeling, but simply because *the magnetic rapport between the two once broken, it becomes at each time doubly difficult to re-establish it again*; and that it is neither just nor fair, that the Masters should strain their powers for those whose future course and final desertion they very often can plainly foresee. Yet, how many of those who, expecting as I would call it “favours by anticipation,” and being disappointed, instead of humbly repeating *mea culpa*, tax the Masters with selfishness and injustice? They will deliberately break the thread of connection ten times in one year, and yet expect each time to be taken back on the old lines! I know of one theosophist—let him be nameless though it is hoped he will recognize himself—a quiet, intelligent young gentleman, a mystic by nature, who, in his ill-advised enthusiasm and impatience, changed *Masters* and his ideas about half a dozen times in less than three years. First he offered himself, was accepted on probation and took the vow of chelaship; about a year later, he suddenly got the idea of getting married, though he had several proofs of the corporeal presence of his Master, and had several favours bestowed upon him. Projects of marriage failing, he sought “Masters” under other climes, and became an enthusiastic Rosicrucian; then he returned to theosophy as a Christian mystic; then again sought to enliven his austerities with a wife; then gave up the idea and turned a spiritualist. And now having applied once more “to be taken back as a chela” (I have his letter) and his Master remaining silent—he renounced him altogether, to seek in the words of the above manifesto—his old “Essenian Master and *to test the spirits* in his name.”

The able and respected editor of the *Occult Word* and her Secretary  
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are right, and have chosen the only true path in which with a very small dose of blind faith, they are sure to encounter no deceptions or disappointments. "It is pleasant for some of us," they say, "to obey the call of the 'Man of Sorrows' who will not turn any away, because they are unworthy or have not scored up a certain percentage of personal merit." How *do* they know? unless they accept the cynically awful and pernicious dogma of the Protestant Church, that teaches the forgiveness of the blackest crime, provided the murderer *believes sincerely* that the blood of his "Redeemer" has saved him at the last hour — what is it but *blind* un-philosophical faith? Emotionalism is *not* philosophy; and Buddha devoted his long self-sacrificing life to tear people away precisely from that *evil breeding* superstition. Why speak of Buddha then, in the same breath? The doctrine of salvation by *personal* merit, and *self-forgetfulness* is the cornerstone of the teaching of the Lord Buddha. Both the writers may have and very likely they did — "hunt after *strange gods*"; but these *were not our* Masters. They have "denied Him thrice" and now propose "with bleeding feet and prostrate spirit" to "pray that He (Jesus) may take us (them) once more under his wing," etc. The "Nazarene Master" is sure to oblige them so far. Still they will be "living on *husks*" plus "blind faith." But in this they are the best judges, and no one has a right to meddle with their private beliefs in our Society; and heaven grant that they should not in their fresh disappointment turn our bitterest enemies one day.

Yet, to those Theosophists, who are displeased with the Society in general, no one has ever made to you any rash promises; least of all, has either the Society or its founders ever offered their "Masters" as a *chromo-premium* to the best-behaved. For years every new member has been told that *he was promised nothing*, but had everything to expect only from his own personal merit. The Theosophist is left free and untrammelled in his actions. Whenever displeased — *alia tentanda via est* — no harm in trying elsewhere; unless, indeed one has offered himself and is decided to win the Masters' favors. To such especially, I now address myself and ask: Have you fulfilled *your* obligations and pledges? Have you, who would fain lay all the blame on the Society and the Masters — the latter the embodiment of charity, tolerance, justice and universal love —

have you *led the life* requisite, and the conditions required from one who becomes a candidate? Let him who feels in his heart and conscience

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that he has,—that he has never once failed seriously, never doubted his Master's wisdom, never sought *other* Master or Masters in his impatience to become an Occultist with powers; and that he has never betrayed his theosophical duty in thought or deed,—let him, I say, rise and *protest*. He can do so fearlessly; there is no penalty attached to it, and he will not even receive a reproach, let alone be excluded from the Society—the broadest and most liberal in its views, the most catholic of all the Societies known or unknown. I am afraid my invitation will remain unanswered. During the eleven years of the existence of the Theosophical Society I have known, out of the seventy-two regularly accepted chelas on probation and the hundreds of *lay* candidates—only *three* who have not hitherto failed, and *one only* who had a full success. No one forces anyone into chelaship; no promises are uttered, none except the mutual pledge between Master and the would-be chela. Verily, Verily, many are the called but few are chosen—or rather few who have the patience of going to the bitter end, if bitter we can call simple perseverance and singleness of purpose.

What about the Society, in general, outside of India? Who among the many thousands of members does *lead the life*? Shall anyone say because he is a strict vegetarian—*elephants and cows are that*—or happens to lead a celibate life, after a stormy youth in the opposite direction; or because he studies the *Bhagavad-Gita* or the "Yoga philosophy" *upside down*, that he is a theosophist *according to the Masters' hearts*? As it is not the cowl that makes the monk, so, no long hair with a poetical vacancy on the brow are sufficient to make of one a faithful follower of *divine* Wisdom. Look around you, and behold our Universal Brotherhood so called! The Society founded to remedy the glaring evils of Christianity, to shun bigotry and intolerance, *cant* and superstition and to cultivate real universal love extending even to the dumb brute, what has it become in Europe and America in these eleven years of trial? In one thing only we have succeeded to be considered higher than our Christian Brothers, who, according to Lawrence Oliphant's graphic expression, "kill one another for Brotherhood's sake and fight as devils for the love of God"—and

this is that we have made away *with every dogma* and are now justly and wisely trying to make away with the last vestige of even nominal authority. But in every other respect we are as bad as they are: backbiting, slander, uncharitableness, criticism, incessant war-cry and ding of mutual rebukes that Christian

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Hell itself might be proud of! And all this, I suppose, is the Masters' fault: They will not help those who help others on the way of salvation and liberation from selfishness—with kicks and scandals? Truly *we are* an example to the world, and fit companions for the holy ascetics of the snowy Range!

And now a few words more before I close. I will be asked: “And who are you to find fault with us? Are you, who claim nevertheless communion with the Masters and receive daily favors from Them; Are you so holy, faultless, and so worthy?” To this I answer: I am not. Imperfect and faulty is my nature; many and glaring are my shortcomings—and for this my Karma is heavier than that of any other Theosophist. *It is*—and must be so—since for so many years I stand set in the pillory, a target for my enemies and some friends also. Yet I accept the *trial* cheerfully. Why? Because I know that I have, all my faults notwithstanding, Master's protection extended over me. And if I have it, the reason for it is simply this: for thirty-five years and more, ever since 1851 that I saw any Master *bodily* and personally for the first time, *I have never once denied or even doubted Him*, not even in thought. Never a reproach or a murmur against Him has escaped my lips, or entered even my brain for one instant under the heaviest trials. From the first I knew what I had to expect, for I was told that, which I have never ceased repeating to others: as soon as one steps on the Path leading to the *Ashram* of the blessed Masters—the last and only custodians of primitive Wisdom and Truth—his Karma, instead of having to be distributed throughout his long life, falls upon him in a block and crushes him with its whole weight. He who believes in what he professes and in his Master, will stand it and come out of the trial victorious; he *who doubts*, the coward who fears to receive his just dues and tries to avoid justice being done—fails. He will not escape Karma just the same, but he will only lose that for which he has risked its untimely visits. This is why, having been so constantly, so mercilessly slashed by my Karma using my enemies as unconscious weapons, that I have



stood it all. I felt sure that Master would not permit that I should perish; that he would always appear at the *eleventh* hour—and so he did. Three times I was saved from death by Him, the last time almost against my will; when I went again into the cold, wicked world out of love for Him, who has taught me what I know and made me what I am. Therefore, I do His work and bidding, and this is what has given me the lion's strength to support

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shocks—physical and mental, one of which would have killed any theosophist who would go on doubting of the mighty protection. Unswerving devotion to Him who embodies the duty traced for me, and belief in the Wisdom—collectively, of that grand, mysterious, yet actual Brotherhood of holy men—is my only merit, and the cause of my success in Occult philosophy. And now repeating after the *Paraguru*—my Master's Master—the words He had sent as a message to those who wanted to make of the Society a "miracle club" instead of a Brotherhood of Peace, Love and mutual assistance—"Perish rather, the Theosophical Society and its hapless Founders," I say perish their twelve years' labour and their very lives rather than that I should see what I do today: theosophists, outvying political "rings" in their search for personal power and authority; theosophists slandering and criticizing each other as two rival Christian sects might do; finally theosophists refusing to *lead the life* and then criticizing and throwing slurs on the grandest and noblest of men, because tied by their wise laws—hoary with age and based on an experience of human nature millenniums old—those Masters refuse to interfere with Karma and to play second fiddle to every theosophist who calls upon Them and whether he deserves it or not.

Unless radical reforms in our American and European Societies are speedily resorted to—I fear that before long there will remain but one centre of Theosophical Societies and Theosophy in the whole world—namely, in India; on that country I call all the blessings of my heart. All my love and aspirations belong to my beloved brothers, the Sons of old Aryavarta—the Motherland of my Master.

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## CHELAS AND LAY CHELAS

AS the word *Chela* has, among others, been introduced by Theosophy into the nomenclature of Western metaphysics, and the circulation of our magazine is constantly widening, it will be as well if some more definite explanation than heretofore is given with respect to the meaning of this term and the rules of Chelaship, for the benefit of our European if not Eastern members. A “Chela” then, is one who has offered himself or herself as a pupil to learn practically the “hidden mysteries of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.” The spiritual teacher to whom he proposes his candidature is called in India a *Guru*; and the real Guru is always an Adept in the Occult Science. A man of profound knowledge, exoteric and esoteric, especially the latter; and one who has brought his carnal nature under subjection of the Will; who has developed in himself both the power (*Siddhi*) to control the forces of nature, and the capacity to probe her secrets by the help of the formerly latent but now active powers of his being:—this is the real Guru. To offer oneself as a candidate for Chelaship is easy enough, to develop into an Adept the most difficult task any man could possibly undertake. There are scores of “natural-born” poets, mathematicians, mechanics, statesmen, etc., but a natural-born Adept is something practically impossible. For, though we do hear at very rare intervals of one who has an extraordinary innate capacity for the acquisition of occult knowledge and power, yet even he has to pass the self-same tests and probations, and go through the same self-training as any less endowed fellow aspirant. In this matter it is most true that there is no royal road by which favourites may travel.

For centuries the selection of Chelas—outside the hereditary group within the *gon-pa* (temple)—has been made by the Himalayan Mahatmas themselves from among the class—in Tibet, a considerable one as to number—of natural mystics. The only exceptions have been in the cases of Western men like Fludd, Thomas Vaughan, Paracelsus, Pico di Mirandola, Count St. Germain, etc., whose temperamental affinity to this celestial science more or less

forced the distant Adepts to come into personal relations with them, and enabled them to get such small (or large) proportion of the whole truth as was possible under their social surroundings. From Book IV of Kiu-te, Chapter on “the Laws of Upasans,” we learn that the qualifications expected in a Chela were:—

1. Perfect physical health;
2. Absolute mental and physical purity;
3. Unselfishness of purpose; universal charity; pity for all animate beings;
4. Truthfulness and unswerving faith in the law of Karma, independent of any power in nature that could interfere: a law whose course is not to be obstructed by any agency, not to be caused to deviate by prayer or propitiatory exoteric ceremonies;
5. A courage undaunted in every emergency, even by peril to life;
6. An intuitional perception of one’s being the vehicle of the manifested Avalokitesvara or Divine Atman (Spirit);
7. Calm indifference for, but a just appreciation of everything that constitutes the objective and transitory world, in its relation with, and to, the invisible regions.

Such, at the least, must have been the recommendations of one aspiring to perfect Chelaship. With the sole exception of the 1st, which in rare and exceptional cases might have been modified, each one of these points has been invariably insisted upon, and all must have been more or less developed in the inner nature by the Chela’s unhelped exertions, before he could be actually put to the test.

When the self-evolving ascetic—whether in, or outside the active world—had placed himself, according to his natural capacity, above, hence made himself master of, his (1) *Sarira*—body; (2) *Indriya*—senses; (3) *Dosha*—faults; (4) *Dukkha*—pain; and is ready to become one with his *Manas*—mind; *Buddhi*—intellection, or spiritual intelligence; and *Atma*—highest soul, *i.e.*, spirit. When he is ready for this, and, further, to recognize in *Atma* the highest ruler in the world of perceptions, and in the will, the highest executive energy (power),

then may he, under the time-honoured rules, be taken in hand by one of the Initiates. He may then be shown the mysterious path at whose thither end the Chela is taught the unerring discernment of *Phala*, or the fruits of causes produced, and

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given the means of reaching *Apavarga*—emancipation, from the misery of repeated births (in whose determination the ignorant has no hand), and thus of avoiding *Pratyā-bhava*—transmigration.

But since the advent of the Theosophical Society, one of whose arduous tasks it was to re-awaken in the Aryan mind the dormant memory of the existence of this science and of those transcendent human capabilities, the rules of Chela selection have become slightly relaxed in one respect. Many members of the Society becoming convinced by practical proof upon the above points, and rightly enough thinking that if other men had hitherto reached the goal, they too if inherently fitted, might reach it by following the same path, pressed to be taken as candidates. And as it would be an interference with Karma to deny them the chance of at least beginning—since they were so importunate, they were given it. The results have been far from encouraging so far, and it is to show these unfortunates the cause of their failure as much as to warn others against rushing heedlessly upon a similar fate, that the writing of the present article has been ordered. The candidates in question, though plainly warned against it in advance, began wrong by selfishly looking to the future and losing sight of the past. They forgot that they had done nothing to deserve the rare honour of selection, nothing which warranted their expecting such a privilege; that they could boast of none of the above enumerated merits. As men of the selfish, sensual world, whether married or single, merchants, civilian or military employees, or members of the learned professions, they had been to a school most calculated to assimilate them to the animal nature, least so to develop their spiritual potentialities. Yet each and all had vanity enough to suppose that their case would be made an exception to the law of countless centuries' establishment as though, indeed, in their person had been born to the world a new *Avatar*! All expected to have hidden things taught, extraordinary powers given them because—well, because they had joined the Theosophical

Society. Some had sincerely resolved to amend their lives, and give up their evil courses; we must do them that justice, at all events.

All were refused at first, Col. Olcott, the President, himself, to begin with; and as to the latter gentleman there is now no harm in saying that he was not formally accepted as a Chela until he had proved by more than a year's devoted labours and by a determination which brooked no denial, that he might safely be tested. Then from all sides came complaints—from Hindus, who ought to have

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known better, as well as from Europeans who, of course, were not in a condition to know anything at all about the rules. The cry was that unless at least a few Theosophists were given the chance to try, the Society could not endure. Every other noble and unselfish feature of our programme was ignored—a man's duty to his neighbour, to his country, his duty to help, enlighten, encourage and elevate those weaker and less favoured than he; all were trampled out of sight in the insane rush for adeptship. The call for phenomena, phenomena, phenomena, resounded in every quarter, and the Founders were impeded in their real work and teased importunately to intercede with the Mahatmas, against whom the real grievance lay, though their poor agents had to take all the buffets. At last, the word came from the higher authorities that a few of the most urgent candidates should be taken at their word. The result of the experiment would perhaps show better than any amount of preaching what Chelaship meant, and what are the consequences of selfishness and temerity. Each candidate was warned that he must wait for years in any event, before his fitness could be proven, and that he must pass through a series of tests that would bring out all there was in him, whether bad or good. They were nearly all married men and hence were designated "Lay Chelas"—a term new in English, but having long had its equivalent in Asiatic tongues. A Lay Chela is but a man of the world who affirms his desire to become wise in spiritual things. Virtually, every member of the Theosophical Society who subscribes to the second of our three "Declared Objects" is such; for though not of the number of true Chelas, he has yet the possibility of becoming one, for he has stepped across the boundary-line which separated him from the Mahatmas, and has brought himself, as it were, under their notice.

In joining the Society and binding himself to help along its work, he has pledged himself to act in some degree in concert with those Mahatmas, at whose behest the Society was organized, and under whose conditional protection it remains. The joining is then, the introduction; all the rest depends entirely upon the member himself, and he need never expect the most distant approach to the “favor” of one of our Mahatmas, or any other Mahatmas in the world—should the latter consent to become known—that has not been fully earned by personal merit. The *Mahatmas are the servants, not the arbiters of the Law of Karma*. Lay-Chelaship confers no privilege upon anyone except that of working for merit under the observation of a Master.

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And whether that Master be or be not seen by the Chela makes no difference whatever as to the result: his good thoughts, words and deeds will bear their fruits, his evil ones, theirs. To boast of Lay Chelaship or make a parade of it, is the surest way to reduce the relationship with the Guru to a mere empty name, for it would be *primâ facie* evidence of vanity and unfitness for farther progress. And for years we have been teaching everywhere the maxim “First deserve, then desire” intimacy with the Mahatmas.

Now there is a terrible law operative in nature, one which cannot be altered, and whose operation clears up the apparent mystery of the selection of certain “Chelas” who have turned out sorry specimens of morality, these few years past. Does the reader recall the old proverb, “Let sleeping dogs lie”? There is a world of occult meaning in it. No man or woman knows his or her moral strength until it is *tried*. Thousands go through life very respectably, because they were never put to the pinch. This is a truism doubtless, but it is most pertinent to the present case. One who undertakes to try for Chelaship by that very act rouses and lashes to desperation every sleeping passion of his animal nature. For this is the commencement of a struggle for the mastery in which quarter is neither to be given nor taken. It is, once for all, “To be, or Not to be”; to conquer, means Adeptship; to fail, an ignoble Martyrdom; for to fall victim to lust, pride, avarice, vanity, selfishness, cowardice, or any other of the lower propensities, is indeed ignoble, if measured by the standard of true manhood. The Chela is not only called to face all the latent evil propensities of his nature, but, in addition, the whole volume of maleficent power accumulated by the

community and nation to which he belongs. For he is an integral part of those aggregates, and what affects either the individual man, or the group (town or nation) reacts upon the other. And in this instance his struggle for goodness jars upon the whole body of badness in his environment, and draws its fury upon him. If he is content to go along with his neighbours and be almost as they are—perhaps a little better or somewhat worse than the average—no one may give him a thought. But let it be known that he has been able to detect the hollow mockery of social life, its hypocrisy, selfishness, sensuality, cupidity and other bad features, and has determined to lift himself up to a higher level, at once he is hated, and every bad, or bigoted, or malicious nature sends at him a current of opposing will power. If he is innately strong he shakes it off, as the powerful

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swimmer dashes through the current that would bear a weaker one away. But in this moral battle, if the Chela has one single hidden blemish—do what he may, it *shall* and *will* be brought to light. The varnish of conventionalities which “civilization” overlays us all with must come off to the last coat, and the Inner Self, naked and without the slightest veil to conceal its reality, is exposed. The habits of society which hold men to a certain degree under moral restraint, and compel them to pay tribute to virtue by seeming to be good whether they are so or not, these habits are apt to be all forgotten, these restraints to be all broken through under the strain of chela-ship. He is now in an atmosphere of illusions—*Maya*. Vice puts on its most alluring face, and the tempting passions try to lure the inexperienced aspirant to the depths of psychic debasement. This is not a case like that depicted by a great artist, where Satan is seen playing a game of chess with a man upon the stake of his soul, while the latter’s good angel stands beside him to counsel and assist. For the strife is in this instance between the Chela’s Will and his carnal nature, and Karma forbids that any angel or Guru should interfere until the result is known. With the vividness of poetic fancy Bulwer Lytton has idealised it for us in his *Zanoni*, a work which will ever be prized by the occultist; while in his *Strange Story* he has with equal power shown the black side of occult research and its deadly perils. Chelaship was defined, the other day, by a Mahatma as a “psychic solvent, which eats away all dross and leaves only the pure gold behind.” If the candidate has the latent lust for money, or political chicanery, or materialistic scepticism, or vain display, or false speaking, or cruelty, or sensual gratification of any kind, the

germ is almost sure to sprout; and so, on the other hand, as regards the noble qualities of human nature. The real man comes out. Is it not the height of folly, then, for anyone to leave the smooth path of common-place life to scale the crags of chelaship without some reasonable feeling of certainty that he has the right stuff in him? Well says the Bible: "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall"—a text that would-be Chelas should consider well before they rush headlong into the fray! It would have been well for some of our Lay-Chelas if they had thought twice before defying the tests. *We call to mind several sad failures within a twelvemonth.* One went bad in the head, recanted noble sentiments uttered but a few weeks-previously, and became a member of a religion he had just scornfully and unanswerably proven false. A second became a defaulter and absconded with his employer's money—the latter also

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a Theosophist. A third gave himself up to gross debauchery, and confessed it with ineffectual sobs and tears, to his chosen Guru. A fourth got entangled with a person of the other sex and fell out with his dearest and truest friends. A fifth showed signs of mental aberration and was brought into Court upon charges of discreditable conduct. A sixth shot himself to escape the consequences of criminality, on the verge of detection! And so we might go on and on. All these were apparently sincere searchers after truth, and passed in the world for respectable persons. Externally, they were fairly eligible as candidates for Chelaship, as appearances go; but "within all was rottenness and dead men's bones." The world's varnish was so thick as to hide the absence of the true gold underneath; and the "resolvent" doing its work, the candidate proved in each instance but a gilded figure of moral dross, from circumference to core. . . .

In what precedes we have, of course, dealt but with the failures among Lay-Chelas; there have been partial successes too, and these are passing gradually through the first stages of their probation. Some are making themselves useful to the Society and to the world in general by good example and precept. If they persist, well for them, well for us all: the odds are fearfully against them, but still "there is no Impossibility to him who Wills." The difficulties in Chelaship will never be less until human nature changes and a new sort is evolved. St. Paul (Rom. vii, 18, 19) might have had a Chela in mind when he said "to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good



I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." And in the wise Kirátár-juniya of Bharávi it is written: —

The enemies which rise within the body,  
Hard to be overcome—the evil passions—  
Should manfully be fought; *who conquers these Is equal to the  
conqueror of worlds, (xi, 32.)*

*Supplement to Theosophist, July, 1883*

MADAME BLAVATSKY ON  
"THE HIMALAYAN BROTHERS"

SIR,—

*"On the authority of an adept" (?) "they" (the Theosophists and Madame Blavatsky) "are all mediums under the influence of the lower spirits"* Such is the sentence used by you in an editorial review of Mr. Sinnett's *Occult World (Spiritualist, June 17th)*. Doubtful as its pertinency might appear, I personally found nothing very objectionable in it, the more so, as elsewhere you do me the honour to express your conviction that (whether controlled by good or bad spirits) I yet am a "strong physical medium" —that term precluding at least the suspicion of my being a regular impostor. This letter then is not directed against you, but rather against the pretensions of a would-be "adept." Another point should be also attended to before I proceed, in order that the situation may be as clearly defined as possible.

Finding myself for the period of nearly seven years one of the best abused individuals under the sun, I rather got accustomed to that sort of thing. Hence, I would hardly take up the pen now to defend my own character. If people, besides forgetting that I am a woman, and an old woman, are dull enough to fail to perceive that had I declared myself anything in creation, save a Theosophist and one of the founders of our Society, I would have been in every respect—materially as well as socially—better off in the world's consideration, and that therefore, since, notwithstanding all the persecution and opposition

encountered, I persist in remaining and declaring myself one, I cannot well be that charlatan and pretender some people would see in me—I really cannot help it. Fools are unable, and the wise unwilling to see the absurdity of such an accusation, for as Shakespeare puts it:

Folly in fools bears not so strong a note  
As foolery in the wise, when wit doth  
dote.

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It is not then to defend myself that I claim space in your columns, but to answer one whose *ex-cathedra* utterances have revolted the sense of justice of more than one of our Theosophists in India, and to defend them—who have a claim on all the reverential feeling that my nature is capable of.

A new correspondent, one of those dangerous, quasi-anonymous individuals who abuse their literary privilege of hiding their true personality and thus shirk responsibility behind an initial or two, has lately won a prominent place in the columns of your journal. He calls himself an “adept”; that is easy enough, but does or rather can he prove it? To begin with, in the sight of the Spiritualists as much as in that of sceptics in general, an “adept,” whether he hails from Tibet, India, or London, is all one. The latter will persist in calling him an impostor; and the former, were he even to prove his powers, in seeing in him either a medium or a juggler. Now your “J.K.” when he states in the *Spiritualist* of June 24th, that “the phenomena attendant upon real adeptship are on an entirely different plane from “Spiritualism” risks, nay is sure, to have every one of the above expletives flung in his face by both the above-mentioned classes.

Could he but prove what he claims, namely, the powers conferring upon a person the title of an initiate, such epithets might well be scorned by him. Aye,—but I ask again, is he ready to make good his claim? The language used by him, to begin with, is not that which a true adept would ever use. It is dogmatic and authoritative throughout, and too full of insulting aspersions against those who are not yet proved to be worse or lower than himself; and fails entirely to carry conviction to the minds of the profane as of those who do know something of adepts and initiates—that it is one of such proficientes who now addresses them. Styling himself an adept, whose “Hierophant is a western gentleman,” but a few lines further on he confesses his utter ignorance of the

existence of a body which cannot possibly be ignored by any true adept! I say "cannot" for there is no accepted neophyte on the whole globe but at least knows of the Himalayan Fraternity. The sanction to receive the last and supreme initiation, the real "word at low breath" can come but through those fraternities in Egypt, India, and Thibet to one of which belongs "Koot Hoomi Lal Singh." True, there is "adept" and adept, and they differ, as there are adepts in more than one art and science. I, for one, know in America of a shoemaker, who advertised

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himself as "an adept in the high art of manufacturing Parisian cothurns." J.K. speaks of Brothers "on the soul plane," of "divine Kabbalah culminating in God," of "slave magic," and so on, a phraseology which proves to me most conclusively that he is but one of those dabblers in western occultism which were so well represented some years ago, by French-born "Egyptians" and "Algerians," who told people their fortunes by the *Tarot*, and placed their visitors within enchanted circles with a Tetragrammaton inscribed in the centre. I do not say J.K. is one of the latter, I beg him to understand. Though quite unknown to me and hiding behind his two initials, I will not follow his rude example and insult him for all that. But I say and repeat that his language sadly betrays him. If a Kabbalist at all, then himself and his "Hierophant" are but the humble self-taught pupils of the mediaeval, and so-called "Christian" Kabbalists; of adepts, who, like Agrippa, Khunrath, Paracelsus, Vaughan, Robert Fludd, and several others, revealed their knowledge to the world *but to better conceal it*, and who never gave the key to it in their writings. He bombastically asserts his own knowledge and power, and proceeds to pass judgment on people of whom he knows and can know nothing. Of the "Brothers" he says: "If they are true adepts, they have not shown much worldly wisdom, and the organization which is to inculcate their doctrine is a complete failure, for even the very first psychical and physical principles of true Theosophy and occult science are quite unknown to and unpractised by the members of that organization—the Theosophical Society."

How does he know? Did the Theosophists take him into their confidence? And if he knows something of the British Theosophical Society, what *can* he know of those in India? If he belongs to any of them, then does he play false to the whole body and is a traitor. And if he does not, what has he to say of its

practitioners, since the Society in general, and especially its esoteric sections that count but a very few “chosen ones” —are secret bodies?

The more attentively I read his article the more am I inclined to laugh at the dogmatic tone prevailing in it. Were I a Spiritualist, I would be inclined to suspect in it a good “goak” of John King, whose initials are represented in the signature of J.K. Let him first learn, that mirific Brother of the “Western Hermetic Circle in the soul-plane,” a few facts about the adepts in general, before he renders himself any more ridiculous.

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(1) No true adept will on any consideration whatever reveal himself as one, to the profane. Nor would he ever speak in such terms of contempt of people, who are certainly no more silly, and, in many an instance, far wiser than himself. But were even the Theosophists the poor misled creatures he would represent them to be, a true adept would rather help than deride them.

(2) There never was a true Initiate but knew of the secret Fraternities in the East. It is not Eliphas Levi who would ever deny their existence, since we have his authentic signature to the contrary. Even P. B. Randolph, that wondrous, though erratic, genius of America, that half-initiated seer, who got his knowledge in the East, had good reasons to know of their actual existence, as his writings can prove.

(3) One who ever perorates upon his occult knowledge, and speaks of practising *his* powers in the name of some particular prophet, deity, or Avatar, is but a sectarian mystic at best. He cannot be an adept in the Eastern sense — a *Mahatma*, for his judgment will always be biased and prejudiced by the colouring of his own special and dogmatic religion.

(4) The great science, called by the vulgar “magic,” and by its Eastern proficient *Gupta Vidya*, embracing as it does each and every science, since it is the acme of knowledge, and constitutes the perfection of philosophy, is universal: hence—as very truly remarked—cannot be confined to one particular nation or geographical locality. But, as Truth is *one*, the method for the attainment of its highest proficiency must necessarily be also *one*. It cannot be subdivided, for, once reduced to parts, each of them, left to itself, will, like rays of light, diverge from, instead of converging to, its centre, the ultimate goal

of knowledge; and these parts can rebecome the *Whole* only by collecting them together again, or each fraction will remain but a fraction.

This truism, which may be termed elementary mathematics for little boys, has to be re-called, in order to refresh the memory of such "adepts" as are too apt to forget that "Christian Kabbalism" is but a fraction of *Universal Occult Science*. And, if they believe that they have nothing more to learn, then the less they turn to "Eastern Adepts" for information the better and the less trouble for both. There is but one royal road to "Divine Magic"; neglect and abandon it to devote yourself specially to one of the paths diverging from it, and like a lonely wanderer you will find yourself

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lost in an inextricable labyrinth. Magic, I suppose, existed millenniums before the Christian era; and, if so, are we to think then, with our too learned friends, the modern "Western Kabbalists," that it was all *Black Magic*, practised by the "Old firm of Devil & Co."? But together with every other person who knows something of what he or she talks about, I say that it is nothing of the kind; that J.K. seems to be superbly ignorant even of the enormous difference which exists between a Kabbalist and an Occultist. Is he aware, or not, that the Kabbalist stands, in relation to the Occultist, as a little detached hill at the foot of the Himalayas, to Mount Everest? That what is known as the Jewish Kabbala of Simon Ben Jochai, is already the disfigured version of its primitive source, the Great Chaldean *Book of Numbers*? That as the former, with its adaptation to the Jewish Dispensation, its mixed international Angelology and Demonology, its Orphiels and Raphaels and Greek Tetragrams, is a pale copy of the Chaldean, so the Kabbala of the Christian Alchemists and Rosicrucians is naught in its turn but a tortured edition of the Jewish. By centralizing the Occult Power and his course of actions, in some one national God or *Avatar*, whether in Jehovah or Christ, Brahma or Mahomet, the Kabbalist diverges the more from the one central Truth.

It is but the Occultist, the Eastern adept, who stands a Free Man, omnipotent through its own Divine Spirit as much as man can be on earth. He has rid himself of all human conceptions and religious side-issues; he is at one and the same time a Chaldean Sage, a Persian Magi, a Greek Theurgist, an Egyptian Hermetist, a Buddhist Rahat and an Indian Yogi. He has collected into one

bundle all the separate fractions of Truth widely scattered over the nations, and holds in his hand the One Truth, a torch of light which no adverse wind can bend, blow out or even cause to waver. Not he the Prometheus who robs but a portion of the Sacred Fire, and therefore finds himself chained to Mount Caucasus for his intestines to be devoured by vultures, for he has secured God within himself and depends no more on the whim and caprice of either good or evil deities.

True, "Koot Hoomi" mentions Buddha. But it is not because the brothers hold him in the light of God or even of "a God," but simply because he is the Patron of the Thibetan Occultists, the greatest of the *Illuminati* and adepts, self-initiated by his own Divine Spirit or "God-self" unto all the mysteries of the invisible universe.

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Therefore to speak of imitating "the life of Christ," or that of Buddha, or Zoroaster, or any other man on earth chosen and accepted by any one special nation for its God and leader, is to show oneself a Sectarian even in Kabbalism, that fraction of the one "Universal Science"—Occultism. The latter is pre-historic and is coeval with intelligence. The Sun shines for the heathen Asiatic as well as for the Christian European and for the former still more gloriously, I am glad to say.

To conclude, it is enough to glance at that sentence of more than questionable propriety, and more fit to emanate from the pen of a Jesuit than that of a Kabbalist, which allows of the supposition that the "Brothers" are only a branch of the old established firm of "Devil and Co." to feel convinced that beyond some "Abracadabra" dug out from an old mouldy MS. of Christian Kabbalism, J.K. *knows nothing*. It is but on the unsophisticated profane, or a very innocent Spiritualist, that his bombastic sentences, all savouring of the *Anche is son pittore*, that he may produce some sensation.

True, there is no need of going absolutely to Thibet or India to find *some* knowledge and power "which are latent in every human soul"; but the acquisition of the highest knowledge and power require not only many years of the severest study enlightened by a superior intelligence and an audacity bent by no peril; but also as many years of retreat in comparative

solitude, and association with but students pursuing the same object, in a locality where nature itself preserves like the neophyte an absolute and unbroken stillness if not silence! where the air is free for hundreds of miles around of all mephytic influence; the atmosphere and human magnetism absolutely pure, and—no animal blood is spilt. Is it in London or even the most country-hidden village of England that such conditions can be found?

—H. P. Blavatsky

Bombay, July 20th.

*Spiritualist* (London), August 12, 1881

### CAN THE MAHATMAS BE SELFISH?

IN various writings on occult subjects, it has been stated that *unselfishness* is a *sine qua non* for success in occultism. Or a more correct form of putting it, would be that the development of an unselfish feeling is in itself the primary training which brings with it “knowledge which is power” as a necessary accessory. It is not, therefore, “knowledge,” as ordinarily understood, that the occultist works for, but it comes to him as a matter of course, in consequence of his having removed the veil which screens true knowledge from his view. The basis of knowledge exists everywhere, since the phenomenal world furnishes or rather abounds with facts, the causes of which have to be discovered. We see only the *effects* in the *phenomenal* world, for each cause in that world is itself the *effect* of some other cause, and so on; and, therefore, true knowledge consists in getting at the root of all phenomena, and thus arriving at a correct understanding of the *primal* cause, the “rootless root,” which is not an effect in its turn.

To perceive anything correctly, one can use only those senses or instruments which correspond to the nature of that object. Hence, to comprehend the noumenal, a noumenal sense is a pre-requisite; while the transient phenomena can be perceived by senses corresponding to the nature of those phenomena. Occult Philosophy teaches us that the seventh principle is the only eternal

Reality, while the rest, belonging as they do to the “world of forms” which are non-permanent, are illusive in the sense that they are transient. To these is limited the phenomenal world which can be taken cognisance of by the senses corresponding to the nature of those six principles. It will thus be clear that it is only the *seventh* sense, which pertains to the *noumenal* world, that can comprehend the Abstract Reality underlying all phenomena. As this seventh principle is all-pervading, it exists potentially in all of us; and he, who would arrive at true knowledge, has to develop that sense in him, or rather he must remove those veils which obscure its manifestation. All sense of *personality* is limited only to these lower six principles, for the

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former relates only to the “world of forms.” Consequently, *true* “knowledge” can be obtained only by tearing away all the curtains of *Maya* raised by a sense of *personality* before the *impersonal Atma*.

It is only in that *personality* that is centered selfishness, or rather the latter creates the former and *vice versa*, since they mutually act and react upon each other. For, selfishness is that feeling which seeks after the aggrandisement of one’s own egotistic personality to the exclusion of others. If, therefore, selfishness limits one to narrow personalities, absolute knowledge is impossible so long as selfishness is not got rid of. So long, however, as we are in this world of phenomena, we cannot be *entirely* rid of a sense of personality, however exalted that feeling may be in the sense that no feeling of *personal* aggrandisement or ambition remains. We are, by our constitution and state of evolution, placed in the “World of Relativity,” but as we find that *impersonality* and non-duality is the ultimate end of cosmic evolution, we have to endeavor to work along with Nature, and not place ourselves in opposition to its inherent impulse which must ultimately assert itself. To oppose it, must necessitate suffering, since a weaker force, in its egotism, tries to array itself against the *universal* law.

All that the occultist does, is to *hasten* this process, by allowing his Will to act in unison with the Cosmic Will or the Demiurgic Mind, which can be done by successfully checking the vain attempt of *personality* to assert itself in opposition to the former. And since the Mahatma is but an advanced occultist,



who has so far controlled his lower “self” as to hold it more or less in complete subjection to the Cosmic impulse, it is in the nature of things impossible for him to act in any other but an unselfish manner. No sooner does he allow the “personal self” to assert itself, than he ceases to be a Mahatma. Those, therefore, who being still entangled in the web of the delusive sense of personality charge the Mahatmas with “selfishness” in withholding “knowledge”—do not consider what they are talking about. The Law of Cosmic evolution is ever operating to achieve its purpose of ultimate unity and to carry the phenomenal into the *noumenal* plane, and the Mahatmas, being *en rapport* with it, are assisting that purpose. They therefore know best what knowledge is best for mankind at a particular stage of its evolution, and none else is competent to judge of that matter, since they alone have got to the *basic knowledge* which can determine

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the right course and exercise proper discrimination.

For us who are yet struggling in the mire of the illusive senses to dictate what knowledge Mahatmas shall impart to us and how they shall act, is like a street-boy presuming to teach science to Prof. Huxley or politics to Mr. Gladstone. For, it will be evident that, as soon as the least feeling of *selfishness* tries to assert itself, the vision of the spiritual sense, which is the only perception of the Mahatma, becomes clouded and he loses the “power” which *abstract* “knowledge” alone can confer. Hence, the vigilant watch of the “Will” we have constantly to exercise to prevent our lower nature from coming up to the surface, which it does in our present undeveloped state; and thus extreme activity and not passivity is the essential condition with which the student has to commence. First his activity is directed to check the opposing influence of the “lower self”; and, when that is conquered, his untrammelled Will centered in his higher (real) “self,” continues to work most efficaciously and actively in unison with the cosmic ideation in the “Divine Mind.”

*Theosophist*, August, 1884

## IS CREATION POSSIBLE FOR MAN?

The Editor of the Theosophist, Madame,

Talking the other day to a friend, who, like me, without being a Theosophist, takes a very great interest in the movements of your Society, I incidentally happened to remark that the "Brothers of the first section" were credited with such large powers, that even *creation* was not at times impossible to them. In support of my assertion, I instanced their own cup and saucer phenomenon, as narrated by Mr. Sinnett in his "Occult World," which phenomenon appeared to me to be something more than the mere *reproduction*, *transference* or *unearthing* from its hiding-place of an article *lost* or *stolen*, like the brooch. My friend, however, warmly objected to my statement—remarking that creation was not possible to man, whatever else he may be able to accomplish.

Believing, as I then did, in Christianity as the most perfect heaven-descended code of ethics on earth, there was a time in the history of my chequered life, (chequered, I mean, as regards the vast sea of doubt and unbelief on which I have been tossing for over twenty years) when I would have myself as warmly, even indignantly, repelled the idea of creation as a possibility to man; but the regular reading of your journal, and a careful perusal of Mr. Sinnett's book and of that marvel of learning and industry your own "Isis Unveiled," have effected quite a revolution (whether for good or bad has yet to be seen) in my thoughts, and it is now some time since I have begun to believe in the possibility of phenomena beyond the range of my own narrow vision.

Will you kindly tell me which of us is right, my friend or I? Not having the honour of being personally known to you, I close this letter only with my initial.

H.

OUR ANSWER

The question to be dealt with is hardly whether our correspondent or his friend is right, for we understand him to take up the

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prudent attitude of a seeker after truth who shrinks from affirming dogmatically that creation *is* possible for man, even while unwilling to accept the dogmatic negative assertion of his friend that “it is impossible.” Before coming to the gist of the question raised, we have, therefore, to notice the illustrations which this letter affords of the ways in which such a question may be considered.

When our correspondent’s friend denies that creation is possible for man, we can hardly assume that he does so from any conviction that he has sounded all the mysteries of Nature, and knowing all about the universe,—being able to account for all its phenomena—has ascertained that the process, whatever that may be, which he conceives of as creation does not go on anywhere in obedience to the will or influence of man, and has further ascertained that there is something in man which makes it impossible that such a process should be accomplished. And yet without having done all that, it is bold of him to say that creation is impossible. Assuming that he is not a student of occult science,—and the tone of the letter before us conveys the impression that he is not—our friend’s friend when he makes his dogmatic statement, seems to be proceeding on the method but too commonly adopted by people of merely ordinary culture and even by a few men of science—the method which takes a large group of preconceived ideas as a standard to which any new idea must be applied. If the new idea fits in with, and seems to support the old ones, well and good; they smile upon it. If it clashes with some of these they frown at it, and excommunicate it without further ceremony.

Now the attitude of mind exhibited by our correspondent, who finds many old beliefs, shattered by new ideas, the force of which he is constrained by moral honesty to recognize, and who, therefore, feels that in presence of the vast possibilities of Nature he must advance very cautiously and be ever on his guard against false lights held out by time-honoured prejudices and hasty conclusions,—seems to us an attitude of mind which is very much better entitled to respect than that of his over-confident friend. And we are the more anxious to recognize its superiority in the most emphatic language, because

when we approach the actual question to be discussed the bearing of what we have to say will be rather in favour of the view which the “friend” takes of “creations,”

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if indeed we are all attaching the same significance to that somewhat overdriven word.

It is needless after what we have just said to point out that if we are now going to make some statements as to what is, and what is not the fact, as regards some of the conditions of the universe we are not on that account infringing the rules of thought just laid down. We are simply giving an exposition of our little fragment of occult philosophy as taught by masters who are in a position to make positive statements on the subjects and the credibility of which will never be in danger from any of those apparently inexplicable occurrences related in the books to which our correspondent refers, and likely enough, as he justly conceives, to disturb many of the orthodox beliefs which he has seen crumbling around him.

It would be a volume we should have to write and not a brief explanatory note, if we attempted to begin, by elucidating the conviction we entertain that the Masters of Occult Philosophy above referred to are entitled to say what is and what is not. Enough for the present to say what we believe would be said in answer to the question before us, by *those who know*.

But we must have a clear understanding as to what is meant by creation. Probably the common idea on the subject is that when the world was “created,” the creator accorded himself or was somehow accorded a dispensation from the rule *ex nihilo nihil fit* and actually made the world out of nothing—if that is the idea of creation to be dealt with now, the reply of the philosophers would be not merely that such creation is impossible to man but that it is impossible to gods, or God; in short absolutely impossible. But a step in the direction of a philosophical conception is accomplished when people say the world was “created” (we say fashioned)—out of Chaos. Perhaps, they have no very clear idea of what they mean by Chaos, but it is a better word to use in this case than “nothing.” For, suppose we endeavour to conceive chaos as the matter of the universe in an unmanifested state it will be seen at once that though such matter

is perfectly inappreciable to ordinary human senses, and to that extent equivalent to “nothing” creation from such materials is not the production of something which did not exist before, but a change of state imposed upon a portion of universal matter which in its

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previous state was invisible, intangible and imponderable, but not on that account non-existent.<sup>1</sup> Theosophists-Occultists do not, however, use the word “creation,” at all, but replace it by that of Evolution.

Here we approach a comprehension of what may have been the course of events as regards the production of the mysterious cup and saucer described in Mr. Sinnett’s book. It is in no way inconceivable that if the production of manifestation in matter is the act accomplished by what is ordinarily called creation that the power of the human will in some of its transcendent developments may be enabled to impose on unmanifested matter or chaos, the change which brings it within the cognisance of the ordinary human senses.

*Theosophist*, December, 1881

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<sup>1</sup> It is one of the many reasons why Buddhist philosophy refuses to admit the existence and interference in the production of the universe of a direct creator or god. For once admit, for argument’s sake, that the world *was* created by such a being, who, to have done so, must have been omnipotent, there remains the old difficulty to be dealt with—who then created that pre-existing matter, that eternal, invisible, intangible and imponderable something or chaos? If we are told that being “eternal” and imperishable it had no need of being “created,” then our answer will be that in such a case there are two “Eternals” and two “Omnipotents”; or if our opponents argue that it is the omnipotent No. I or God who created it, then we return from where we first started—to the creation of *something* out of *nothing*, which is such an absolute absurdity before science and logic that it does not even require the final unanswerable query resorted to by some precocious children “and who created God!” —Ed.

## ANSWERS TO QUERIES

A Correspondent from New York writes:

. . . . The Editors of Lucifer would confer a great benefit on those who are attracted to the movement which they advocate, if they would state:

(I) Whether a would-be-theosophist-occultist is required to abandon his worldly ties and duties such as family affection, love of parents, wife, children, friends, etc.?

I ask this question because it is rumoured here that some theosophical publications have so stated, and would wish to know whether such a *sine qua non* condition really exists in your Rules? The same, however, is found in the New Testament. "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me, etc., etc," is said in Matthew (x. 37). Do the Masters of Theosophy demand as much?

Yours in the Search of Light,

L. M. C.

This is an old, old question, and a still older charge against theosophy, started first by its enemies. We emphatically answer, no; adding that no *theosophical* publication could have rendered itself guilty of such a falsehood and calumny. No follower of theosophy, least of all a disciple of the "Masters of Theosophy" (the *chela* of a *guru*), would ever be accepted on such conditions. Many were the candidates, but "few the chosen." Dozens were refused, simply because married and having a sacred duty to perform to wife and children.<sup>1</sup> None have ever been asked to forsake father or mother; for he who, being necessary to his parent for his support, leaves him or her to gratify his own selfish consideration or thirst for knowledge, however great and sincere, is "*unworthy*" of the Science of Sciences, "or ever to approach a holy Master."

Our correspondent must surely have confused in his mind Theosophy

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<sup>1</sup>We know but two cases of *married "chelas"* being accepted; but both these were Brahmins and had *child-wives*, according to Hindu custom, and they were *Reformers* more than *chelas*, trying to abrogate child-marriage and slavery. Others had to obtain the consent of their wives before entering the "Path," as is usual in India since long ages.

with Roman Catholicism, and Occultism with the dead-letter teachings of the Bible. For it is only in the Latin Church that it has become a meritorious action,

which is called serving God and Christ, to “abandon father and mother, wife and children,” and every duty of an honest man and citizen, in order to become a monk. And it is in St. Luke’s Gospel that one reads the terrible words, put in the mouth of Jesus: “If any *man* come to me, and *hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, his own life also*, he cannot be my disciple.” (xiv. 26.)

*Saint (?) Jerome* teaches, in one of his writings, “If thy father lies down across thy threshold, if thy mother uncovers to thine eyes the bosom which suckled thee, *trample on thy father’s lifeless body, trample on thy mother’s bosom, and with eyes unmoistened and dry, fly to the Lord, who calleth thee!*”

Surely then, it is not from any *theosophical* publication that our correspondent could have learnt such an infamous charge against theosophy and its masters— but rather in some *anti-Christian*, or too dogmatically “*Christian*” paper.

Our society has never been “more Catholic than the Pope.” It has done its best to follow out the path prescribed by the Masters; and if it has failed in more than one respect to fulfil its arduous task, the blame is certainly not to be thrown on either Theosophy, nor its Masters, but on the limitations of human nature. The *Rules*, however, of *chelaship*, or discipleship, are there, in many a Sanskrit and Tibetan volume. In Book IV of *Kiu-ti*, in the chapter on “*the Laws of Upasans*” (disciples), the qualifications expected in a “regular *chela*” are: (1) Perfect physical health.<sup>2</sup> (2) Absolute mental and physical purity. (3) Unselfishness of purpose; universal charity; pity for all animate beings. (4) Truthfulness and unswerving faith in the laws of Karma. (5) A courage undaunted in the support of truth, even in face of peril to life. (6) An intuitive perception of one’s being the vehicle of the manifested divine *Atman* (spirit). (7) Calm indifference for, but a just appreciation of, everything that constitutes the objective and transitory world. (8) Blessing of both parents<sup>3</sup> and *their permission to become an Upasan* (chela); and (9) Celibacy, and freedom from any obligatory duty.”

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<sup>2</sup> This rule I applies only to the “temple chelas,” who must be *perfect*.

<sup>3</sup> Or one, if the other is dead.

The two last rules are most strictly enforced. No man *convicted of disrespect to his father or mother, or unjust abandonment of his wife*, can ever be accepted even as a *lay chela*.

This is sufficient, it is hoped. We have heard of chelas who, having *failed*, perhaps in consequence of the neglect of some such duty, for one or another reason, have invariably thrown the blame and responsibility for it on the teaching of the Masters. This is but natural in poor and weak human beings who have not even the courage to recognise their own mistakes, or the rare nobility of publicly confessing them, but are always trying to find a scapegoat. Such we pity, and leave to the Law of Retribution, or Karma. It is not these weak creatures, who can ever be expected to have the best of the enemy described by the wise Kirátárjuniya of Bharavi:

The enemies which rise within the body,  
Hard to be overcome—the evil passions—  
Should manfully be fought, *who conquers these*  
*Is equal to the conqueror of worlds*, (xi. 32.)

[Ed.]

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We have received several communications for publication, bearing on the subjects discussed in the editorial of our last issue, "Let every man prove his own work." A few brief remarks may be made, not in reply to any of the letters—*which, being anonymous, and containing no card from the writers, cannot be published* (nor are such noticed, as a general rule)—but to the ideas and accusations contained in one of them, a letter signed "M." Its author takes up the cudgels on behalf of the Church. He objects to the statement that the institution lacks the enlightenment necessary to carry out a true system of philanthropy. He appears, also, to demur to the view that "the practical people either go on doing good unintentionally and often do harm," and points to the workers amid our slums as a vindication of Christianity—which, by-the-by, was in no sense attacked in the editorial so criticized.



To this, repeating what was said, we maintain that more mischief has been done by emotional charity than sentimentalists care to face. Any student of political economy is familiar with this fact, which passes for a truism with all those who have devoted attention to the problem. No nobler sentiment than that which animates

the unselfish philanthropist is conceivable; but the question at issue is not summed up in the recognition of this truth. The practical results of his labours have to be examined. We have to see whether he does not sow the seeds of a greater—while relieving a lesser—evil.

The fact that “thousands are making great efforts in all the cities throughout our land” to meet want, reflects immense credit on the character of such workers. It does not affect their creed, for such natures would remain the same, whatever the prevailing dogmas chanced to be. It is certainly a very poor illustration of the fruits of centuries of dogmatic Christianity that England should be so honeycombed with misery and poverty as she is—especially on the biblical ground that a tree must be judged by its fruits! It might, also, be argued, that the past history of the Churches, stained as it is with persecutions, the suppression of knowledge, crime and brutality, necessitates the turning over of a new leaf. The difficulties in the way are insuperable. “Churchianity” has, indeed, done its best to keep up with the age by assimilating the teachings of, and making veiled truces with, science, but it is incapable of affording a true spiritual ideal to the world.

The same Church-Christianity assails with fruitless pertinacity, the ever-growing host of Agnostics and Materialists, but is *as absolutely ignorant, as the latter, of the mysteries beyond the tomb*. The great necessity for the Church, according to Professor Flint, is to keep the leaders of European thought within its fold. By such men it is, however, regarded as an anachronism. The Church is eaten up with scepticism within its own walls; free-thinking clergymen being now very common. This constant drain of vitality has reduced the true religion to a very low ebb, and it is to infuse a new current of ideas and aspirations into modern thought, in short, to supply a logical basis for an elevated morality, a science and philosophy which is suited to the knowledge of the day, that Theosophy comes before the world. Mere physical philanthropy, apart from

the infusion of new influences and ennobling conceptions of life into the minds of the masses, is worthless. The gradual assimilation by mankind of great spiritual truths will alone revolutionize the face of civilization, and ultimately result in a far more effective panacea for evil, than the mere tinkering of superficial misery. Prevention is better than cure. Society creates its own outcasts, criminals, and profligates, and then condemns

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and punishes its own Frankensteins, sentencing its own progeny, the “bone of its bone, and the flesh of its flesh,” to a life of damnation on earth. Yet that society recognises and enforces most hypocritically Christianity—*i.e.*, “Churchianity.” Shall we then, or shall we not, infer that the latter is unequal to the requirements of mankind? Evidently the former, and most painfully and obviously so, in its present dogmatic form, which makes of the beautiful ethics preached on the Mount, a Dead Sea fruit, a whitened sepulchre, and no better.

Furthermore, the same “M.,” alluding to Jesus as one with regard to whom there could be only two alternatives, writes that he “was either the Son of God or the vilest impostor who ever trod this earth.” We answer, not at all. Whether the Jesus of the New Testament ever lived or not, whether he existed as an historical personage, or was simply a lay figure around which the Bible allegories clustered—the Jesus of Nazareth of Matthew and John, is the ideal for every would-be sage and Western candidate Theosophist to follow. That such an one as he, was *a* “Son of God,” is as undeniable as that he was neither the *only* “Son of God,” nor the first one, nor even the last who closed the series of the “Sons of God,” or the children of Divine Wisdom, on this earth. Nor is that other statement that in “His life he (Jesus) has ever spoken of himself as co-existent with Jehovah, the Supreme, the Centre of the Universe,” correct, whether in its dead letter, or hidden mystic sense. In no place does Jesus ever allude to “*Jehovah*”; but, on the contrary, attacking the Mosaic laws and the alleged Commandments given on Mount Sinai, he disconnects himself and his “Father” most distinctly and emphatically from the Sinaitic tribal God. The whole of Chapter V, in the Gospel of Matthew, is a passionate protest of the “man of peace, love and charity,” against the cruel, stern, and selfish commandments of “the man of war,” the “Lord” of Moses (Exod. xv., 3). “Ye

have heard that it was said by them of old times," —so and so—"But I say unto you," quite the reverse. Christians who still hold to the Old Testament and the Jehovah of the Israelites, are at best *schismatic Jews*. Let them be that, by all means, if they will so have it; but they have no right to call themselves even *Chrétians*, let alone *Christians*.<sup>4</sup>

It is a gross injustice and untruth to assert, as our anonymous

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<sup>4</sup>See "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels," in this number.

ANSWERS TO QUERIES

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correspondent does, that "the freethinkers are notoriously unholy in their lives." Some of the noblest characters, as well as deepest thinkers of the day, adorn the ranks of Agnosticism, Positivism and Materialism. The latter are the worst enemies of Theosophy and Mysticism; but this is no reason why strict justice should not be done unto them. Colonel Ingersoll, a rank materialist, and the leader of free-thought in America, is recognised, even by his enemies, as an ideal husband, father, friend and citizen, one of the noblest characters that grace the United States. Count Tolstoi is a freethinker who has long parted with the orthodox Church, yet his whole life is an exemplar of Christ-like altruism and self-sacrifice. Would to goodness every "Christian" should take those two "*infidels*" as his models in private and public life. The munificence of many freethinking philanthropists stands out in startling contrast with the apathy of the monied dignitaries of the Church. The above fling at the "enemies of the Church," is as absurd as it is contemptible.

"What can you offer to the dying woman who fears to tread alone the dark unknown?" we are asked. Our Christian critic here frankly confesses (a) that Christian dogmas have only developed *fear* of death, and (b) the *agnosticism* of the *orthodox believer* in Christian theology as to the future *post-mortem* state. It is, indeed, difficult to appreciate the peculiar type of bliss which orthodoxy offers its believers in—*damnation*.

The dying man—the average Christian—with a *dark* retrospect in life can scarcely appreciate this boon; while the Calvinist or the Predestinarian, who is brought up in the idea that God may have pre-assigned him from eternity to

everlasting misery, through no fault of that man, but simply because he is God, is more than justified in regarding the latter as ten times worse than any devil or fiend that unclean human fancy could evolve.

Theosophy, on the contrary, teaches that *perfect, absolute justice* reigns in nature, though short-sighted man fails to see it in its details on the material and even psychic plane, and that every man determines his own future. The true Hell is life on Earth, as an effect of Karmic punishment following the preceding life during which the evil causes were produced. The Theosophist fears *no hell*, but confidently expects rest and bliss during the *interim* between two incarnations, as a reward for all the unmerited suffering he has endured in an existence into which he was ushered by

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Karma, and during which he is, in most cases, as helpless as a tom-off leaf whirled about by the conflicting winds of social and private life. Enough has been given out at various times regarding the conditions of post-mortem existence, to furnish a solid block of information on this point. Christian theology has nothing to say on this burning question, except where it veils its ignorance by mystery and dogma; but Occultism, unveiling the symbology of the Bible, explains it thoroughly.—[Ed.]

*Lucifer*, December, 1887

## OLD HINDU SHIPS

SOME twenty-five years ago two ocean steamships came into collision off the coast of Newfoundland; one sank with all on board, the other was saved in consequence of having the hull divided by iron bulkheads into water-tight compartments. Though the bottom was crushed in the water, it would only fill the compartment where the break was, and so the steamship came safely to port. This then novel improvement in the art of ship-building was brought into such conspicuous notice by that occurrence, and its merits were so palpable, that from that time steamships have been almost universally built with water-tight bulkheads.

Like most other supposed “modern” inventions, this was known to the ancient Hindus; and in quoting what follows from the narrative of the famous—now respected and credited—Venetian traveller of the thirteenth century, Ser Marco Polo,<sup>1</sup> we express the hope that this may serve as one more inducement to young India to respect their ancestors according to their deserts:

Some ships of the larger class have, besides (the cabins), to the number of thirteen bulkheads or divisions in the hold, formed of thick planks let into each other (*incastrati*, mortised or rabbeted). The object of these is to guard against accidents which may occasion the vessel to spring a leak, such as striking on a rock or receiving a stroke from a whale, a circumstance that not unfrequently occurs; for, when sailing at night, the motion through the waves causes a white foam that attracts the notice of the hungry animal. In expectation of meeting with food, it rushes violently to the spot, strikes the ship, and often forces in some part of the bottom. The water, running in at the place where the injury has been sustained, makes its way to the well which is always kept clear. The crew, upon discovering the situation of the leak, immediately remove the goods from the division affected by the water, which, in consequence of the boards being so well fitted, cannot pass from one division to another. They then repair the damage, and return the goods to the place in the hold from whence they had been taken. The ships are all double-planked; that is, they have a course of

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<sup>1</sup> *The Travels of Marco Polo, the Venetian*. Edited by Thomas Wright, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., etc., Corresponding Member of the Institute of France. London, 1854.

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sheathing-boards laid over the planking in every part. These are caulked with oakum both inside and without, and are fastened with iron nails. They are not coated with pitch, as the country does not produce that article, but the bottoms are smeared over with the following preparations:—The people take quick-lime and hemp, which latter they cut small, and with these, when pounded together, they mix oil procured from a certain tree, making of the whole a kind of unguent, which retains its viscous property more firmly, and is a better material than pitch.

*Theosophist*, November, 1881

## DOES VACCINATION PREVENT SMALLPOX?

THE November *Journal of Science* (London) contains an interesting review of Dr. Parkin's new work "Epidemiology, or the Remote Causes of Epidemic Diseases in the Animal and Vegetable Creation," which is well worth reading. Dr. Parkin's theory is that "there occur certain 'pestilential epochs,' during which the world is at frequent intervals devastated by epidemics which travel in a determinate direction from Central or Eastern Asia to the west of Europe and even to America; that during such epochs all diseases, even those not considered as communicable from one person to another, increase in frequency and violence; that these epochs are further marked by Epizoötics and by 'blights' or widespread diseases in the vegetable world, and are attended by a general intensification of earthquakes, storms, floods, droughts, fogs, seasons of abnormal heat or cold, and other convulsions of inorganic nature. Such an epoch is generally ushered in by the appearance of new diseases, or the reappearance of maladies that had become obsolete." The last great pestilential term, Dr. Parkin thinks, began about the seventh century, and the fatal wave or current rolled westward without check to the beginning of the eighteenth century. During this time a succession of epidemics raged, among them the fearful plague or Black Death. In 1803 an epidemic of yellow fever at Malaga carried off 36,000 persons. The plague visiting London in 1665 destroyed, between the months of June and December, 20,000 persons, or one-third of the then whole population. According to Sydenham it had invaded England every thirty or forty years. In 1770 it was at Marseilles, in 1771 and 1772 at Moscow, in 1815-16 in the Neapolitan dominions. But despite its frequent challenges to medical science the best authorities have confessed that of its treatment little is known (see Am. Cyclo. XIII, 369). Nor, in fact, is anything definite known as to the causes of epidemics in general. The author of the medical articles in the *Cyclopedia* just named prophetically (a.d. 1859) says: "The progressive sciences of meteorology and physical geography will probably soon throw additional

light upon these

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difficult questions." Dr. Parkin's new work comes almost as a fulfilment of this prophecy. He seems to have conclusively disposed of two pet popular theories, that of the sanitary reformers that dirt is the primal cause of epidemics, and the notion that they are propagated by contagion. Such is also the opinion of the reviewer in the *Journal of Science*, who admits that the historical facts mentioned by Dr. Parkin "are decidedly opposed to both." As examples he cites the facts that "the cholera has been known to travel steadily for hundreds of miles in the teeth of a strong monsoon. It often works up a river, showing that it is not occasioned by infectious matter draining into the current." And he adds significantly, "alike in epidemics of plague, cholera, and yellow-fever, it has been found that classes of people who from occupation or habit were most exposed to the air suffered most, whilst those who kept themselves shut up escaped. How ill this agrees with the teachings of the sanitary reformers!"

But we have not referred to this subject merely to show the helplessness of Western scientists in face of one of these mysterious waves of death that flow around the globe at intervals. The immediate cause is the bearing they have upon the subject of compulsory vaccination in India. We have before us an interesting public document<sup>1</sup> kindly sent us by the learned Dr. Leitner, President of the Government University College, Lahore. The opinion of the Anjuman upon the Bill making vaccination compulsory having been asked by the Punjab Government, that body after a sensible and temperate debate, advised against the adoption of the compulsory clause. The Hindu members especially, and Dr. Leitner himself, pointed out that if the ignorant Hindus should once learn that the vaccine lymph is obtained from ulcers on the teats of the cow, there would be a general protest, perhaps forcible resistance, to the enforcement of the Act. For, while certain products of the cow are regarded, upon the authority of Shastras, as holy, all others, including blood and its impurities are regarded as most impure and unholy. And any one who should knowingly permit either of them to enter his body in any manner, would lose caste. We are not aware what action was taken by the authorities in the premises, but if it is not too late perhaps those in charge of the subject will be interested in the following extract from the same article ("The,

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<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Anjuman-i-Punjab, in connection with the proposed Vaccination Bill, etc.*

Sanitary Millennium") in the *Journal of Science*:

Amongst the diseases which had become less frequent and less severe, but which have since resumed an epidemic and highly dangerous character, a prominent place is due to smallpox, especially as its alleged preventive, vaccination, has taken rank among the political questions of the day. We are told that if this disease no longer carries off its victims by tens of thousands, as in the dark ages, the change is due to vaccination. But there can be not a shadow of doubt that small-pox had begun to decline long before the discovery of Jenner was introduced into practice.

In 1722 Dr. Wagstaffe wrote that the mortality among children did not exceed 1 per cent of the cases. From 1796 to 1825 there was not a single epidemic of small-pox in England. Yet, according to a report published by the College of Physicians in 1807, only about 1½ per cent of the population were vaccinated. Now if we admit that the immunity gained by this operation is absolute and permanent, how is it possible that three vaccinated persons out of every 200 would protect the remaining 197? At the present time about 97 per cent of the population are supposed to be vaccinated. Yet so far from being able to protect the residual 3 per cent it is considered that they are imperilled by the obstinacy or neglect of this small minority. We have the lamentable fact that, whilst vaccination has become all but universal, small-pox has reappeared among us not in isolated cases but in epidemics succeeding each other at short intervals, and each more deadly than the foregoing. Thus in the epidemic of 1857-58-59 the deaths were 14,244; in that of 1863-64-65, 20,059, and in that 1870-71-72, 44,840. Thus in the first interval the deaths from this cause had increased 50 per cent, whilst the population had grown only 7 per cent. In the second interval the deaths from small-pox have risen by 120 per cent, but the population only 10 per cent. Another ugly fact is that the number of persons who have been vaccinated but who are subsequently attacked with small-pox is steadily on the increase. At the Highgate small-pox hospital from 1835 to 1851 the previously-vaccinated formed 53 per cent of the total small-pox cases admitted. In 1851-52 it rose to 66.7 per cent; in



1854-5-6 to 71.2 per cent; in 1859-60 to 72; in 1866 to 81.1 and in 1868 to 84 per cent. How are such facts to be reconciled with the orthodox theory that vaccination is a safeguard against small-pox? What would be the conclusion formed by an unprejudiced statistician if these figures were laid before him? If *a* grows more common as *b* increases in number and general distribution no man in his senses will argue that *b* is a hindrance to *a*. The very opposite conclusion, that *b* is causally connected with *a* would seem more legitimate. How the credit of vaccination

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is to be saved is not apparent. We cannot cut the knot by supposing that modern medical practitioners are less careful and skilled in the performance of the operation or less scrupulous in the selection of vaccine lymph. There remains, then, merely the conclusion that small-pox, too, has had a period of cessation during the latter part of the past century and the first quarter of the present;—that the apparent success of vaccination was mainly due to its coincidence with this temporary lull, and that the disease is now rapidly regaining its old virulence and reassuming the pestilential proportions which it displayed in the days of our forefathers.

It is but fair to remark that our esteemed colleague, Dr. D. E. Dudley, President of the Bombay Theosophical Society, takes exception to the accuracy of the above statistics of mortality, and but for the exigencies of his rapidly growing practice would have added a note. Possibly he may find time to do so next month. Meanwhile let us hear from native medical practitioners, astrologers, and pandits what the Shastras have to say as to the cause of epidemics and other abnormal phenomena.

And here is another matter upon which Europe would like to be informed about by them. It is taken from *Spiritual Notes* (London).

According to Dr. Vincenzo Peset y Cervera the crystals of hæmoglobin obtained from the blood of different animals have forms so distinct and characteristic that the origin of a sample of blood may thus be determined! All that is required is to mix the blood with a little bile, when crystals not exceeding 0.003 metre in size are formed in the mass. The shapes of the crystals are said to be as follows: Man, right rectangular prisms; horses,

cubes; ox, rhombohedrons; sheep, rhombohedral tables; dog, rectangular prisms; rabbit, tetrahedrons; squirrel, hexagonal tables; mouse, octahedrons, &c. Commenting on these allegations the *Journal of Science* sagely suggests that “if they are confirmed they may serve for the solution of a most important question raised by Dr. Lionel Beale. If the theory of Evolution be true, the crystals obtained from animals which are nearly related should be either identical or such as are in form easily derived from each other. Should the hæmoglobulin crystals—*e.g.*, of the horse and the ass, of the dog and the fox, of the rabbit and the hare, or of the rat and the mouse—belong respectively to different systems, it will supply a serious argument in favour of independent creation.

*Theosophist*, March, 1881

### THE MISSING LINK

A good many of the Western papers are terribly excited over a bit of news just arrived in Europe from Sangoon. The most radical and freethinking of them crow over the fact as well they may in the interest of truth—as though the thickest, and hitherto most impenetrable of the veils covering Mother Nature’s doings had been removed for ever, and anthropology had no more secrets to learn. The excitement is due to a little monster, a seven-year old boy, now on exhibition at Sangoon. The child is a native of Cambodia, quite robust and healthy, yet exhibiting in his anatomy the most precious and rare of physical endowments—a real tail, ten inches long and 1½ thick at its root!

This original little sample of humanity—*unique*, we believe, of his kind—is now made out by the disciples of Darwin and Haeckel to be the *bonâ* (*bony?*) *fide* Missing Link. Let us suppose, for argument’s sake, that the evolutionists (whose colours we certainly wear) are right in their hypothesis, and that the cherished theory of having baboons for our ancestors turns out true. Will *every* difficulty in our way be then removed? By no means: for, then, more than ever will we have to try to solve the hitherto insolvable problem, which comes first, the Man or the Ape? It will be the Aristotelean egg and chicken

problem of creation over again. We can never know the truth until some streak of good chance shall enable science to witness at different periods and under various climates either women giving birth to apes, graced with a caudal appendix or female orangutan's becoming mothers of tailless, and, moreover, *semi-human* children, endowed with a capacity for speech at least as great as that of a moderately clever parrot or mina.

Science is but a broken reed for us in this respect, for science is just as perplexed, if not more so, than the rest of us, common mortals. So little is it able to enlighten us upon the mystery, that the men of most learning are those who confuse us the most in some respects. As in regard to the heliocentric system,  
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which, after it had been left an undisputed fact more than three centuries, found in the later part of our own a most serious opponent in Dr. Shroepfer, Professor of Astronomy at the University of Berlin, so the Darwinian theory of the evolution of man from an anthropoid, has among its learned opponents one, who, though an evolutionist himself, is eager to oppose Darwin, and seeks to establish a school of his own.

This new "perfectionist" is a professor in the Hungarian town of Fünfkirchen, who is delivering just now a series of lectures, throughout Germany. "Man," says he, "whose origin must be placed in the Silurian mud, whence he began evolving from a frog, must necessarily someday re-evolute into the same animal!" So far well and good. But the explanations going to prove this hypothesis which Professor Charles Deezy accepts as a perfectly established fact, are rather too vague to enable us to build anything like an impregnable theory upon them. "In the primitive days of the first period of evolution," he tells us, "there lived a huge, frog-like, mammalian animal, inhabiting the seas, but which, being of the amphibious kind, lived likewise on land, breathing in the air as easily as it did in water; its chief habitat, though, was in the salt seawater. This frog-like creature is now what we call—man(!) and his marine origin is proved by the fact that *he cannot live without salt.*" There are other signs about man, almost as impressive as the above by which this origin can be established, if we may believe this new prophet of science. For instance, "a well-defined remnant of fins, to be seen between his thumbs and fingers, as also his

insurmountable tendency towards the element of water”: a tendency, we remark *passim*, more noticeable in the Hindu than the Highlander!

No less does the Hungarian scientist set himself against Darwin’s theory of man descending from the ape. According to his new teaching, “it is not the anthropoid which begot man, but the latter who is the progenitor of the monkey. The ape is merely a man returned once more to its primitive, savage state. Our Professor’s views as to geology, and the ultimate destruction of our globe, coupled with his notions regarding the future state of mankind, are no less original and are the very sweetest fruit of his Tree of Scientific Knowledge. Provoking though they do general hilarity, they are nevertheless given out by the “learned” lecturer in quite a serious spirit, and his works are considered among the text-books for colleges. If we have to credit his statement, then we must believe

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that “the moon is slowly but surely approaching the earth.” The result of such an indiscretion on the part of our fair Diana, is to be *most certainly* the following! “The sea waves will, someday, immerse our globe and gradually submerge all the continents. Then man, unable to live any longer on dry land, will have but to return to his primitive form, *i.e.*, he will rebecome an aquatic animal—a man-frog.” And the life-insurance companies will have to shut up their shop and become bankrupts—he might have added. Daring speculators are advised to take their precautions in advance.

Having permitted ourselves this bit of irreverence about Science —those, rather, who abuse their connection with it—we may as well give here some of the more acceptable theories respecting the missing link. These are by no means so scarce as bigots would like to make us believe, Schweinfurth and other great African travellers vouchsafe for the truth of these assertions and believe they have found races which may, after all, be the missing links—between man and ape. Such are the *Akkas* of Africa; those whom Herodotus calls the *Pigmies* (II. 32) and the account of whom—notwithstanding it came from the very pen of the Father of History —was until very recently believed to be erroneous and they themselves myths of a fabled nation. But, since the public has had the most trustworthy narratives of European travellers, we have learned to know better,

and no one any longer thinks that Herodotus has confounded in his account men and the cynocephaloid apes of Africa.

We have but to read the description of the orang-outang and of the chimpanzee to find that these animals—all but the hairy surface—answer in nearly every respect to these *Akkas*. They are said to have large cylindrical heads on a thin neck; and a body about four feet high; very long arms, perfectly disproportionate, as they reach far lower than their knees; a chest narrow at the shoulders and widening tremendously toward the stomach which is always enormous; knees thick, and hands of an extraordinary beauty of design, (a characteristic of monkey's hands, which with the exception of their short thumbs have wonderfully neat and slender fingers tapering to the ends, and always prettily shaped finger nails). The *Akkas'* walk is vacillating which is due to the abnormal size of their stomach, as in the chimpanzee and the orang-outang. Their cranium is large, profoundly depressed at

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the root of the nose, and surmounted by a contracting forehead sloping directly backward; a projecting mouth with very thin lips, and a beardless chin—or rather no chin at all. The hair on their heads does not grow, and though less noisy than the orang-outang they are enormously so when compared with other men. On account of the long grass which often grows twice their own size in the regions they inhabit, they are said to jump like so many grasshoppers, to make enormous strides, and, to have all the outward motions of big anthropoids.

Some scientists think—this time with pretty good reason—that the *Akkas*, more even than the *Matimbas* of which d'Escayrac de Lauture gives such interesting accounts—the *Kimosas*, and the *Bushin*, of austral Africa, are all remnants of the *missing link*.

*Theosophist*, February, 1881

THE NUMBER SEVEN

A DEEP significance was attached to numbers in hoary antiquity. There was not a people with anything like philosophy, but gave great prominence to numbers in their application to religious observances, the establishment of festival days, symbols, dogmas, and even the geographical distribution of empires. The mysterious numerical system of Pythagoras was nothing novel when it appeared far earlier than 600 years b.c. The occult meaning of figures and their combinations entered into the meditations of the sages of every people; and the day is not far off when, compelled by the eternal cyclic rotation of events, our now sceptical unbelieving West will have to admit that in that regular periodicity of ever recurring events there is something more than a mere blind chance. Already our Western *savants* begin to notice it. Of late, they have pricked up their ears and begun speculating upon cycles, numbers and all that which, but a few years ago, they had relegated to oblivion in the old closets of memory, never to be unlocked but for the purpose of grinning at the uncouth and idiotic superstitions of our *unscientific* fore fathers.

As one of such novelties, the old, and matter-of-fact German journal *Die Gegenwart* has a serious and learned article upon "the significance of the number seven" introduced to the readers as a "Culture-historical Essay." After quoting from it a few extracts, we will have something to add to it perhaps. The author says:

The number *seven* was considered sacred not only by all the cultured nations of antiquity and the East, but was held in the greatest reverence even by the later nations of the West. The astronomical origin of this number is established beyond any doubt. Man, feeling himself time out of mind dependent upon the heavenly powers, ever and everywhere made earth subject to heaven. The largest and brightest of the luminaries thus became in his sight the most important and highest of powers; such were the planets which the whole antiquity numbered as *seven*. In course of time these were transformed into *seven* deities. The Egyptians had *seven* original and higher gods; the Phœnicians *seven* kabiris; the Persians, *seven* sacred horses of Mithra; the Parsees, *seven* angels opposed by *seven* demons,

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and *seven* celestial abodes paralleled by *seven* lower regions. To represent

the more clearly this idea in its concrete form, the *seven* gods were often represented as one *seven-headed* deity. The whole heaven was subjected to the *seven* planets; hence, in nearly all the religious systems we find *seven* heavens.

The belief in the *sapta loka* of the Brahminical religion has remained faithful to the archaic philosophy; and — who knows — but the idea itself was originated in Aryavarta, this cradle of all philosophies and mother of all subsequent religions! If the Egyptian dogma of the *metempsychosis* or the transmigration of soul taught that there were *seven* states of purification and progressive perfection, it is also true that the Buddhists took from the Aryans of India, not from Egypt, their idea of *seven* stages of progressive development of the disembodied soul, allegorized by the *seven* stories and umbrellas, gradually diminishing towards the top on their pagodas.

In the mysterious worship of Mithra there were "*seven gates,*" *seven altars,* *seven mysteries.* The priests of many Oriental nations were sub-divided into *seven* degrees; *seven* steps led to the altars and in the temples burnt candles in *seven*-branched candlesticks. Several of the Masonic Lodges have, to this day, *seven* and *fourteen* steps.

The *seven* planetary spheres served as a model for state divisions and organizations. China was divided into *seven* provinces; ancient Persia into *seven* satrapies. According to the Arabian legend *seven* angels cool the sun with ice and snow, lest it should burn the earth to cinders; and *seven thousand* angels wind up and set the sun in motion every morning. The two oldest rivers of the East — the Ganges and the Nile — had each *seven* mouths. The East had in the antiquity *seven* principal rivers (the Nile, the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Oxus, the Yaksart, the Arax and the Indus); *seven* famous treasures; *seven* cities full of gold; *seven* marvels of the world, &c. Equally did the number *seven* play a prominent part in the architecture of temples and palaces. The famous pagoda of Churingham is surrounded by *seven* square walls, painted in *seven* different colours, and in the middle of each wall is a *seven* storied pyramid; just as in the antediluvian days the temple of Borsippa, now the Birs-Nimrud, had *seven* stages, symbolical of the *seven* concentric

circles of the *seven* spheres, each built of tiles and metals to correspond with the colour of the ruling planet of the sphere typified.

These are all “remnants of paganism” we are told—traces “of the superstitions of old, which, like the owls and bats in a dark subterranean, flew away to return no more before the glorious light of Christianity” —a statement but too easy of refutation. If the author of the article in question has collected hundreds of instances to show that not only the Christians of old but even the modern Christians have preserved the number *seven*, and as sacredly as it ever was before, there might be found in reality *thousands*. To begin with the astronomical and religious calculation of old of the pagan Romans, who divided the week into *seven* days, and held the *seventh* day as the most sacred, the *Sol* or *Sunday* of Jupiter, and to which all the Christian nations—especially the Protestants—make *puja* to this day. If, perchance, we are answered that it is not from the pagan Romans but from the monotheistic Jews that we have it, then why is not the Saturday or the real “Sabbath” kept instead of the Sunday, or *Sol’s* day?

If in the “Ramayana” *seven* yards are mentioned in the residences of the Indian kings; and *seven* gates generally led to the famous temples and cities of old, then why should the Frieslanders have in the tenth century of the Christian era strictly adhered to the number *seven* in dividing their provinces, and insisted upon paying *seven* “*pfennigs*” of contribution? The Holy Roman and Christian Empire has *seven* *Kurfursts* or Electors. The Hungarians emigrated under the leadership of *seven* dukes and founded *seven* towns, now called *Semigradyá* (now Transylvania). If pagan Rome was built on *seven* hills, Constantinople had *seven* names—Bysance, Antonia, New Rome, the town of Constantine, The Separator of the World’s Parts, The Treasure of Islam, Stamboul—and was also called the city on the *seven* Hills, and the city of the *seven* Towers as an adjunct to others. With the Mussulmans “it was besieged *seven* times and taken after *seven* weeks by the *seventh* of the Osman Sultans.” In the ideas of the Eastern peoples, the *seven* planetary spheres are represented by the *seven* rings worn by the women on *seven* parts of the body—the head, the neck, the hands, the feet, in the ears, in the nose, around the



waist—and these *seven* rings or circles are presented to this time by the Eastern suitors to their brides; the beauty of the woman consisting in the Persian songs of *seven* charms.

The *seven* planets ever remaining at an equal distance from each other, and rotating in the same path, hence, the idea suggested

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by this motion, of the eternal harmony of the universe. In this connection the number *seven* became especially sacred with them, and ever preserved its importance with the astrologers. The Pythagoreans considered the figure *seven* as the image and model of the divine order and harmony in nature. It was the number containing twice the sacred number *three* or the “triad,” to which the “one” or the divine *monad* was added:  $3 + 1 + 3$ . As the harmony of nature sounds on the key-board of space, between the *seven* planets, so the harmony of audible sound takes place on a smaller plan within the musical scale of the ever-recurring *seven* tones. Hence, *seven* pipes in the syrinx of the god Pan (or Nature), their gradually diminishing proportion of shape representing the distance between the planets and between the latter and the earth—and, the seven-stringed lyre of Apollo. Consisting of a union between the number *three* (the symbol of the divine triad with all and every people, Christians as well as pagans) and of *four* (the symbol of the cosmic forces or elements), the number *seven* points out symbolically to the union of the Deity with the universe; this Pythagorean idea was applied by the Christians—(especially during the Middle Ages)—who largely used the number *seven* in the symbolism of their sacred architecture. So, for instance, the famous Cathedral of Cologne and the Dominican Church at Regensburg display this number in the smallest architectural details.

No less an importance has this mystical number in the world of intellect and philosophy. Greece had *seven* sages, the Christian Middle Ages *seven* free arts (grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy). The Mahometan Sheikh-ul-Islam calls in for every important meeting *seven* “ulems.” In the Middle Ages an oath had to be taken before *seven* witnesses, and the one, to whom it was administered, was sprinkled *seven* times with blood. The processions around the temples went *seven* times, and the devotees had to kneel *seven* times before uttering a

vow. The Mahometan pilgrims turn round Kaaba *seven* times, at their arrival. The sacred vessels were made of gold and silver purified *seven* times. The localities of the old German tribunals were designated by *seven* trees, under which were placed *seven* "Schoffers" (judges) who required *seven* witnesses. The criminal was threatened with a *seven*-fold punishment and a *seven*-fold purification was required as a *seven*-fold reward was promised to the virtuous. Everyone knows the great importance placed in the

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West on the *seventh* son of a *seventh* son. All the mythic personages are generally endowed with *seven* sons. In Germany, the king and now the emperor cannot refuse to stand as god-father to a *seventh* son, if he be even a beggar. In the East in making up for a quarrel or signing a treaty of peace, the rulers exchange either *seven* or forty-nine (7 X 7) presents.

To attempt to cite all the things included in this mystical number would require a library. We will close by quoting but a few more from the region of the demoniacal. According to authorities in those matters—the Christian clergy of old—a contract with the devil had to contain *seven* paragraphs, was concluded for *seven* years and signed by the contractor *seven* times; all the magical drinks prepared with the help of the enemy of man consisted of *seven* herbs; that lottery ticket wins, which is drawn out by a *seven*-year old child. Legendary wars lasted *seven* years, *seven* months and *seven* days; and the combatant heroes number *seven*, *seventy*, *seven hundred*, *seven thousand* and *seventy thousand*. The princesses in the fairy tales remained *seven* years under a spell, and the boots of the famous cat—the Marquis de Carabas —were *seven* leagued. The ancients divided the human frame into *seven* parts; the head, the chest, the stomach, two hands and two feet; and man's life was divided into *seven* periods. A baby begins teething in the *seventh* month; a child begins to sit after *fourteen* months (2 X 7); begins to walk after *twenty-one* months (3 X 7); to speak after *twenty-eight* months (4 X 7); leaves off sucking after *thirty-five* months (5 X 7); at *fourteen* years (2 X 7) he begins to finally form himself; at *twenty-one* (3 X 7) he ceases growing. The average height of a man, before mankind degenerated, was *seven* feet; hence the old Western laws ordering the garden walls to be *seven* feet high. The education of the boys began with the Spartans and the old Persians at the age

of *seven*. And in the Christian religions—with the Roman Catholics and the Greeks—the child is not held responsible for any crime till he is *seven*, and it is the proper age for him to go to confession.

If the Hindus will think of their Manu and recall what the old Shastras contain, beyond doubt they will find the origin of all this symbolism. Nowhere did the number *seven* play so prominent a part as with the old Aryas in India. We have but to think of the *seven* sages—the *Sapta Rishis*; the *Sapta Loka*—the *seven* worlds; the *Sapta Pura*—the *seven* holy cities; the *Sapta Dvipa*—the *seven* holy islands; the *Sapta Samudra*—the *seven* holy seas; the

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*Sapta Parvatta*—the *seven* holy mountains; the *Sapta Arania*—the *seven* deserts; the *Sapta Vriksha*—the *seven* sacred trees; and so on, to see the probability of the hypothesis. The Aryas *never* borrowed anything, nor did the Brahmans, who were too proud and exclusive for that. Whence, then, the mystery and sacredness of the number *seven*?

*Theosophist*, June, 1880

## THE NUMBER SEVEN AND OUR SOCIETY

THE thoughtful reader must have pondered well over the mysterious import that the number *Seven* seems to have always had among the ancients, as succinctly epitomized in our June number, as well as the theory of cycles, discussed in the July issue. It was there stated that the German scientists are now giving attention to this manifestation of the numerical harmony and periodicity of the operations of Nature. A series of statistical observations, embracing some centuries of historical events, tend to show that the ancients must have been perfectly aware of this law when constructing their systems of philosophy. In fact, when statistical science shall have been fully perfected, as it seems likely to be, there will be constantly increasing proofs that the evolution of heroes, poets, military chieftains, philosophers, theologians, great merchants, and all other remarkable personages, is as capable of mathematical estimate upon the basis of the potentiality of numbers, as the return of a comet by the rules of astronomical calculations. The comparatively modern system of

life insurance rests upon the calculated expectancy of life on the average at certain ages; and, while nothing is so uncertain as the probable longevity of any single individual in a community, nothing is more certain than that the probable life-chance of any one person, in the mass of population, can be known on the basis of the general average of human life. In fact, as M. de Cazeneuve, in the *Journal du Magnetisme*, justly observes, the law of numerical proportions is verified in every department of the physical sciences. We see it in chemistry as the law of definite proportions and multiple proportions; in physics, as the law of optics, acoustics, electricity, &c.; in mineralogy, in the wonderful phenomena of crystallization; in astronomy, in the celestial mechanics. Well may the writer, above-quoted, remark: "Physical and moral laws have so infinitely numerous points of contact, that, if we have not as yet reached the point where we can demonstrate their identity, it is none the less certain that there exists between them a very great analogy."

We have attempted to show how, by a sort of common instinct, a peculiar solemnity and mystical significance has been given the

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Number *Seven* among all people, at all times. It now remains for us to cite, from the experience of the Theosophical Society, some facts which indicate how its power has manifested itself with us. Continually our experiences have been associated with *Seven* or some combination or multiple of it. And it must be remembered that, in not a single instance, was there any intention that the number should play a part in our affairs; but, on the contrary, what happened was in many cases exactly the reverse of what we desired. It was only the other day that we began to take any note of the striking chain of circumstances, and some have only been recalled now at the moment of writing.

The two chief founders of our Society were the President, Colonel Olcott, and the Conductor of this Magazine. When they made each other's acquaintance (in 1874), the office number of the former was *seven*, the house number of the latter *seventeen*. The President's Inaugural Address before the Society was delivered, November 17, 1875; the Head-quarters were established in the 47th street, (the up-town streets in New York are all designated by numbers), and Colonel Olcott's office was removed to 71 Broadway. On the 17th December 1879, our delegates to India sailed for London; the voyage,

owing to storms and fogs, lasted *seventeen* days; on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 1880, we left London for Liverpool to take the steamer for Bombay, got on board the next day, but lay all night in the Mersey, and on the 19<sup>th</sup>—the *seventeenth* day from our landing in England, we got to sea. On March 2—*seventeen* days after reaching Bombay—we removed to the bungalows where we have ever since been living. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, *thirty-five* (7 X 5) days after landing, Colonel Olcott delivered his first public oration on Theosophy, at Framji Cowasji Institute, Bombay. July 7, the first Prospectus, announcing the intended foundation of the Theosophist was written; on the 27<sup>th</sup> September, the first “form” was made up at the printing-office, and on October 1—our 227<sup>th</sup> in India—the magazine appeared.

But we anticipate events. In the beginning of April, last year, Colonel Olcott and the Conductor of this Magazine went to the N. W. Provinces to meet Swami Dayánand, and were absent from the Head-quarters *thirty-seven* days, and visited *seven* different cities during the trip. In December of that year we again went northward, and on the 21<sup>st</sup> (7 X 3) of that month, a special meeting of the Society of Benares Pandits was held to greet Colonel

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Olcott and elect him an Honorary Member in token of the friendliness of the orthodox Hindu pandits for our Society—a most important event.

Coming down to the Ceylon trip, we find, on consulting the diary, that our party sailed from Bombay, May 7, the steamer starting her engines at 7.7 a.m. We reached Point de Galle on the 17<sup>th</sup>. At the first meeting in Ceylon of candidates for initiation, a group of *seven* persons presented themselves. At Panadure, *seven* were also initiated first, the evening proving so boisterous and stormy that the rest could not leave their houses. At Colombo, *fourteen* (7 X 2) were initiated the first night, while, at the preliminary meeting to organize the local branch temporarily, there were *twenty-seven*. At Kandy, *seventeen* comprised the first body of candidates. Returning to Colombo, we organized the “Lanka Theosophical Society,” a scientific branch, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of the month, and on the evening, when the Panadure branch was formed, *thirty-five* names (7 X 5) were registered as follows. *Seven* priests were initiated here during this second visit, and at Bentota, where we tarried to organize a branch, there were again *seven* priests admitted. *Thirty-five* (7 X 5) members organized the Matara

branch; and here again the priests taken into fellowship numbered *seven*. So, too, at Galle, *twenty-seven* persons were present on the night of the organization—the rest being unavoidably absent; and at Welitara the number was *twenty-one*, or three times *seven*. Upon counting up the entire number of lay Buddhists included in our *seven* Ceylon branches, that are devoted to the interests of that faith, we find our mystical number *seven* occupying the place of units, and what adds to the singularity of the fact is that the same is the case with the sum-total of priests who joined our Parent Society.

Our septenary fatality followed us all throughout the return voyage to Bombay. Of the Delegation, two members, having urgent business, took an earlier steamer from Colombo, thus reducing our number to *seven*. Two more fully intended to come home from Galle by the vessel of the 7th July, but, as it turned out, she did not touch there and so, perforce, our band of *seven* came together on the 12th—the *fifty-seventh* day after our landing. The sea voyage from Ceylon to Bombay may be said to begin upon leaving Colombo, since the run from Galle to that port is in Ceylonese waters. From friends—five laymen and two priests

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again *seven*—who came aboard at Colombo to bid us farewell, we learned that the July Theosophist had reached there, and being naturally anxious to see a copy, urgently requested that one should be sent us to look at, if possible, before 5 o'clock p.m., the hour at which it was thought we would leave port. This was promised us, and, after our friends left, we watched every craft that came from shore. Five o'clock came, then six and half-past six, but no messenger or magazine for us. At last, precisely, at *seven*, one little canoe was seen tossing in the heavy sea that was running; she approached, was alongside; on her bows, painted on a white ground was the Number *Seven*; a man climbed over the ship's rail, and in his hand was the paper we were waiting for! When the anchor was up and the pilot's bell rang for starting the engines, two of our party ran to look at the ship's clock: it stood at *seven* minutes past 7 p.m.

At Tuticorin, Mr. Padshah, one of our party, went ashore as his desire was to return by rail to Bombay, so as to see Southern India; the little boat in which he went ashore we noticed, after she had got clear from the crowd of craft alongside, bore the number *forty-seven*. Going down the coast on our outward

voyage, our steamer touched at *fourteen* (7 X 2 ports; coming home, our vessel, owing to the monsoon weather and the heavy surf along the Malabar Coast, visited only *seven*. And finally, as though to show us that our septenate destiny was not to be evaded, it was at exactly *seven* o'clock—as the log of the S.S. *Chanda* shows—when we sighted the pilot off Bombay harbour, at 7.27 the bell rang to slow down the engines, at 7.47 the pilot stepped on the “bridge” and took command of the ship, and, at 9.37, our anchor was dropped off the Apollo Bunder, and our voyage was thus ended on the 24th of July, the *seventh* day after the one on which we had sailed for Ceylon. To ascribe to mere coincidence this strange, if not altogether unprecedented, concatenation of events, in which the Number *Seven* was, as the astrologers might call it “in the ascendant,” would be an absurdity. The most superficial examination of the doctrine of chance will suffice to show that. And, if, indeed, we must admit that some mysterious law of numerical potentialities is asserting itself in shaping the fortunes of the Theosophical Society, whither shall we turn for an explanation but to those ancient Asiatic philosophies which were built upon the bed-rock of Occult Science?

*Theosophist*, September, 1880

## THE CYCLE MOVETH

Let the great world spin for ever down the  
ringing grooves of change.

Tennyson

The goal of yesterday will be the starting-  
point of to-morrow.

Carlyle

THE great mystic of the eighteenth century, the ardent disciple of Jacob Boehme—Louis Claude de Saint Martin—used to say in the last years of his life: “I would have loved to meet more with those who guess at truths, for such alone are living men.”

This remark implies that, outside the limited circle of mystics which has existed in every age, people endowed with correct psychic intuition were still fewer at the end of the last century than they are now. These were, indeed, years of complete soul-blindness and spiritual drought. It is during that century that the chaotic darkness and Babylonish confusion with regard to spiritual things, which have ever reigned in brains too crammed with mere scientific learning, had fully asserted their sway over the masses. The lack of soul perception was not confined to the “Forty Immortals” of the French Academy, nor to their less pretentious colleagues of Europe in general, but had infected almost all the classes of Society, settling down as a chronic disease called Scepticism and the denial of all but matter.

The messengers sent out periodically in the last quarter of every century westward—ever since the mysteries which alone had the key to the secrets of nature had been crushed out of existence in Europe by heathen and Christian conquerors—had appeared that time in vain. St. Germain and Cagliostro are credited with real phenomenal powers only in fashionable novels, to remain inscribed in encyclopedias—to purblind the better, we suppose, the minds of forthcoming generations—as merely clever charlatans. The only

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man whose powers and knowledge could have been easily tested by exact science, thus forming a firm link between physics and metaphysics—Friedrich Anton Mesmer—had been hooted from the scientific arena by the greatest “scholar-ignoramus” in things spiritual, of Europe. For almost a century, namely from 1770 down to 1870, a heavy spiritual darkness descending on the Western hemisphere, settled, as if it meant to stay, among *cultured* societies.

But an under-current appeared about the middle of our century in America, crossing the Atlantic between 1850 and 1860. Then came in its trail the marvelous medium for physical manifestations, D. D. Home. After he had taken by storm the Tuileries and the Winter Palace, light was no longer allowed to shine under a bushel. Already, some years before his advent, “a change” had come “o’er the spirit of the dream” of almost every civilized community in the two worlds, and a great reactive force was now at work.



What was it? Simply this. Amidst the greatest glow of the self-sufficiency of exact science, and the reckless triumphant crowing of victory over the ruins of the very foundations—as some Darwinists had fondly hoped—of old superstitions and creeds; in the midst of the deadliest calm of wholesale negations, there arose a breeze from a wholly unexpected quarter. At first the significant afflatus was like a hardly perceptible stir, puffs of wind in the rigging of a proud vessel—the ship called “Materialism,” whose crew was merrily leading its passengers toward the Maelstrom of annihilation. But very soon the breeze freshened and finally blew a gale. It fell with every hour more ominously on the ears of the iconoclasts, and ended by raging loud enough to be heard by everyone who had ears to hear, eyes to see, and an intellect to discern. It was the inner voice of the masses, their spiritual intuition—that traditional enemy of cold intellectual reasoning, the legitimate progenitor of Materialism—that had awakened from its long cataleptic sleep. And, as a result, all those ideals of the human soul which had been so long trampled under the feet of the would-be conquerors of the world-superstitions, the self-constituted guides of a new humanity—appeared suddenly in the midst of all these raging elements of human thought, and, like Lazarus rising out of his tomb, lifted their voice and loudly demanded recognition.

This was brought on by the invasion of “Spirit” manifestations, when mediumistic phenomena had broken out like an influenza all over Europe. However unsatisfactory their philosophical interpretation,

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these phenomena being genuine and true as truth itself in their being and their reality, they were undeniable; and being in their very nature beyond denial, they came to be regarded as evident proofs of a life beyond—opening, moreover, a wide range for the admission of every metaphysical possibility. This once the efforts of materialistic science to disprove them availed it nothing. Beliefs such as man’s survival after death, and the immortality of Spirit, were no longer pooh-poohed as figments of imagination; for, prove once the genuineness of such transcendental phenomena to be beyond the realm of matter, and beyond investigation by means of *physical* science, and—whether these phenomena contain *per se* or not the *proof of immortality*, demonstrating as they do the existence of invisible and spiritual regions where other forces than

those known to exact science are at work—they are shown to lie beyond the realm of materialism. Cross, by one step only, the line of matter and the area of Spirit becomes infinite. Therefore, believers in them were no longer to be brow-beaten by threats of social contumacy and ostracism; this, also, for the simple reason that in the beginning of these manifestations almost the whole of the European higher classes became ardent “Spiritualists.” To oppose the strong tidal wave of the cycle there remained at one time but a handful, in comparison with the number of believers, of grumbling and all-denying fogeys.

Thus was once more demonstrated that human life, devoid of all its world-ideals and beliefs—in which the whole of philosophical and cultured antiquity, headed in historical times by Socrates and Plato, by Pythagoras and the Alexandrian Neo-Platonists, believed —becomes deprived of its higher sense and meaning. The world-ideals can never completely die out. Exiled by the fathers, they will be received with opened arms by the children.

Let us recall to mind how all this came to pass.

It was, as said, between the third and fourth quarters of the present century that reaction set in in Europe—as still earlier in the United States. The days of a determined psychic rebellion against the cold dogmatism of science and the still more chilling teachings of the schools of Büchner and Darwin, had come in their pre-ordained and pre-appointed time of cyclic law. Our older readers may easily recollect the suggestive march of events. Let them remember how the wave of mysticism, arrested in its free course during its first twelve or fifteen years in America by public, and

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especially by religious, prejudices, finally broke through every artificial dam and over-flooded Europe, beginning with France and Russia and ending with England—the slowest of all countries to accept new ideas, though these may bring us truths as old as the world.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding every opposition, “Spiritualism,” as it was soon called, got its rights of citizenship in Great Britain. For several years it reigned undivided. Yet in truth, its phenomena, its psychic and mesmeric manifestations, were but the cyclic pioneers of the revival of prehistoric

Theosophy, and the occult Gnosticism of the antediluvian mysteries. These are facts which no intelligent Spiritualist will deny; as, in truth, modern Spiritualism is but an earlier revival of crude Theosophy, and modern Theosophy a *renaissance* of ancient Spiritualism.

Thus, the waters of the great “Spiritual” flood were neither primordial nor pure. When, owing to cyclic law, they had first appeared, manifesting at Rochester, they were left to the mercies and mischievous devices of two little girls to give them a name and an interpretation. Therefore when, breaking the dam, these waters penetrated into Europe, they bore with them scum and dross, flotsam and jetsam, from the old wrecks of hypotheses and hazily outlined aspirations, based upon the dicta of the said little girls. Yet the eagerness with which “Spiritualism” and its twin-sister Spiritism were received, all their inanities notwithstanding, by almost all the cultured people of Europe, contains a splendid lesson.

In this passionate aspiration of the human Soul—this irrepressible flight of the higher elements in man toward their forgotten Gods and the God within him—one heard the voice of the public conscience. It was an undeniable and not to be misunderstood answer of the inner nature of man to the then revelling, gloating Materialism of the age, as an escape from which there was but another form of evil—adherence to the dogmatic, ecclesiastical conventionalism of State religions. It was a loud, passionate protest against both, a drifting towards a middle way between the two extremes—namely, between the enforcement for long centuries of a *personal* God of infinite love and mercy by the diabolical means of sword, fire, and inquisitional tortures; and, on the other hand, the reign, as a natural reaction, of complete denial of such a God, and along with him of an infinite Spirit, a Universal Principle manifesting as immutable Law.

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True science had wisely endeavored to make away, along with the mental slavery of mankind, with its orthodox, paradoxical God; *pseudo*-science had devised by means of sophistry to do away with every belief save in matter. The haters of the Spirit of the world, denying God in Nature as much as an extra-cosmic Deity, had been preparing for long years to create an artificial, soulless humanity; and it was only just that their Karma should send a host of *pseudo*-

“Spirits” or Souls to thwart their efforts. Shall anyone deny that the highest and the best among the representatives of Materialistic science have succumbed to the fascination of the will-o’-the-wisps which looked at first sight as the most palpable proof of an *immortal Soul* in man<sup>1</sup>—*i.e.*, the alleged *communion between the dead and the living*?<sup>2</sup> Yet, such as they were, these abnormal manifestations, being in their bulk genuine and spontaneous, carried away and won all those who had in their souls the sacred spark of intuition. Some clung to them because, owing to the death of ideals, of the crumbling of the Gods and faith in every civilized centre, they were dying themselves of spiritual starvation; others because, living amidst sophistical perversion of every noble truth, they preferred even a feeble approximation to truth to no truth whatever.

But, whether they placed belief in and followed “Spiritualism” or not, many were those on whom the spiritual and psychic evolution of the cycle wrought an indelible impression; and such ex-materialists could never return again to their iconoclastic ideas. The enormous and ever-growing numbers of mystics at the present time show better than anything else the undeniably occult working of the cycle. Thousands of men and women who belong to no church, sect, or society, who are neither Theosophists nor Spiritualists,

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<sup>1</sup> Let our readers recall the names of the several most eminent men in literature and science who had become openly Spiritualists. We have but to name Professor Hare, Epes Sarjeant, Robert Dale Owen, Judge Edmonds, etc., in America; Professors Butlerof, Wagner, and, greater than they, the late Dr. Pirogoff (see his posthumous “Memoirs,” published in *Rooskaya Starina*, 1884-1886), in Russia; Zöllner, in Germany; M. Camille Flammarion, the Astronomer, in France; and last but not least, Messrs. A. Russell Wallace, W. Crookes, Balfour Stewart, etc., in England, followed by a number of scientific stars of the second magnitude.

<sup>2</sup> We hope that the few friends we have left in the ranks of the Spiritualists may not misunderstand us. We denounce the bogus “spirits” of *seances* held by professional mediums, and deny the possibility of such manifestations of spirits on the physical plane. But we believe thoroughly in Spiritualistic phenomena, and in the intercourse between Spirits of *Egos*—of embodied and disembodied entities; only adding that, since the latter cannot manifest on our plane, it is the Ego of the living man which meets the Ego of the

dead personality, by ascending to the Devachanic plane, which may be accomplished in trance, during sleep in dreams, and by other subjective means.

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are yet virtually members of that Silent Brotherhood the units of which often do not know each other, belonging as they do to nations far and wide apart, yet each of whom carries on his brow the mark of the mysterious Karmic seal—the seal that makes of him or her a member of the Brotherhood of the Elect of Thought. Having failed to satisfy their aspirations in their respective *orthodox* faiths, they have severed themselves from their Churches in soul when not in body, and are devoting the rest of their lives to the worship of loftier and purer ideals than any intellectual speculation can give them. How few, in comparison to their numbers, and how rarely one meets with such, and yet their name is legion, if they only chose to reveal themselves.

Under the influence of that same passionate search of “life in spirit” and “life in truth,” which compels every earnest Theosophist onward through years of moral obloquy and public ostracism; moved by the same dissatisfaction with the principles of pure conventionality of modern society, and scorn for the still triumphant, fashionable thought, which, appropriating to itself unblushingly the honoured epithets of “scientific” and “foremost,” of “pioneer” and “liberal,” uses these prerogatives but to domineer over the fainthearted and selfish—these earnest men and women prefer to tread alone and unaided the narrow and thorny path that lies before him who will neither recognize authorities nor bow before cant. They may leave “Sir Oracles” of modern thought, as well as the Pecksniffs of time-dishonoured and dogma-soiled lay-figures of Church-conventionality, without protest; yet, carrying in the silent shrine of their soul the same grand ideals as all mystics do, they are in truth Theosophists *de facto* if not *de jure*. We meet such in every circle of society, in every class of life. They are found among artists and novelists, in the aristocracy and commerce, among the highest and the richest, as among the lowest and the poorest. Among the most prominent in this century is Count L. Tolstoi, a living example, and one of the signs of the times in this period, of the occult working of the ever moving cycle. Listen to a few lines of the history of the psycho-spiritual evolution of this aristocrat, the greatest writer of modern Russia, by one of the best *feuilletonistes* in St. Petersburg.

. . . The most famous of our Russian authors, the “word-painter,” a writer of Shakespearean realism, a heathen poet, one who in a certain sense worshipped in his literary productions life for the sake of life, *an sich und fur sich*—as the Hegelians used to say—collapses suddenly over his fairy palette, lost in tormenting

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thought; and forthwith he commences to offer to himself and the world the most abstruse and insoluble problems. . . . The author of the ‘Cossacks’ and ‘Family Happiness,’ clad in peasant’s garb and bast shoes, starts as a pilgrim on foot in search of divine truth. He goes to the solitary forest *skits*<sup>3</sup> of the *Raskolnikyi*,<sup>4</sup> visits the monks of the Desert of Optino, passes his time in fasting and prayer. For his *belles lettres* and philosophy he substitutes the Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers; and, as a sequel to ‘Anna Karenina’ he creates his ‘Confessions’ and ‘Explanations of the New Testament.’

The fact that Count Tolstoi, all his passionate earnestness notwithstanding, did not become an orthodox Christian, nor has succumbed to the wiles of Spiritualism (as his latest satire on mediums and “spirits” proves), prevents him in no way from being a full-fledged mystic. What is the mysterious influence which has suddenly forced him into that weird current almost without any transition period? What unexpected idea or vision led him into that new groove of thought? Who knoweth save himself, or those real “Spirits,” who are not likely to gossip it out in a modern seance-room?

And yet Count Tolstoi is by no means a solitary example of the work of that mysterious cycle of psychic and spiritual evolution now in its full activity—a work which, silently and unperceived, will grind to dust the most grand and magnificent structures of materialistic speculations, and reduce to nought in a few days the intellectual work of years. What is that moral and invisible Force? Eastern philosophy alone can explain.

In 1875 the Theosophical Society came into existence. It was ushered into the world with the distinct intention of becoming an ally to, a supplement and a helper of, the Spiritualistic movement —of course, in its higher and more philosophical aspect. It succeeded, however, only in making of the Spiritualists

its bitterest enemies, its most untiring persecutors and denunciators. Perchance the chief reason for it may be found in the fact that many of the best and most intellectual of their representatives passed body and soul into the Theosophical Society. Theosophy was, indeed, the only system that gave a philosophical *rationale* of mediumistic phenomena, a logical *raison d'être* for them. Incomplete and unsatisfactory some of its teachings certainly are, which is only owing to

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<sup>3</sup> *Skit* is a religious hermitage.

<sup>4</sup> *Raskolnik*, a Dissenter; hitherto persecuted and forbidden sects in Russia.

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the imperfections of the human nature of its exponents, not to any fault in the system itself or its teachings. Based as these are upon philosophies hoary with age, the experience of men and races nearer than we are to the source of things, and the records of sages who have questioned successively and for numberless generations the Sphinx of Nature, who now holds her lips sealed as to the secrets of life and death—these teachings have to be held certainly as a little more reliable than the dicta of certain “intelligences.”

Whether the intellect and consciousness of the latter be *induced* and artificial—as we hold—or emanate from a personal source and entity, it matters not. Even the *exoteric* philosophies of the Eastern sages—systems of thought whose grandeur and logic few will deny—agree in every fundamental doctrine with our Theosophical teachings. As to those creatures which are called and accepted as “Spirits of the Dead”—because, forsooth, they themselves say so—their true nature is as unknown to the Spiritualists as to their mediums. With the most intellectual of the former the question remains to this day *sub judice*. Nor is it the Theosophists who would differ from them in their higher view of Spirits.

As it is not the object of this article, however, to contrast the two most significant movements of our century, nor to discuss their relative merits or superiority, we say at once that our only aim in bringing them forward is to draw attention to the wonderful progress of late of this occult cycle. While the enormous numbers of adherents to both Theosophy and Spiritualism, within

or outside of our respective societies, show that both movements were but the necessary and, so to say, Karmically pre-ordained work of the age, and that each of them was born at its proper hour and fulfilled its proper mission at the right time, there are other and still more significant signs of the times.

A few years ago we predicted in print that after a short cycle of abuse and persecution, many of our enemies would come round, while others would, *en désespoir de cause* follow our example and found mystic Societies. As Egypt in the prophecy of Hermes, Theosophy was accused by “impious foreigners” (in our case, those outside its fold) of adoring monsters and chimaeras, and teaching “enigmas incredible to posterity.” If our “sacred scribes and hierophants” are not wanderers upon the face of the earth, it was through no fault of good Christian priests and clergymen; and no less than the Egyptians in the early centuries of the new faith and era, had

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we, from fear of a still worse profanation of sacred things and names, to bury deeper than ever the little of the esoteric knowledge that had been permitted to be given out to the world.

But, during the last three years all this has rapidly changed, and the demand for mystic information became so great, that the Theosophical Publishing Society could not find workers enough to supply the demand. Even the “Secret Doctrine,” the most abstruse of our publications—notwithstanding its forbidding price, the conspiracy of silence, and the nasty, contemptuous flings at it by some daily papers—has proved financially a success. See the change. That which Theosophists hardly dared speak about with bated breath for fear of being called lunatics but a few years ago, is now being given out by lecturers, publicly advocated by mystical clergymen. While the orthodox hasten to make away with the old hell and sapphire-paved New Jerusalem, the more liberal accept now under Christian veils and biblical nomenclature our Doctrine of Karma, Reincarnation, and God as an abstract Principle.

Thus the Church is slowly drifting into philosophy and pantheism. Daily, we recognize some of our teachings creeping out as speculations—religious, poetical and even scientific: and these noticed with respect by the same papers which will neither admit their theosophical origin nor abstain from vilipending



the very granary of such mystic ideas—the Theosophical Society. About a year ago a wise criticaster exclaimed in a paper we need not advertise:—

To show the utterly *unscientific* ideas with which the work (the *Secret Doctrine*) is crammed, it may be sufficient to point out that its author refuses belief in the existence of *inorganic matter* and endows atoms with intelligence.

And to-day we find Edison's conception of matter quoted with approval and sympathy by London magazines from *Harper's*, in which we read:

I do not believe that matter is inert, acted upon by an outside force. To me it seems that every atom is possessed by a certain amount of primitive intelligence: look at the thousand ways in which atoms of hydrogen combine with those of other elements. . . . Do you mean to say they do this without intelligence? . . .

Mr. Edison is a Theosophist, though not a very active one. Still the very fact of his holding a diploma seems to inspire him with Theosophical truths.

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“Theosophists believe in reincarnation!” say contemptuously our Christian enemies. “We do not find one word ever said by our Saviour that *could be interpreted against the modern belief in reincarnation*. . . .” preaches the Rev. Mr. Bullard, thus half opening, and very wisely too, a back door for the day when this Buddhistical and Brahminical “inane belief” will have become general.

Theosophists believe that the earliest races of men were as ethereal as are now their astral doubles, and call them *chhayas* (shadows). And now hear the English poet-laureate singing in his last book, “Demeter, and other Poems” —

The *ghost in man*, the *ghost that once was man*,  
But cannot wholly free itself from men,  
Are calling to each other through a Dawn,  
Stronger than earth has ever seen; *the veil*  
*Is rending*, and the voices of the day  
Are heard across the voices of the Dark.  
*No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell for man*,

. . . . .

. . . . .  
*Æonian evolution, swift or slow,  
Through all the spheres — an ever opening height,  
An ever lessening earth. . . .*<sup>5</sup>

This looks as if Lord Tennyson had read Theosophical books, or is inspired by the same grand truths as we are.

“Oh!” we hear some sceptics exclaiming, “but there are poetical licenses. The writer does not believe a word of it.” How do you know this? But even if it were so, here is one more proof of the cyclic evolution of our Theosophical ideas, which, I hope, will not be dubbed, to match, as “clerical licenses.” One of the most esteemed and sympathetic of London clergymen, the Rev. G. W. Allen, has just stepped into our Theosophical shoes and followed our good example by founding a “Christo-Theosophical Society.” As its double title shows, its platform and programme have to be necessarily more restricted and limited than our own, for in the words of its circular “it is (only) intended to cover ground which that (the original or ‘Parent’) Society at present does not cover.” However much our esteemed friend and co-worker in Theosophy may be mistaken in believing that the teachings of the Theosophical Society do not cover *esoteric* Christianity as they do the esoteric aspect of all other world-religions, yet his new Society is sure to do

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<sup>5</sup>The italics are ours.

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good work. For, if the name chosen means anything at all, it means that the work and study of the members must of necessity be Theosophical. The above is again proven by what the circular of the “Christo-Theosophical Society” states in the following words: —

It is believed that at the present day there are many persons who are dissatisfied with the crude and unphilosophic enunciation of Christianity put forward so often in sermons and theological writings. Some of these persons are impelled to give up all faith in Christianity, but many of them

do this reluctantly, and would gladly welcome a presentation of the old truths which should show them to be in harmony with the conclusions of reason and the testimony of undeniable intuition. There are many others, also, whose only feeling is that the truths of their religion mean so very little to them practically, and have such very little power to influence and ennoble their daily life and character. To such persons the Christo-Theosophical Society makes its appeal, inviting them to join together in a common effort to discover that apprehension of Christian Truth, and to attain that Power, which must be able to satisfy the deep yearnings of the human heart, and give strength for self-mastery and a life lived for others.

This is admirable, and shows plainly its purpose of countering the very pernicious influences of exoteric and dogmatic theology, and it is just what we have been trying to do all along. All similarity, however, stops here, as it has nothing to do, as it appears, with *universal* but only sectarian Theosophy. We fear greatly that the "C.T.S."—by inviting

to its membership those persons who, while desirous of apprehending ever more and more clearly the mysteries of Divine Truth, *yet wish to retain as the foundation of their philosophy the Christian doctrines of God as the Father of all men, and Christ as His revelation of Himself to mankind*

—limits thereby "the Mysteries of the Divine Truth" to one single and the youngest of all religions, and *avatars* to but one man. We hope sincerely that the members of the Christo-Theosophical Society may be able to avoid this Charybdis without falling into Scylla.

There is one more difficulty in our way, and we would humbly ask to have it explained to us. "The Society," states the circular, "is not made up of Teachers and Learners. We are all learners." This, with the hope distinctly expressed a few lines higher, that the members will "gladly welcome a presentation of the old truths . . . in harmony with the conclusions of reason," etc., leads to a natural query: Which of the "learners" is to present the said truths to the other learners? Then comes the unavoidable reasoning that whosoever

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the "learner" may be, no sooner he will begin his "presentation" than he will become *nolens volens* a "teacher."

But this is, after all, a trifle. We feel too proud and too satisfied with the homage thus paid to Theosophy, and with the sight of a representative of the Anglican clergy following in our track, to find fault with details, or wish anything but good luck to the Christo-Theosophical Association.

*Lucifer*, March, 1890

## OUR CYCLE AND THE NEXT

The world's great age begins anew,  
The golden days return.  
The earth doth like a snake renew  
Her winter weeds outworn.  
—Shelley

My friend, the golden age hath passed  
away,  
Only the good have power to bring it  
back . . . . —Goethe

THAT had the author of *Prometheus Unbound* in his mind's eye when writing about the return of the golden days, and the new beginning of the world's great age? Has his poetical foresight carried his "Vision of the Nineteenth Century" into the "One Hundred and Nineteenth," or has that vision revealed to him in gorgeous imagery the things to come which are the things that were?

Fichte assures us it is "a phenomenon of frequent occurrence, particularly in past ages," that "what *we shall become* is pictured by something which *we already have been*; and that what we have to obtain is represented as something which we have formerly lost." And he adds, "what Rousseau, under the name of the state of Nature, and old poets by the title of the Golden Age, place *behind* us, lies actually *before* us."

Such is also Tennyson's idea, when he says:

Old writers push'd the happy seasons back —

The more fools they—we forward; dreamers both. . . .

Happy the optimist in whose heart the nightingale of hope can still sing, with all the iniquity and cold selfishness of the present age

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before his eyes! Our century is a boastful age, and proud as it is hypocritical; as cruel as it is dissembling.

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Oh ye, gods, how dissembling and truly sacrilegious in the face of every truth, is this, our century, with all its boastful sanctimoniousness and cant! Verily, “Pecksniffian” ought to be thy name, oh, *nineteenth* of thy Christian series. For thou hast generated more hypocrites in a square yard of thy civilized soil than antiquity has bred of them on all its idolatrous lands during long ages. And thy modern Pecksniff, of both sexes, is “so thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of falsehood that he is *moral* even in drunkenness and canting even in shame and discovery,” in the words of the author of *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

*If true, how dreadful Fichte’s statement! It is terrible beyond words. Shall we then expect at some future recurring cycle to rebecome that which “we already have been,” or that which we are now? To obtain a glance into the future cycle we have thus but to examine the situation around us in the present day. What do we find?*

Instead of truth and sincerity, we have propriety and cold, cultured politeness; in one plain word, *dissembling*. Falsification on every plane; falsification of moral food and the same falsification of eatable food. *Margarine* butter for the soul, and margarine butter for the stomach; beauty and fresh colours without, and rottenness and corruption within. Life—a long race-course, a feverish chase, whose goal is a tower of selfish ambition, of pride, and vanity, of greed for money or honours, and in which human passions are the horsemen, and our weaker brethren the steeds. At this terrible steeplechase the prize-cup is purchased with the heart’s blood and sufferings of countless fellow-creatures, and won at the cost of spiritual self-degradation.

Who, in this century, would presume to say what he thinks? It takes a brave man, nowadays, to speak the truth fearlessly, and even that at personal risk and cost. For the law forbids one saying the truth, except under compulsion, in its courts and under threat of perjury. Have lies told about you publicly and in print, and, unless you are wealthy, you are powerless to shut your calumniator's mouth; state facts, and you become a defamer; hold your tongue on some iniquity perpetrated in your presence, and your friends will

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hold you as a participator therein—a confederate. The expression of one's honest opinion has become impossible in this, our cycle. The just lost bill repealing the "Blasphemy Laws," is a good proof in point.

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The *Pall Mall Gazette* had, in its issue of April 13th, some pertinent lines on the subject; its arguments, however, presenting but a one-sided view, and having, therefore, to be accepted *cum grano salis*. It reminds the reader that the true principle in the Blasphemy Laws "was long ago laid down by Lord Macaulay," and adds:

To express your own religious or irreligious opinions with the utmost possible freedom is one thing; to put forward your views offensively, so as to outrage and pain other people, is another thing. You may wear what clothes you please, or no clothes at all, in your own house, but if a man were to assert his right to walk down Regent-street clad solely in his shirt the public would have a right to object. Suppose some zealous man were to placard all the hoardings of London with "comic" pictures of the Crucifixion, that surely ought to be an offense, even in the eyes of those who do not believe the Crucifixion ever happened.

Just so. Be religious or irreligious, in our age, as much as you like, but do not be offensive, and dare not "outrage and pain other people." Does *other* people mean here Christians only, no other persons being considered? Moreover, the margin thus left for the jury's opinion is ominously wide, for who knows where the line of demarcation is to be drawn! To be entirely impartial and fair in their verdict in these particular matters, the jury would have to be a mixed one and consist of six Christians and six "infidels." Now we have been impressed in

youth that Themis was a blindfolded goddess only in antiquity and among the heathen. Since then—Christianity and civilization having opened her eyes—the allegory allows now of two versions. But we try to believe the best of the two inferences, and thinking of law most reverentially, we come to the following conclusions: *in law*, that which is sauce for the goose *must be* sauce for the gander. Therefore, if administered on this principle, the “Blasphemy Laws,” must prove most beneficent to all concerned, “without distinction of race, colour or religion,” as we say in theosophy.

Now, if law *is* equitable, it must apply impartially to all. Are we then to understand that it forbids “to outrage and pain” *anyone’s*

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feelings, or simply those of the Christians? If the former, then it must include Theosophists, Spiritualists, the many millions of *heathens* whom merciful fate has made Her Majesty’s subjects, and even the Freethinkers, and Materialists, some of whom are very thin-skinned. It *cannot* mean the latter, *i.e.*, limit the “law” to the God of the Christians alone; nor would we presume to suspect it of such a sinful bias. For “blasphemy” is a word applying not only to God, Christ and the Holy Ghost, not merely to the Virgin and Saints, but to every God or Goddess. This term, with the same criminal sense attached to it, existed with the Greeks, the Romans, and with the older Egyptians ages before our era. “Thou shalt not revile the *gods*” (plural), stands out prominent in verse 28 of chapter xxii of *Exodus*, when “God” speaks out from Mount Sinai. So much admitted, what becomes of our friends, the missionaries? If enforced, the law does not promise them a very nice time of it. We pity them, with the Blasphemy Laws suspended over their heads like a sword of Damocles; for, of all the foul-mouthed *blasphemers* against God and the Gods of other nations they are the foremost. Why should they be allowed to break the law against Vishnu, Durga, or any fetish; against Buddha, Mahomet, or even a spook, in whom a spiritualist sincerely recognizes his dead mother, any more than an “infidel” against Jehovah? In the eyes of Law, Hanuman, the monkey-god, has to be protected as much as any of the trinitarian god-heads; otherwise law would be more blindfolded than ever. Moreover, besides his sacredness in the eyes of the teeming millions of India, Hanuman is no less dear to the sensitive hearts of Darwinists; and blasphemy against our first cousin, the tailless baboon, is

certain to “hurt the feelings” of Messers. Grant Allen and Aveling, as much as those of many Hindu theosophists. We grant that he who makes “comic pictures of the crucifixion,” commits an offense against the law. But so does he who ridicules Krishna, and misunderstanding the allegory of his Gopi (shepherdesses) speaks foully of him before Hindus. And how about the profane and vulgar jokes uttered from the pulpit by some ministers of the gospels themselves—not about Krishna, but Christ himself?

And here steps in the comical discrepancy between theory and practice, between the dead and living letter of the law. We know of several most offensively “comic” preachers, but have hitherto found “infidels” and *atheists* alone sternly reproving for it those sinning Christian ministers, whether in England or America.

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The world upside down! Profane blasphemy charged upon gospel preachers, the orthodox press keeping silent about it, and an Agnostic alone raising his voice against such clownish proceedings. It is certain that we find more truth in one paragraph of “Saladin’s”<sup>1</sup> writings than in half the daily papers of the United Kingdom; more of reverential and true feeling, to whatsoever applied, and more of fine sense for the *fitness of things* in the little finger of that “infidel,” than in all the burly, boisterous figure of the Reverend-irreverend Mr. Spurgeon. One is an “agnostic”—a “scoffer at the Bible” he is called; the other a famous Christian preacher. But *Karma* having nought to do with the dead letter of human laws, of civilization or progress, provides on our spinning ball of mud an antidote for every evil, hence a truth-worshipping *infidel*, for every money-making preacher who desecrates his gods. America has its Talmage, described very properly by the *New York “Sun”*<sup>2</sup> as a “gibbering charlatan,” and its Colonel Robert Ingersoll. In England Talmage’s imitators find a stern Nemesis in “Saladin.” The Yankee preacher was more than once severely taken to task by infidel papers for leading his flock to heaven not in a reverential spirit, but trying to shorten the long and tedious journey with sundry Biblical anecdotes. Who in New York has forgotten the *farce-pantomime* performed by Talmage on April 15, 1877? We remember it well. His subject was the “trio of Bethany,” when each of the three *dramatis personae* was “mimicked to perfection,” as declared by the congregation. Jesus was shown by the reverend



harlequin, "making a morning call" on Mary and Martha, throwing himself "on an *ottoman*," then taking up the time of Mary "the lover of ethics," who sat at his feet, and finding himself "*blown up* for this" (sic) by Martha, "left to serve alone." Colonel Sandys said the other day in the House of Commons in his speech on Mr. Bradlaugh's Blasphemy Bill which he opposed, that "while we punished those who killed the body, the object of the bill was to allow those who would murder the souls of men to do so with impunity."

Does he think that making fun of *sacred* beliefs by a Christian preacher fills the souls of his listeners with reverence, and *murders*

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<sup>1</sup> The fine poet and witty editor of the late *Secular Review*, now the *Agnostic Journal*. The works of Mr. W. Stewart Ross ("Saladin") e.g., "Woman, Her Glory, Her Shame, and Her God," "Miscellaneous Pamphlets," "God and His Book," etc., will become in the XXth century the most powerful as the most complete vindication of every man and woman called infidel in the XIXth.

<sup>2</sup> The Sun of April 6, 1877.

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*it* only when that fun comes from an infidel? The same pious "commoner" reminded the House that: "Under the law of Moses those who committed blasphemy were to be taken out of the camp and stoned to death."

We have not the slightest objection to Protestant fanatics of the Mosaic persuasion, taking the Talmages and Spurgeons, and stoning them to death. We will not even stop to enquire of such a modern Saul, why blame in such a case the Pharisees for acting on that same Mosaic law and crucifying his Christ, or "certain of the Synagogue of the Libertines" for stoning Stephen? But we will simply state this:—If *justice*, like charity, does not stop "at home," such unfairness as Freethinkers, Agnostics, Theosophists, and other *infidels* receive generally at the hands of law, will be a subject of the scorn for future history.

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For history repeats itself. Spurgeon having poked fun at Paul's *miracles*, we recommend every fair-minded person to procure the *Agnostic Journal* of April 13, and read Saladin's article "At Random," devoted to that favourite preacher. If they would find out the reason why, day by day, religious feeling is dying

out in this country, *murdered* as it is in Christian *souls*, let them read it. Reverence is replaced by emotionalism. The Salvationists glorifying Christ on the "light fantastic toe," and Spurgeon's "tabernacle" is all that remains in this Christian land of the Sermon on the Mount. Crucifixion and Calvary are solely represented by that weird combination of hell-fire and "Punch and Judy show," which is preeminently Mr. Spurgeon's religion. Who, then, will find these lines by "Saladin" *too* strong?

. . . . Edward Irving was a severe mystic and volcanic Elijah; Charles Spurgeon is a grinning and exoteric Grimaldi. Newly returned from Mentone and gout, he presided over the annual meeting of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Church Auxilliary, held in the Tabernacle. At the commencement of the proceedings he remarked to those about to pray; "Now, it is a cold night, and, if anybody prays very long, somebody will be frozen to death. (Laughter.) I remember that Paul preached a long sermon once, and a young man tumbled out of a window and killed himself. If anybody gets frozen to-night, I am not like Paul, and cannot restore him, so please don't render a miracle necessary, as I cannot perform it. (Laughter.)"

Such a Jester as this, if he had been alive and in Palestine,  
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contemporary with the "blessed Lord," out of whom he makes such a profit, would have poked the "blessed Lord" jocularly in the ribs with a "well, and how are you, old boy from Nazareth?" There would have been Judas, called Iscariot, who carried the bag, and Charles, called Spurgeon, who wore the cap and bells.

I make light of the Galilean fables, because to me they are simply fables; but to Mr. Spurgeon they are "the very word of very God," and it is not for him to make light of them, even to please the holy mediocrites of the Tabernacle. I venture to recommend to Mr. Spurgeon's devout attention a sentiment to be found in Cicero's *De Legibus*, and which runs thus: *De sacris autem haec sit una sententia, ut conserventur*. As Mr. Spurgeon has all his life been so prayerfully absorbed that he has had no time for study and knows no language save a voluble gush of washerwoman

English, I may tell him and his that the words mean, *But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred be inviolate.* —(Agn. Journal, April 13.)

Amen, we utter, from the bottom of our soul, to this noble advice. "But his pen is dipped in sacrilegious gall!" we heard a clergyman say to us the other day, speaking of "Saladin." "Aye," we answered. "But his is a diamond pen, and the gall of his irony is clear as crystal, free as it is from any other desire than to deal justly and speak the truth." In view of the "blasphemy law" remaining on hand, and the equitable law of this country which makes a libel more *libellous* in proportion to the truth it contains, and especially with an eye to the pecuniary ruin which it entails upon at least one of the parties, there is more heroism and fearless self-abnegation in speaking the truth *pro bono publico*, than in pandering to public hobbies. With the exception, perhaps, of the brave and outspoken editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* there is no writer in England whom we respect more for such noble-minded fearlessness, and none whose fine wit we admire more than "Saladin's."

But the world, in our day, judges everything on appearance. Motives are held as of no account, and the materialistic tendency is foremost in condemning *a priori* that which clashes with skin-deep propriety and encrusted notions. Nations, men, and ideas all are judged according to our preconceptions, and the lethal emanations of modern civilization kill all goodness and truth. As observed by St. Georges, the savage races are fast disappearing, "killed by the mere contact of civilized man." No doubt, it *must be* a consolation to the Hindu and even the Zulu, to think that all their surviving

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brethren will die (thanks to the missionary effort) linguists and scholars, if not Christians. A theosophist, a colonist born in Africa, was telling us the other day that a Zulu had offered himself to him as "a boy." This Caffre was a graduate of a college, a Latin, Greek, Hebrew and English scholar. Found unable with all these achievements to cook a dinner or clean boots, the gentleman had to send him away—probably *to starve*. All this has inflated the European with pride. But, as says again the above-quoted writer, "he forgets that Africa is fast becoming Mussulman, and that *Islam*, a kind of granite block which in its powerful cohesion defies the force of the waves and winds, is refractory to European ideas, which, so far, have never seriously affected it." Europe may

yet awaken one day to find itself Mussulman, if not in “durance vile” to the “heathen Chinee.” But when the “inferior races” have all died out, who, or what shall replace them in the cycle that is to mirror our own?

There are those, also, who with a superficial eye to ancient as also to modern history, slight and disparage everything ever achieved in antiquity. We remember reading about heathen priesthoods; who “built proud towers,” instead of “emancipating degraded savages.” The Magi of Babylon were contrasted with the “poor Patagonians” and other Christian missions, the former coming out second best in every such comparison. To this it may be answered that if the ancients built “proud towers” so do the moderns; witness, the present Parisian craze, the *Eiffel* Tower. How many human lives the ancient towers cost, no one can tell, but the *Eiffel*, unfinished as it is, has cost in the first year of its existence over one hundred workmen killed. Between the latter and the Babylonian Tower, the palm of superiority in usefulness belongs by rights to the *ziggurat*, the Planet Tower of Nebo’s Temple of Borsippa. Between a “proud tower” built to the national God of Wisdom, and another “proud tower” constructed to attract the children of folly—unless it is urged that even modern folly is superior to ancient wisdom—there is room for a diversity of opinions. Furthermore, it is to Chaldean astrology that modern astrognosy owes its progress, and it is the astronomical calculations of the Magi that became the ground-work of our present mathematical astronomy and have guided discoverers in their researches. As to missions, whether to Patagonia or Anam, Africa or Asia, it is still an open question with the unprejudiced, whether they are a benefit or an evil which Europe confers on the “degraded savages.” We seriously doubt whether the “benighted” heathen

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would not profit more by being left severely alone than by being made (in addition to treason to their earlier beliefs) acquainted with the blessings of rum, whiskey and the various ensuing diseases which generally appear in the trail of European missionaries. Every sophistry notwithstanding, a moderately honest *heathen* is nearer the Kingdom of Heaven than a lying, thieving, rascally Christian convert. And—since he is assured that his robes (*i.e.* crimes) are washed in the blood of Jesus, and is told of God’s greater joy “over one sinner

that repenteth" than over 99 sinless saints—neither he, nor we, can see why the convert should not profit by the opportunity.

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"Who," asks E. Young, "gave in antiquity twenty millions, not at the bidding of an imperious monarch or a tyrannical priesthood, but at the spontaneous call of the national conscience and by the immediate instrumentality of the national will?" the writer adding, that in this "money grant" there is "a moral grandeur that sinks the Pyramids into littleness." O, the pride and the conceit of this our age!

We do not know. Had each of the subscribers to this "money grant" given his "widow's *two mites*," they might claim collectively to have *cast* "more than all," more than any other nation, and await their reward. England being, however, the wealthiest nation in the world, the intrinsic merits of the case seem slightly altered. Twenty millions in a lump represent indeed a mighty engine for good. But such a "money grant" could only gain in Karma, were it to pander less to national pride, and were the nation not to feel itself so exalted for it, in the four quarters of the globe, by hundred-voiced fame trumpeted by public organs. *True* charity opens her purse-strings with an invisible hand, and:

Finishing its act, exists no more. . . .

It shuns Fame, and is never ostentatious. Besides which, everything is relative. One million in specie, 3,000 years ago, represented ten-fold more than twenty millions to-day. Twenty millions are a Niagara inundating with Titanic force some popular want, and creating, for the time being, as great a commotion. But, while helping for a certain lapse of time tens of thousands of hungry wretches, even such an enormous sum leaves ten times as many unfortunate, starving wretches still unrelieved.

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To such munificent bounties we prefer countries where there are no needy people at all, *e.g.* those small communities, the remnants of once mighty races, which allow no beggars among their co-religionists—we mean the Parsis. Under the Indian and Buddhist Kings, like Chandragupta and Asoka, people

did not wait, as they do now, for a national calamity, to throw the surplus of their overflowing wealth at the head of a portion of the starving and the homeless, but worked steadily on, century after century, building *rest-houses*, digging wells and planting fruit-trees along the roads, wherein the weary pilgrim and the penniless traveler could always find rest and shelter, be fed and *receive* hospitality at the national expense. A little clear stream of cold, healthy water which runs steadily, and is ever ready to refresh parched lips, is more beneficent than the sudden torrent that breaks the dam of national indifference, now and then, by fits and starts.

Thus, if we have to become in the future cycle *that which we already have been*, let this be as in the days of Asoka, not as it is now. But we are reproached with forgetting "*Christian heroism*." Where will you find, we are asked, a parallel to the heroism of the early martyrs and that displayed in our day? We are sorry to contradict this boast like many others. If casual instances of heroism in our century are undeniable, who, on the other hand, dreads death more, as a general rule, than the Christian? The idolater, the Hindu and the Buddhist, in short every Asiatic or African, dies with an indifference and serenity unknown to our Western man. As for "*Christian heroism*," whether we mean mediaeval or modern heroes or heroines, a St. Louis, or a General Gordon, a Joan of Arc, or a Nightingale, there is no need of the adjective to emphasize the substantive. The Christian martyrs were preceded by the idolatrous and even godless Spartans of many virtues, the brave sisters of the Red Cross by the matrons of Rome and Greece. To this day, the daily self-tortures submitted to by the Indian Yogi and the Mussulman Fakir, tortures often lasting through years, throw entirely into the shadow—the unavoidable heroism of the Christian martyr, ancient or modern. He who would learn the full meaning of the word "*heroism*" must read the *Annals of Rajistan* by Colonel Tod. . . .

"Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's," is a golden rule, but like so many others from the same source, Christians are the first to break it.

Pride and conceit are the two hideous cancers devouring the heart  
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of *civilized* nations, and selfishness is the sword handled by

evanescent *personality* to sever the golden thread that links it to immortal individuality. Old Juvenal must have been a prophet. It is *our* century that he addresses when saying:

We own thy merits; but we blame beside  
Thy mind elate with insolence and pride!

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Pride is the first enemy to itself. Unwilling to hear any one praised in its presence, it falls foul of every rival and does not always come out victorious. "I am *the* one, and God's elect," says the proud nation. "I am *the* invincible and the foremost; tremble all ye around me!" Behold, there comes a day when we see it crouching in the dust, bleeding and mangled. "I am the one," croaks the private crow in peacock's feathers. "I am *the* one—painter, artist, writer, or what not—*par excellence*. . . . On whomsoever I shed my light, he is singled out by the nations; on whomsoever I turn my back, he is doomed to contempt and oblivion."

Vain conceit and glorification. In the law of Karma as in the truths we find in the gospels, he who is the first will be the last—hereafter. There are those writers whose thoughts, however distasteful to the bigoted majority will survive many generations; others which, however brilliant and original, will be rejected in the future cycles. Moreover, as the cowl does not make the monk, so the external excellence of a thing does not guarantee the moral beauty of its workman, whether in art or literature. Some of the most eminent poets, philosophers and authors were historically immoral. Rousseau's ethics did not prevent his nature being far from perfect. Edgar Poe is said to have written his best poems in a state verging on *delirium tremens*. George Sand, her magnificent psychological insight, the high moral character of her heroines, and her elevated ideas notwithstanding, could have never claimed the *Montyon* prize for virtue. Talent, moreover, and especially genius, are no development of any one's present life, of which one ought to feel personally proud, but the fruition of a previous existence, and its illusions are dangerous. "Maya," say the Orientals, "spreads its thickest and most deceitful veils over the most lovely spots and objects in nature." The most beautiful serpents are the most

venomous. The *Upas* tree, whose deadly atmosphere kills every living thing that approaches it, is—the Queen of Beauty in the African forests.  
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Shall we expect the same in the “coming cycle”? Are we doomed to the same evils then that befall us now?

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Nevertheless, and though Fichte’s speculation will have proved correct and Shelley’s “Golden Age” will have dawned upon mankind, still Karma will have its usual way. For we shall have become “the ancients” in our turn, for those who will come long after us. The men of that period will also believe themselves the *only* perfect beings and show scorn to the “Eiffel” as we show scorn to the Babel-tower. Slaves to the *routine*—the established opinions of the day; what they of the next cycle will say and do, will alone be well said and done.

“Wolf! wolf!” will be the cry raised against those who, as we defend the ancients now, will attempt to say a good word for us. And forthwith the finger of scorn and every weapon available will be directed at him who falls off from the beaten track, and at the “blasphemers” who may dare to call by their right names the gods of that cycle, and presume to defend their own ideals. What biographies shall be written of the famous infidels of to-day, one can foresee in reading those of some of England’s best poets; *e.g.*, the posthumous opinions passed on Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Yea, he is now accused of what he would have otherwise been praised for, because, forsooth, he wrote in his boyhood “A Defence of Atheism”! *Ergo*, his imagination is said to have carried him “beyond the bounds of reality,” and his metaphysics are said to be “without a solid foundation of reason.” This amounts to saying that his critics alone know *all* about the landmarks placed by nature between the real and the unreal. This kind of orthodox trigonometrical surveyors of the absolute, who claim to be the only specialists chosen by their God for the setting of boundaries and who are ever ready to sit in judgment over independent metaphysicians, are a feature of our century. In Shelley’s case, the metaphysics of the young author of “Queen Mab,” described in popular encyclopedias as a “violent and blasphemous attack on Christianity



and the Bible," must, of course, have appeared to his infallible judges without "a solid foundation in reason." For them, that "foundation" is in the motto of Tertullian, "*Credo quia absurdum est.*"

Poor, great young Shelley! He who laboured so zealously for several years of his too short life in relieving the poor and consoling

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the distressed, and who, according to Medwin, would have given his last sixpence to a stranger in want, he is called an *Atheist* for refusing to accept the Bible *literally!* We find, perhaps, a reason for this "Atheism" in the *Conversations Lexicon*, in which Shelley's immortal name is followed by that of Shem, "the eldest son of Noah . . . said in Scripture to have died at the age of 600 years." The writer of this encyclopedic information (quoted by us *verbatim*) had just indulged in saying that "the censure of extreme presumption can hardly be withheld from a writer who, in his youth, rejects all *established* opinions," such as Bible chronology we suppose. But the same writer passes without a word of comment and in prudent, if not reverential, silence, the cyclic years of Shem, as indeed he may!

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Such is our century, so noisily, but happily for all preparing for its final leap into eternity. Of all past centuries, it is the most smilingly cruel, wicked, immoral, boastful and incongruous. It is the hybrid and unnatural production, the monstrous child of its parents —an honest mother called "mediaeval superstition" and a dishonest, humbugging father, a profligate impostor, universally known as "modern civilization." This unpaired, odd team which now drags the car of progress through the triumphal arches of our civilization, suggests strange thoughts. Our Oriental turn of mind makes us think, as we gaze at this orthodox piety harnessed together with cool sneering materialism, of a fitting symbol for our century. We choose it in the colonial production of European ethics (alas, *living* productions!) known as the *half-castes*. We fancy a coffee-coloured, oily face, looking insolently at the world through an eyeglass. A flat and woolly head, surmounted by a tall hat, enthroned on a pedestal of white-starched collar, shirt, and fashionable satin cravat. Leaning on the arm of

this hybrid production, the flat swarthy visage of a mongrel beauty shines under a Parisian bonnet—a pyramid of gauze, gay ribands and plumes. . . .

Indeed, this combination of Asiatic flesh and European array is no more ludicrous than the bird's-eye view of the moral and intellectual amalgamation of ideas and views as now accepted. Mr. Huxley and the "Woman clothed with the Sun"; the Royal Society and the new prophet of Brighton, who lays letters "before the Lord" and has messages for us in reply "from Jehovah of Hosts"; who signs himself, unblushingly, "King Solomon" on letters stamped with the

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heading, "Sanctuary of Jehovah" (*sic*), and calls the "Mother" —(the said *Solar* "woman") "that accursed thing" and an *abomination*.

Yet their teachings are all authoritative and *orthodox*. Just fancy Mr. Grant Allen trying to persuade General Booth that "Life owes its origin to the chemically-separative action of ethereal undulations on the cooled surface of the earth, especially carbonic anhydride and water"; and "le brav' general" of England, arguing that this cannot be so, since this "cooled surface" was only called into being 4004 b. c.; thence, that his (Grant Allen's) "existing diversity of organic forms" was not in the least due, as his new book would make the unwary believe, "to the minute interaction of dynamical laws," but to the dust of the ground, from which "the Lord-God formed the beast of the field" and "every fowl of the air."

These two are the representatives of the goats and the sheep on the Day of Judgment, the Alpha and the Omega of orthodox and correct society in our century. The unfortunates squeezed on the neutral line between these two are steadily kicked and butted by both. *Emotionalism* and *conceit*—one, a nervous disease, the other that feeling which prompts us to swim with the current if we would not pass for retrograde fogeys, or infidels—are the powerful weapons in the hands of our pious modern "sheep" and our learned "goats." How many swell the respective ranks merely owing to one or the other of these feelings, is known to their *Karma* alone . . . .

Those who are not to be moved by either hysterical emotion or a holy fear of the multitudes and propriety; those, whom the voice of their conscience—"that

still small voice" which, when heard, deafens the mighty roar of the Niagara Falls itself and will not permit them to lie to their own souls—remain outside. For these there is no hope in this departing age, and they may as well give up all expectation. *They are born out of due time.* Such is the terrible picture presented by our present cycle, now nearing its close, to those from whose eyes the scales of prejudice, preconception and partiality have fallen, and who see the truth that lies behind the deceptive appearances of our Western "civilization." But what has the new cycle in store for humanity? Will it be merely a continuation of the present, only in darker and more terrible colours? Or shall a new day dawn for mankind, a day of pure sunlight, of truth, of charity, of true happiness for all? The answer depends mainly on the few Theosophists who, true to their colours through good repute and

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ill, still fight the battle of Truth against the powers of Darkness.

An infidel paper contains some optimistic words, the last prophecy by Victor Hugo, who is alleged to have said this:

For four hundred years the human race has not made a step but what has left its plain vestige behind. We enter now upon great centuries. The sixteenth century will be known as the age of painters, the seventeenth will be termed the age of writers, the eighteenth the age of philosophers, the nineteenth the age of apostles and prophets. To satisfy the nineteenth century it is necessary to be the painter of the sixteenth, the writer of the seventeenth, the philosopher of the eighteenth, and it is also necessary, like Louis Blanc, to have the innate and holy love of humanity which constitutes an apostolate, and opens up a prophetic vista into the future, In the twentieth, war will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, animosity will be dead, royalty will be dead, and dogmas will be dead, but man will live. For all, there will be but one country—that country the whole earth; for all, there will be but one hope—that hope the whole heaven.

All hail, then, to that noble twentieth century which shall own our children, and which our children shall inherit!

If Theosophy prevailing in the struggle, its all-embracing philosophy strikes deep root into the minds and hearts of men, if its doctrines of Reincarnation

and Karma, in other words, of Hope and Responsibility, find a home in the lives of the new generations, then, indeed, will dawn the day of joy and gladness for all who now suffer and are outcast. For real Theosophy Is Altruism, and we cannot repeat it too often. It is brotherly love, mutual help, unswerving devotion to Truth. If once men do but realize that in these alone can true happiness be found, and never in wealth, possessions, or any selfish gratification, then the dark clouds will roll away, and a new humanity will be born upon earth. Then, the Golden Age will be there, indeed.

But if not, then the storm will burst, and our boasted western civilization and enlightenment will sink in such a sea of horror that its parallel History has never yet recorded.

*Lucifer*, May, 1

## KARMIC VISIONS

Oh, sad no more! Oh, sweet *No more!*  
Oh, strange *No more!*  
By a mossed brook bank on a stone  
I smelt a wild weed-flower alone;  
There was a ringing in my ears,  
And both my eyes gushed out with tears,  
Surely all pleasant things had gone before.  
Low buried fathom deep beneath with thee, no more!  
—Tennyson (“The Gem,” 1831)

A CAMP filled with war-chariots, neighing horses and legions of long-haired soldiers. . . .

A regal tent, gaudy in its barbaric splendour. Its linen walls are weighed down under the burden of arms. In its centre a raised seat covered with skins, and on it a stalwart, savage-looking warrior. He passes in review prisoners of war brought in turn before him, who are disposed of according to the whim of the heartless despot.

A new captive is now before him, and is addressing him with passionate earnestness. . . . As he listens to her with suppressed passion in his manly, but fierce, cruel face, the balls of his eyes become bloodshot and roll with fury. And as he bends forward with fierce stare, his whole appearance—his matted locks hanging over the frowning brow, his big-boned body with strong sinews, and the two large hands resting on the shield placed upon the right knee —justifies the remark made in hardly audible whisper by a grey-headed soldier to his neighbor:

“Little mercy shall the holy prophetess receive at the hand of Clovis!”

The captive, who stands between two Burgundian warriors, facing the ex-prince of the Salians, now king of all the Franks, is an old woman with silver-white dishevelled hair, hanging over her skeleton-like shoulders. In spite of her great age, her tall figure

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is erect; and the inspired black eyes look proudly and fearlessly into the cruel face of the treacherous son of Gilderich.

“Aye, King,” she says, in a loud, ringing voice. “Aye, thou art great and mighty now, but thy days are numbered, and thou shalt reign but three summers longer. Wicked thou wert born . . . perfidious thou art to thy friends and allies, robbing more than one of his lawful crown. Murderer of thy next-of-kin, thou who addest to the knife and spear in open warfare, dagger, poison, and treason, beware how thou dealest with the servant of Nerthus!”<sup>1</sup>

“Ha, ha! . . . old hag of Hell!” chuckles the King, with an evil, ominous sneer. “Thou hast crawled out of the entrails of thy mother-goddess, truly. Thou fearest not my wrath? It is well. But little need I fear thine empty imprecations. . . . I, a baptized Christian!”

“So, so,” replies the Sybil. “All know that Clovis has abandoned the gods of his fathers; that he has lost all faith in the warning voice of the white horse of the Sun, and that out of fear of the Alemanni he went serving on his knees Remigius, the servant of the Nazarene, at Rheims. But hast thou become any truer in thy new faith? Hast thou not murdered in cold blood all thy brethren

who trusted in thee, after, as well as before, thy apostasy? Hast not thou plighted troth to Alaric, the King of the West Goths, and hast thou not killed him by stealth, running thy spear into his back while he was bravely fighting an enemy? And is it thy new faith and thy new gods that teach thee to be devising in thy black soul even now foul means against Theodoric, who put thee down? . . . Beware, Clovis, beware! For now the gods of thy fathers have risen against thee! Beware, I say, for. . . .”

“Woman!” fiercely cries the King—“Woman, cease thy insane talk and answer my question. Where is the treasure of the grove amassed by thy priests of Satan, and hidden after they had been driven away by the Holy Cross? . . . Thou alone knowest. Answer, or by Heaven and Hell I shall thrust thy evil tongue down thy throat for ever!” . . .

She heeds not the threat, but goes on calmly and fearlessly as before, as if she had not heard.

“. . . The gods say, Clovis, thou art accursed! . . . Clovis, thou shalt be reborn among thy present enemies, and suffer the tortures

— — —

<sup>1</sup>“The Nourishing” (Tacit., *Germ.* XI)—the Earth, a Mother-Goddess, the most beneficent deity of the ancient Germans.

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thou hast inflicted upon thy victims. All the combined power and glory thou hast deprived them of shall be thine in prospect, yet thou shalt never reach it! . . . Thou shalt . . .”

The prophetess never finishes her sentence.

With a terrible oath the King, crouching like a wild beast on his skin-covered seat, pounces upon her with the leap of a jaguar, and with one blow fells her to the ground. And as he lifts his sharp murderous spear the “Holy One” of the Sun-worshipping tribe makes the air ring with a last imprecation.

“I curse thee, enemy of Nerthus! May my agony be tenfold thine! . . . May the Great Law avenge. . . .”

The heavy spear falls, and, running through the victim's throat, nails the head to the ground. A stream of hot crimson blood gushes from the gaping wound and covers king and soldiers with indelible gore. . . .

## II

Time—the landmark of gods and men in the boundless field of Eternity, the murderer of its offspring and of memory in mankind —time moves on with noiseless, incessant step through aeons and ages. . . . Among millions of other Souls, a Soul-Ego is reborn: for weal or for woe, who knoweth! Captive in its new human Form, it grows with it, and together they become, at last, conscious of their existence.

Happy are the years of their blooming youth, unclouded with want or sorrow. Neither knows aught of the Past nor of the Future. For them all is the joyful Present: for the Soul-Ego is unaware that it had ever lived in other human tabernacles, it knows not that it shall be again reborn, and it takes no thought of the morrow.

Its Form is calm and content. It has hitherto given its Soul-Ego no heavy troubles. Its happiness is due to the continuous mild serenity of its temper, to the affection it spreads wherever it goes. For it is a noble Form, and its heart is full of benevolence. Never has the Form startled its Soul-Ego with a too-violent shock, or otherwise disturbed the calm placidity of its tenant.

Two score of years glide by like one short pilgrimage; a long walk through the sun-lit paths of life, hedged by ever-blooming roses with no thorns. The rare sorrows that befall the twin pair, Form and Soul, appear to them rather like the pale light of the

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cold northern moon, whose beams throw into a deeper shadow all around the moon-lit objects, than as the blackness of night, the night of hopeless sorrow and despair.

Son of a Prince, born to rule himself one day his father's kingdom; surrounded from his cradle by reverence and honours; deserving of the

universal respect and sure of the love of all—what could the Soul-Ego desire more from the Form it dwelt in?

And so the Soul-Ego goes on enjoying existence in its tower of strength, gazing quietly at the panorama of life ever changing before its two windows—the two kind blue eyes of a loving and good man.

### III

One day an arrogant and boisterous enemy threatens the father's kingdom, and the savage instincts of the warrior of old awaken in the Soul-Ego. It leaves its dream-land amid the blossoms of life and causes its Ego of clay to draw the soldier's blade, assuring him it is in defence of his country.

Prompting each other to action, they defeat the enemy and cover themselves with glory and pride. They make the haughty foe bite the dust at their feet in supreme humiliation. For this they are crowned by history with the unfading laurels of valour, which are those of success. They make a footstool of the fallen enemy and transform their sire's little kingdom into a great empire. Satisfied they could achieve no more for the present, they return to seclusion and to the dreamland of their sweet home.

For three lustra more the Soul-Ego sits at its usual post, beaming out of its window on the world around. Over its head the sky is blue and the vast horizons are covered with those seemingly unfading flowers that grow in the sunlight of health and strength. All looks fair as a verdant mead in spring. . . .

### IV

But an evil day comes to all in the drama of being. It waits through the life of king and of beggar. It leaves traces on the history of every mortal born from woman, and it can neither be scared away, entreated, nor propitiated. Health is a dewdrop that falls from the heavens to vivify the blossoms on earth only during the morn of life, its spring and summer. . . . It has but a short duration and returns from whence it came—the invisible realms.



How oft 'neath the bud that is brightest and fairest,  
The seeds of the canker in embryo lurk!  
How oft at the root of the flower that is rarest—  
Secure in its ambush the worm is at work. . . .

The running sand which moves downward in the glass, wherein the hours of human life are numbered, runs swifter. The worm has gnawed the blossom of health through its heart. The strong body is found stretched one day on the thorny bed of pain.

The Soul-Ego beams no longer. It sits still and looks sadly out of what has become its dungeon windows, on the world which is now rapidly being shrouded for it in the funeral palls of suffering. Is it the eve of night eternal which is nearing?

## V

Beautiful are the resorts on the midland sea. An endless line of surf-beaten, black, ragged rocks stretches, hemmed in between the golden sands of the coast and the deep blue waters of the gulf. They offer their granite breast to the fierce blows of the northwest wind and thus protect the dwellings of the rich that nestle at their foot on the inland side. The half-ruined cottages on the open shore are the insufficient shelter of the poor. Their squalid bodies are often crushed under the walls torn and washed down by wind and angry wave. But they only follow the great law of the survival of the fittest. Why should *they* be protected?

Lovely is the morning when the sun dawns with golden amber tints and its first rays kiss the cliffs of the beautiful shore. Glad is the song of the lark, as, emerging from its warm nest of herbs, it drinks the morning dew from the deep flower-cups; when the tip of the rosebud thrills under the caress of the first sunbeam, and earth and heaven smile in mutual greeting. Sad is the Soul-Ego alone as it gazes on awakening nature from the high couch opposite the large bay-window.

How calm is the approaching noon as the shadow creeps steadily on the sundial towards the hour of rest! Now the hot sun begins to melt the clouds in the limpid air and the last shreds of the morning mist that lingers on the tops of the distant hills vanish in it. All nature is prepared to rest at the hot

and lazy hour of midday. The feathered tribes cease their song; their soft, gaudy wings droop, and they hang their drowsy heads, seeking refuge from the burning heat. A morning lark is busy nestling in the bordering bushes under

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the clustering flowers of the pomegranate and the sweet bay of the Mediterranean. The active songster has become voiceless. "Its voice will resound as joyfully again to-morrow!" sighs the Soul-Ego, as it listens to the dying buzzing of the insects on the verdant turf. "Shall ever mine?" And now the flower-scented breeze hardly stirs the languid heads of the luxuriant plants. A solitary palm-tree, growing out of the cleft of a moss-covered rock, next catches the eye of the Soul-Ego. Its once upright, cylindrical trunk has been twisted out of shape and half-broken by the nightly blasts of the north-west winds. And as it stretches wearily its drooping feathery arms, swayed to and fro in the blue pellucid air, its body trembles and threatens to break in two at the first new gust that may arise. "And then, the severed part will fall into the sea, and the once stately palm will be no more," soliloquises the Soul-Ego as it gazes sadly out of its windows. Everything returns to life in the cool, old bower at the hour of sunset. The shadows on the sun-dial become with every moment thicker, and animate nature awakens busier than ever in the cooler hours of approaching night. Birds and insects chirrup and buzz their last evening hymns around the tall and still powerful Form, as it paces slowly and wearily along the gravel walk. And now its heavy gaze falls wistfully on the azure bosom of the tranquil sea. The gulf sparkles like a gem-studded carpet of blue-velvet in the farewell dancing sunbeams, and smiles like a thoughtless, drowsy child, weary of tossing about. Further on, calm and serene in its perfidious beauty, the open sea stretches far and wide the smooth mirror of its cool waters—salt and bitter as human tears. It lies in its treacherous repose like a gorgeous, sleeping monster, watching over the unfathomed mystery of its dark abysses. Truly the monument less cemetery of the millions sunk in its depths. . . . -

Without a grave,

Unknell'd, uncoffined and unknown. . . .

while the sorry relic of the once noble Form pacing yonder, once that its hour

strikes and the deep-voiced bells toll the knell for the departed soul, shall be laid out in state and pomp. Its dissolution will be announced by millions of trumpet voices. Kings, princes and the mighty ones of the earth will be present at its obsequies, or will send their representatives with sorrowful faces and condoling

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messages to those left behind. . . . .

“One point gained, over those ‘uncoffined and unknown,’” is the bitter reflection of the Soul-Ego.

Thus glides past one day after the other; and as swift-winged Time urges his flight, every vanishing hour destroying some thread in the tissue of life, the Soul-Ego is gradually transformed in its views of things and men. Flitting between two eternities, far away from its birth-place, solitary among its crowd of physicians, and attendants, the Form is drawn with every day nearer to its Spirit-Soul. Another light unapproached and unapproachable in days of joy, softly descends upon the weary prisoner. It sees now that which it had never perceived before. . . . .

## VI

How grand, how mysterious are the spring nights on the seashore when the winds are chained and the elements lulled! A solemn silence reigns in nature. Alone the silvery, scarcely audible ripple of the wave, as it runs caressingly over the moist sand, kissing shells and pebbles on its up and down journey, reaches the ear like the regular soft breathing of a sleeping bosom. How small, how insignificant and helpless feels man, during these quiet hours, as he stands between the two gigantic magnitudes, the star-hung dome above, and the slumbering earth below. Heaven and earth are plunged in sleep, but their souls are awake, and they confabulate, whispering one to the other mysteries unspeakable. It is then that the occult side of Nature lifts her dark veils for us, and reveals secrets we would vainly seek to extort from her during the day. The firmament, so distant, so far away from earth, now seems to approach and bend over her. The sidereal meadows exchange embraces with their more humble sisters of the earth—the daisy-decked valleys and the green slumbering fields. The heavenly dome falls prostrate into the arms of the great quiet sea; and the millions of stars that stud the former peep into and bathe in every lakelet and pool. To

the grief-furrowed soul those twinkling orbs are the eyes of angels. They look down with ineffable pity on the suffering of mankind. It is not the night dew that falls on the sleeping flowers, but sympathetic tears that drop from those orbs, at the sight of the Great Human Sorrow. . . .  
Yes; sweet and beautiful is a southern night. But

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When silently we watch the bed, by the taper's flickering light,  
When all we love is fading fast—how terrible is night. . . .

VII

Another day is added to the series of buried days. The far green hills, and the fragrant boughs of the pomegranate blossom have melted in the mellow shadows of the night, and both sorrow and joy are plunged in the lethargy of soul-resting sleep. Every noise has died out in the royal gardens, and no voice or sound is heard in that overpowering stillness. Swift-winged dreams descend from the laughing stars in motley crowds, and landing upon the earth disperse among mortals and immortals, amid animals and men. They hover over the sleepers, each attracted by its affinity and kind; dreams of joy and hope, balmy and innocent visions, terrible and awesome sights seen with sealed eyes, sensed by the soul; some instilling happiness and consolation, others causing sobs to heave the sleeping bosom, tears and mental torture, all and one preparing unconsciously to the sleepers their waking thoughts of the morrow.

Even in sleep the Soul-Ego finds no rest.

Hot and feverish its body tosses about in restless agony. For it, the time of happy dreams is now a vanished shadow, a long bygone recollection. Through the mental agony of the soul, there lies a transformed man. Through the physical agony of the frame, there flutters in it a fully awakened Soul. The veil of illusion has fallen off from the cold idols of the world, and the vanities and emptiness of fame and wealth stand bare, often hideous, before its eyes. The thoughts of the Soul fall like dark shadows on the cogitative faculties of the fast disorganizing body, haunting the thinker daily, nightly, hourly. . . .

The sight of his snorting steed pleases him no longer. The recollections of guns and banners wrested from the enemy; of cities razed, of trenches, cannons and tents, of an array of conquered spoils now stirs but little his national pride. Such thoughts move him no more, and ambition has become powerless to awaken in his aching heart the haughty recognition of any valourous deed of chivalry. Visions of another kind now haunt his weary days and long sleepless nights. . . .

What he now sees is a throng of bayonets clashing against each other in a mist of smoke and blood; thousands of mangled corpses

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covering the ground, torn and cut to shreds by the murderous weapons devised by science and civilization, blessed to success by the servants of his God. What he now dreams of are bleeding, wounded and dying men, with missing limbs and matted locks, wet and soaked through with gore. . . .

### VIII

A hideous dream detaches itself from a group of passing visions, and alights heavily on his aching chest. The night-mare shows him men, expiring on the battle field with a curse on those who led them to their destruction. Every pang in his own wasting body brings to him in dream the recollection of pangs still worse, of pangs suffered through and for him. He sees and *feels* the torture of the fallen millions, who die after long hours of terrible mental and physical agony; who expire in forest and plain, in stagnant ditches by the road-side, in pools of blood under a sky made black with smoke. His eyes are once more rivetted to the torrents of blood, every drop of which represents a tear of despair, a heart-rent cry, a life-long sorrow. He hears again the thrilling sighs of desolation, and the shrill cries ringing through mount, forest and valley. He sees the old mothers who have lost the light of their souls; families, the hand that fed them. He beholds widowed young wives thrown on the wide, cold world, and beggared orphans wailing in the streets by the thousands. He finds the young daughters of his bravest old soldiers exchanging their mourning garments for the gaudy frippery of prostitution, and the Soul-Ego shudders in the sleeping Form. . . . His heart is rent by the groans of the famished; his eyes blinded by the smoke of burning hamlets, of homes destroyed, of towns and cities in smouldering ruins.

And in his terrible dream, he remembers that moment of insanity in his soldier's life, when standing over a heap of the dead and the dying, waving in his right hand a naked sword red to its hilt with smoking blood, and in his left, the colours rent from the hand of the warrior expiring at his feet, he had sent in a stentorian voice praises to the throne of the Almighty, thanksgiving for the victory just obtained! . . . He starts in his sleep and awakes in horror. A great shudder shakes his frame like an aspen leaf, and sinking back on his pillows, sick at the recollection, he hears a voice—the voice of the Soul-Ego—saying in him:—

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“Fame and victory are vainglorious words. . . . Thanksgiving and prayers for lives destroyed—wicked lies and blasphemy!” . . . “What have they brought thee or to thy fatherland, those bloody victories!” . . . . whispers the Soul in him. “A population clad in iron armour,” it replies. “Two score millions of men dead now to all spiritual aspiration and Soul-life. A people, henceforth deaf to the peaceful voice of the honest citizen's duty, averse to a life of peace, blind to the arts and literature, indifferent to all but lucre and ambition. What is thy future Kingdom, now? A legion of war-puppets as units, a great wild beast in their collectivity. A beast that, like the sea yonder, slumbers gloomily now, but to fall with the more fury on the first enemy that is indicated to it. Indicated, by whom? It is as though a heartless, proud Fiend, assuming sudden authority, incarnate Ambition and Power, had clutched with iron hand the minds of a whole country. By what wicked enchantment has he brought the people back to those primeval days of the nation when their ancestors, the yellow-haired Suevi, and the treacherous Franks roamed about in their warlike spirit, thirsting to kill, to decimate and subject each other? By what infernal powers has this been accomplished? Yet the transformation has been produced and it is as undeniable as the fact that alone the Fiend rejoices and boasts of the transformation effected. The whole world is hushed in breathless expectation. Not a wife or mother, but is haunted in her dreams by the black and ominous storm-cloud that overhangs the whole of Europe. The cloud is approaching. . . . . It comes nearer and nearer. . . . . Oh woe and horror! . . . . I foresee once more for earth the suffering I have already witnessed. I read the fatal destiny upon the brow

of the flower of Europe's youth! But if I live and have the power, never, oh never shall my country take part in it again! No, no, I will not see—

The glutton death gorged with devouring lives. . . .“I will not hear—  
. . . . . robb'd mothers' shrieks. While from men's piteous wounds and horrid gashes  
The lab'ring life flows faster than the blood! . . . .”

## IX

Firmer and firmer grows in the Soul-Ego the feeling of intense hatred for the terrible butchery called war; deeper and deeper does it impress its thoughts upon the Form that holds it captive.

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Hope awakens at times in the aching breast and colours the long hours of solitude and meditation; like the morning ray that dispels the dusky shades of shadowy despondency, it lightens the long hours of lonely thought. But as the rainbow is not always the dis-peller of the storm-clouds but often only a refraction of the setting sun on a passing cloud, so the moments of dreamy hope are generally followed by hours of still blacker despair. Why, oh why, thou mocking Nemesis, hast thou thus purified and enlightened, among all the sovereigns of this earth, him, whom thou hast made helpless, speechless and powerless? Why hast thou kindled the flame of holy brotherly love for man in the breast of one whose heart already feels the approach of the icy hand of death and decay, whose strength is steadily deserting him and whose very life is melting away like foam on the crest of a breaking wave? And now the hand of Fate is upon the couch of pain. The hour for the fulfilment of nature's law has struck at last. The old Sire is no more; the younger man is henceforth a monarch. Voiceless and helpless, he is nevertheless a potentate, the autocratic master of millions of subjects. Cruel Fate has erected a throne for him over an open grave, and beckons him to glory and to power. Devoured by suffering, he finds himself suddenly crowned. The wasted Form is snatched from its warm nest amid the palm groves and the roses; it is whirled from balmy south to the frozen north, where waters harden into crystal groves and “waves on waves in solid mountains rise”; whither he now speeds to reign and—speeds to die.

## X

Onward, onward rushes the black, fire-vomiting monster, devised by man

to partially conquer Space and Time. Onward, and further with every moment from the health-giving, balmy South flies the train. Like the Dragon of the Fiery Head, it devours distance and leaves behind it a long trail of smoke, sparks and stench. And as its long, tortuous, flexible body, wriggling and hissing like a gigantic dark reptile, glides swiftly, crossing mountain and moor, forest, tunnel and plain, its swinging monotonous motion lulls the worn-out occupant, the weary and heartsore Form, to sleep. . . .In the moving palace the air is warm and balmy. The luxurious vehicle is full of exotic plants; and from a large cluster of sweet-smelling flowers arises together with its scent the fairy Queen of dreams, followed by her band of joyous elves. The Dryads laugh

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in their leafy bowers as the train glides by, and send floating upon the breeze dreams of green solitudes and fairy visions. The rumbling noise of wheels is gradually transformed into the roar of a distant waterfall, to subside into the silvery trills of a crystalline brook. The Soul-Ego takes its flight into Dreamland. . . .

It travels through aeons of time, and lives, and feels, and breathes under the most contrasted forms and personages. It is now a giant, a Yotun, who rushes into Muspelheim, where Surtur rules with his flaming sword. It battles fearlessly against a host of monstrous animals, and puts them to flight with a single wave of its mighty hand. Then it sees itself in the Northern Mist world, it penetrates under the guise of a brave bowman into Helheim, the Kingdom of the Dead, where a Black-Elf reveals to him a series of its lives and their mysterious concatenation. "Why does man suffer?" enquires the Soul-Ego. "Because he would become one," is the mocking answer. Forthwith, the Soul-Ego stands in the presence of the holy goddess, Saga. She sings to it of the valorous deeds of the Germanic heroes, of their virtues and their vices. She shows the soul the mighty warriors fallen by the hands of many of its past Forms, on battlefield, as also in the sacred security of home. It sees itself under the personages of maidens, and of women, of young and old men, and of children. ... It feels itself dying more than once in those forms. It expires as a hero-Spirit, and is led by the pitying Walkyries from the bloody battlefield back to the abode of Bliss under the shining



foliage of Walhalla. It heaves its last sigh in another form, and is hurled on to the cold, hopeless plane of remorse. It closes its innocent eyes in its last sleep, as an infant, and is forthwith carried along by the beautiful Elves of Light into another body—the doomed generator of Pain and Suffering. In each case the mists of death are dispersed, and pass from the eyes of the Soul-Ego, no sooner does it cross the Black Abyss that separates the Kingdom of the Living from the Realm of the Dead. Thus “Death” becomes but a meaningless word for it, a vain sound. In every instance the beliefs of the Mortal take objective life and shape for the Immortal, as soon as it spans the Bridge. Then they begin to fade, and disappear. . . . “What is my Past?” enquires the Soul-Ego of Urd, the eldest of the Norn sisters. “Why do I suffer?”

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A long parchment is unrolled in her hand, and reveals a long series of mortal beings, in each of whom the Soul-Ego recognises one of its dwellings. When it comes to the last but one, it sees a blood-stained hand doing endless deeds of cruelty and treachery, and it shudders. . . . . Guileless victims arise around it, and cry to Orlog for vengeance.

“What is my immediate Present?” asks the dismayed Soul of Werdandi, the second sister.

“The decree of Orlog is on thyself!” is the answer. “But Orlog does not pronounce them blindly, as foolish mortals have it.” “What is my Future?” asks despairingly of Skuld, the third Norn sister, the Soul-Ego. “Is it to be for ever with tears, and bereaved of Hope?” . . .

No answer is received. But the Dreamer feels whirled through space, and suddenly the scene changes. The Soul-Ego finds itself on a, to it, long familiar spot, the royal bower, and the seat opposite the broken palm-tree. Before it stretches, as formerly, the vast blue expanse of waters, glassing the rocks and cliffs; there, too, is the lonely palm, doomed to quick disappearance. The soft mellow voice of the incessant ripple of the light waves now assumes human speech, and reminds the Soul-Ego of the vows formed more than once on that spot. And the Dreamer repeats with enthusiasm the words pronounced

before.

“Never, oh, never shall I, henceforth, sacrifice for vainglorious fame or ambition a single son of my motherland! Our world is so full of unavoidable misery, so poor with joys and bliss, and shall I add to its cup of bitterness the fathomless ocean of woe and blood, called War? Avaunt, such thought! . . . Oh, never more. . . .”

## XI

Strange sight and change. . . . The broken palm which stands before the mental sight of the Soul-Ego suddenly lifts up its drooping trunk and becomes erect and verdant as before. Still greater bliss, the Soul-Ego finds *himself* as strong and as healthy as he ever was. In a stentorian voice he sings to the four winds a loud and a joyous song. He feels a wave of joy and bliss in him, and seems to know why he is happy.

He is suddenly transported into what looks a fairy-like Hall, lit with most glowing lights and built of materials, the like of which

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he had never seen before. He perceives the heirs and descendants of all the monarchs of the globe gathered in that Hall in one happy family. They wear no longer the insignia of royalty, but, *as he seems to know*, those who are the reigning Princes, reign by virtue of their personal merits. It is the greatness of heart, the nobility of character, their superior qualities of observation, wisdom, love of Truth and Justice, that have raised them to the dignity of heirs to the Thrones, of Kings and Queens. The crowns, by authority and the grace of God, have been thrown off, and they now rule by “the grace of divine humanity,” chosen unanimously by recognition of their fitness to rule, and the reverential love of their voluntary subjects.

All around seems strangely changed. Ambition, grasping greediness or envy—miscalled *Patriotism*—exist no longer. Cruel selfishness has made room for just altruism, and cold indifference to the wants of the millions no longer finds favour in the sight of the favoured few. Useless luxury, sham pretences—social and religious—all has disappeared. No more wars are possible, for the armies are abolished. Soldiers have turned into diligent,

hard-working tillers of the ground, and the whole globe echoes his song in rapturous joy. Kingdoms and countries around him live like brothers. The great, the glorious hour has come at last! That which he hardly dared to hope and think about in the stillness of his long, suffering nights, is now realized. The great curse is taken off, and the world stands absolved and redeemed in its regeneration! . . . .

Trembling with rapturous feelings, his heart overflowing with love and philanthropy, he rises to pour out a fiery speech that would become historic, when suddenly he finds his body gone, or, rather, it is replaced by another body. . . . Yes, it is no longer the tall, noble Form with which he is familiar, but the body of somebody else, of whom he as yet knows nothing. . . . . Something dark comes between him and a great dazzling light, and he sees the shadow of the face of a gigantic timepiece on the ethereal waves. On its ominous dial he reads:

“New Era: 970,995 years since the instantaneous destruction by pneumo-dyno-vril of the last 2,000,000 of soldiers in the field, on the western portion of the globe. 971,000 solar years since the submersion of the European Continents and Isles. Such are the decree of Orlog and the answer of Skuld.

He makes a strong effort and—is himself again. Prompted by

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the Soul-Ego to remember and act in conformity, he lifts his arms to Heaven and swears in the face of all nature to preserve peace to the end of his days—in his own country, at least.

A distant beating of drums and long cries of what he fancies in his dream are the rapturous thanksgivings, for the pledge just taken. An abrupt shock, loud clatter, and, as the eyes open, the Soul-Ego looks out through them in amazement. The heavy gaze meets the respectful and solemn face of the physician offering the usual draught. The train stops. He rises from his couch weaker and wearier than ever, to see around him endless lines of troops armed with a new and yet more murderous weapon of destruction—ready for the battlefield.

*Lucifer*, June, 1888

## THE NEW CYCLE

WE cannot inaugurate this first issue of an official and strictly Theosophical Magazine without giving our readers some information that seems essential to us.

Indeed, the ideas held to this day with regard to the Theosophical Society in India, as it has been called, are so vague and so varied, that even many of our members entertain very erroneous views concerning it. Nothing could show more convincingly the necessity of making well known the goals we pursue in a Magazine devoted exclusively to Theosophy. Also, before asking our readers to become interested in it, or even to take up its study, they need to be given some preliminary explanations.

What is Theosophy? Why use this pretentious name, we are asked at the outset. When we answer that Theosophy is Divine Wisdom, or the Wisdom of the Gods (*Theo-Sophia*), rather than that of a God, a still more extraordinary objection is raised: "Then, are you not Buddhists? Yet we know that the Buddhists believe neither in *a*, nor several Gods. . . ."

Nothing could be more correct. But, in the first place, we are no more Buddhists than we are Christians, Mussulmans, Jews, Zoroastrians or Brahmins. Furthermore, concerning the question of Gods: we hold to the esoteric method of the *Hyponia* taught by Ammonius Saccas—*i.e.*, to the occult meaning of the term. Did not Aristotle say: "The Divine Essence permeating nature and diffused throughout the entire Universe (which is infinite), that which the *hoi polloi* call Gods, is simply . . . the first principles" —

in other words, the creative intelligent forces of Nature. From the fact that Buddhist philosophers admit and know of the nature of these forces as well as anybody, it does not follow that the Society—as a Society—is therefore Buddhist. The Society, in its capacity as an abstract corporation, believes in nothing, accepts nothing, teaches nothing. The Society *per se* cannot and must not have any religion, for it contains all religions. Cults are, after all, but external vehicles, more or less material forms and containing more or less of the essence of the One and Universal Truth. In its essential nature Theosophy is the spiritual as well as the physical science of this Truth—the very essence of deistic and philosophical research. As visible representative of the universal Truth, since it contains all religions and philosophies, and since each of them contains in its turn a portion of this Truth—the Society could not be sectarian, have preferences, or be any more partial than, say, an anthropological or geographic society. Do the latter care to what religion their explorers belong, so long as each of their members bravely carries out his duty?

Now, if we are asked, as has been done already so many times, whether we are deists or atheists, spiritualists or materialists, idealists or positivists, royalists, republicans, or socialists, we can only answer that each of these opinions is represented in the Society. I have but to repeat what I said just ten years ago in a lead article in the *Theosophist*, to show how much that which the general public thinks of us is different from what we really are. Our Society has been accused from time to time of the most baroque and contradictory misdeeds, and has been charged with motives and ideas that it has never had. What has not been said of us! One day we were an association of ignoramuses, believers in miracles; the next day, we were declared to be thaumaturgists; our aim was secret and entirely political, it was said in the morning—that we were Carbonari and dangerous Nihilists; then, in the evening, we were found to be spies salaried by autocratic and monarchic Russia. At other times, without any transition, we were believed to be Jesuits seeking to ruin French Spiritism. American Positivists saw in us religious fanatics, while the clergy of all nations denounced us as emissaries of Satan etc., etc. . . . Finally, our good critics with impartial urbanity divided all theosophists into two categories: *charlatans* and *dupes*. . . .

Well, men slander only those they hate or "fear." Why should

we be hated? As to fearing us, who can say? Truth is not always welcome and, perhaps, we utter too many *real* truths! Yet, since the day our Society was founded in the United States, fourteen years ago, our teachings have received wholly unhoped-for attention. The original program had to be enlarged, and the territory of our researches and combined explorations now extends towards unlimited horizons. This expansion was made necessary by the ever growing number of our members, a number still increasing daily; the diversity of their races and their religions requiring ever deeper studies on our part. However, although our program was enlarged, nothing was changed as to the three main objects, except, alas, with regard to the one dearest to our heart, the first, that is: Universal Brotherhood without distinction of race, color or creed. Notwithstanding all our efforts, this object has almost always been ignored, or has remained a dead letter, in India especially, thanks to the innate superciliousness and national pride of the English. Except for that, the other two objects, that is to say, the study of Oriental religions, especially of the ancient Vedic and Buddhistic scriptures, and our researches into the latent powers of man, have been pursued with a zeal that has received its reward.

Since 1876 we have been compelled to deviate more and more from the main highway of general principles, originally laid down, and to take ever widening subsidiary paths. Thus in order to satisfy all Theosophists, and to follow the evolution of all religions, we have been forced to travel clear around the globe, beginning our pilgrimage at the dawn of the cycle of nascent humanity. These researches have resulted in a synthesis which has just been sketched in *The Secret Doctrine*, certain portions of which will be translated in this Magazine. The doctrine is barely outlined in our volumes; and yet the mysteries unveiled therein concerning the beliefs of the prehistoric peoples, cosmogenesis and anthropology, had never been divulged until now. Certain of its dogmas and theories are in conflict with scientific theories, especially with those of Darwin; yet they explain and throw light on what to this day had remained incomprehensible; and fill

more than one gap, left open, *nolens volens*, by official science. But we had to present all these doctrines, such as they are, or never to broach the subject at all. He who is frightened by these infinite prospects and would seek to reduce them by using the shortcuts

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and the “flying bridges” artificially constructed by modern science over its thousand and one gaps, will do better not to enter the Thermopylae of archaic science.

Such has been one of the results our Society has achieved; a poor one, perhaps, but one that will certainly be followed by further revelations, exoteric or purely esoteric. If we speak thereof it is to prove that we do not preach any religion in particular, leaving each member utterly free to follow his own particular belief. The prime object of our organization, of which we strive to make a real brotherhood, is fully expressed in the motto of the Theosophical Society and of all its organs: “There is no Religion higher than Truth.” Hence, as an impersonal Society, we must welcome Truth wherever it may be found, without partiality for any one belief as against another. This leads directly to a quite logical deduction: if we acclaim and welcome with open arms every earnest seeker after truth, it follows that there is no place in our ranks for the ardent sectarian, for the bigot, or for the hypocrite surrounded by a “Chinese wall” of dogmas, each stone of which bears the inscription: “No one may pass here.” What, indeed, could be the position in our midst of a fanatic whose religion forbids all research, and does not admit the free use of reason—when the original concept, the very root from which grows the beautiful plant that we call Theosophy, is free and complete research into all the mysteries, natural, divine, or human!

Except for this restriction, the Society invites everyone to participate in its investigations and discoveries. Whoever feels his heart beating in unison with the great heart of humanity, whoever feels his interests at one with those who are poorer and less fortunate than himself; whoever, man or woman, is ever ready to lend a helping hand to those who suffer, whoever is fully conscious of the real meaning of “Egoism,” is a Theosophist by birth and by right. He can always be sure of finding sympathetic hearts amongst

us. Our Society is in fact a small, special humanity, where, as among mankind at large, one may always find his counterpart.

If it is objected that in it the atheist rubs elbows with the deist, and the materialist with the idealist, we answer: "What of it?" If an individual is a materialist, that is, discerns in matter an infinite potency for the creation, or rather for the evolution of

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all terrestrial life; or else a spiritualist endowed with a spiritual perception the other one does not have, why should this prevent one or the other from being a good Theosophist? Besides, those who worship a Personal God or Divine Substance are far more materialistic than the Pantheists who reject the idea of a carnalized God but who perceive the divine essence in each atom. The whole world knows that Buddhism recognizes neither a God nor Gods. And yet the Arhat, for whom each atom of dust is as full of *Swabhavat* (plastic substance, eternal and intelligent, though impersonal) as he is himself, and who tries to assimilate this *Swabhavat* by identifying himself with the All in order to reach Nirvana, must in order to reach it follow the same Path of sorrows, of renunciation, of good works and of altruism, and has to lead as saintly a life, although less selfish in motive, as the beatified Christian. What matters the passing form if the goal pursued is the same Eternal Essence, whether that Essence appear to human perception under the guise of a Substance, of an immaterial Breath, or of a No-thing! Let us admit the presence, whether called Personal God or Universal Substance, and let us admit a *cause*, since we all see effects. But these effects being the same for the Buddhist atheist as for the Christian deist, and the cause being as inscrutable for the one as for the other, why should we waste our time pursuing an illusive shadow? In the final analysis, the greatest of materialists, as well as the most transcendental of philosophers, admits the omnipresence of an impalpable Proteus, omnipotent in its ubiquity throughout all kingdoms of nature, including man—a Proteus indivisible in its essence, without form and yet manifesting itself in all forms, which is here, there, everywhere and nowhere, which is the All and the Nothing, which is all things and always One, Universal Essence which binds, limits and contains everything, and which everything contains. What theologian



can go beyond that? It is enough to recognize these verities to be a Theosophist; for such a confession amounts to admitting that not only humanity—even though consisting of thousands of races—but all that lives and vegetates, all that in one word is, is made up of the same essence and substance, is animated by the same spirit, and that, therefore, there is solidarity throughout nature, on the physical as well as on the moral plane.

We have already said in the *Theosophist*: “Born in the United

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States of America, the Theosophical Society was constituted on the model of its mother country. The latter, as we know, omits the name of God from its constitution, lest, said the Fathers of the Republic, this word someday afford the pretext for a State religion; for they wanted to grant absolute equality in its laws to all religions so that all would support the State and all in their turn would be protected.”

The Theosophical Society was established on this beautiful model.

As of today its one hundred seventy-three [173] branches are grouped into several Sections. In India these sections are self-governing and self-supporting; outside of India there are two large Sections, one in America, and the other one in England (American Section and British Section). Thus each branch as well as each member, having the right to profess the religion and to study the sciences or philosophies it or he prefers, provided that the whole remains united by bonds of solidarity and fraternity —our Society may be truly called the “Republic of Conscience.”

While being free to engage in those intellectual pursuits that please him the most, each member of our Society must, however, give some reason for belonging to it, which means that each member must do his own chosen part, however small it may be, by way of mental work or otherwise, for the good of all. If he does not work for others, he has no reason for being a Theosophist. All of us must work for the liberation of human thought, for the elimination of selfish and sectarian superstitions, and for the discovery of all the truths that are within the reach of the human mind. This goal

cannot be attained with greater certainty than through the culture of solidarity on the plane of mental work. No honest worker, no serious seeker, has ever returned therefrom empty-handed; and there are hardly any men or women, however busy they may be thought to be, unable to lay their moral or pecuniary mite on the altar of Truth. Henceforth it will be the duty of the Presidents of branches and Sections to see to it that there be no such drones who do nothing but buzz in the Theosophical beehive.

One further word. How many times have not the two founders of the Theosophical Society been accused of ambition and autocracy! How many times have they not been reproached with a pretended desire to impose their will on other members! Nothing

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could be more unjust. The founders of the Society have always been the first and humblest servants of their co-workers and colleagues; always showing themselves ready to help others with the feeble lights at their disposal, and to support them in the fight against the egoists, the indifferent and the sectarians; for such is the first battle for which everyone must be prepared who enters our Society, so little understood by the general public. Besides, the reports published after each Annual Convention are there to prove this. At our last convention, held in Madras, in December 1888, important reforms were proposed and adopted. Anything resembling a financial obligation was discontinued, even the payment of 25 francs for the cost of a diploma having been abolished. Hereafter members will be free to donate what they wish, if their heart is set on helping and supporting the Society, or, not to give anything.

Under these conditions, and at this moment of Theosophical history, it is easy to understand the goal of a Magazine devoted exclusively to the spread of our ideas. In it we would like to be able to open up new intellectual horizons, to trace unexplored paths leading to the amelioration of humankind; to offer words of comfort to all the disinherited of the earth who suffer from a spiritual void, or from an absence of material goods. We invite all noble-hearted persons who would respond to this appeal to join us in this humanitarian work.

Every contributor, whether a member of our Society or merely in sympathy with it, can help us to make of this Magazine the only organ of true Theosophy in France. We are now facing all the glorious possibilities of the future. Once again the hour has struck for the great periodical return of the rising tide of mystic thought in Europe. We are surrounded on all sides by the ocean of universal science—the science of life eternal—bringing in its waters the buried and long forgotten treasures of vanished generations, treasures still unknown to the modern civilized races. The powerful current rising from the submarine abysses, from the depths where lie the learning and arts engulfed with the antediluvian Giants—demi-gods, though mortals hardly yet formed; this current blows us in the face, murmuring: “That which was, still is; that which is forgotten, buried for æons in the depths of Jurassic strata, may once again reappear on the surface. Prepare yourselves.”

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Happy those who understand the language of the elements. But, where are those heading to whom the word element conveys no other meaning than the one given to it by materialistic physics and chemistry? Will the great waters carry them toward familiar shores when they will have been swept off their feet in the oncoming flood? Will they be carried toward the summit of a new Ararat, toward the heights where are light and sun and a safe spot to stand on, or toward a bottomless abyss that will engulf them as soon as they attempt to fight against the irresistible waves of a new element?

Let us prepare, and let us study Truth in all its aspects, trying not to ignore any of them, if we do not wish, when the hour will have struck, to fall into the abyss of the unknown. It is useless to rely on chance, and to await the approaching intellectual and psychic crisis with indifference if not with total incredulity, saying to oneself that if worse comes to worst, the tide will carry us quite naturally to the shore; for there is a strong likelihood of the tide stranding but a corpse! The battle will be fierce, in any case, between brutal materialism and blind fanaticism on the one hand, and on the other philosophy and mysticism—that more or less thick veil of the Eternal Truth.

It is not materialism that will have the upper hand. Everyone fanatically

clinging to an idea isolating him from the universal axiom—“There is no Religion higher than Truth”—will find himself separated like a rotten plank from the new ark called Humanity. Tossed by the waves, chased by the winds, buffeted by this element so terrible because unknown, he will soon find himself swallowed up.

Yes, thus it must be, and it cannot be otherwise when the flame of modern materialism, artificial and cold, will be extinguished for lack of fuel. Those who cannot conceive of a spiritual Ego, of a living Soul, and of an eternal Spirit, within their material shell (which owes its illusory life only to these *principles*); those for whom the great wave of hope in a life beyond the grave is a bitter draught, the symbol of an unknown quantity, or else the subject of a belief *sui generis*, the result of mediumistic or theological hallucinations—those will do well to be prepared for the keenest of disappointments the future could have in store for them. For, from the depths of the muddy black waters of matter, hiding from them on all sides the horizons of the great beyond,

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a mystic force is rising towards the closing years of this century. A mere touch, at the most, until now, but a *superhuman* touch, “supernatural” only for the superstitious and the ignorant. The Spirit of Truth is at this moment moving upon the face of these black waters, and, separating them, forces them to yield their spiritual treasures. This spirit is a force that cannot be either checked or stopped. Those who recognize it and feel that this is the supreme moment of their salvation, will be carried by it beyond the illusions of the great astral serpent. The bliss they will experience will be so sharp and so keen that were they not in spirit detached from their bodies of flesh, this beatitude would wound them like a sharpened blade. It is not pleasure that they will feel, but a bliss which is a foretaste of the wisdom of the gods, of the knowledge of good and evil, and of the fruits of the Tree of Life.

But whether the man of today be a fanatic, a skeptic, or a mystic, he must realize that it is fruitless to struggle against these two moral forces now unleashed and engaged in a fight to the finish. He is at the mercy of these two adversaries and there is no intermediary power capable of protecting

him. It is but a matter of choice: to let oneself be carried away naturally and without struggle by the flood of unfolding mysticism, or else to struggle and react against the stresses of the moral and psychic evolution and to feel oneself swallowed up in the Maelstrom of the new tide. At this very time the whole world with its centers of great intellect and of human culture, with its political, literary, artistic and commercial centers, is in turmoil, everything is tottering, falling apart, and now tending to re-form. It is useless to blind oneself to this, useless to hope one will be able to remain neutral between these two warring forces; one can only be crushed, or has to choose between them. The man who thinks he has chosen freedom and who nevertheless remains submerged in this seething and foaming cauldron of filth called social life, utters the most terrible lie to his Divine Self; a lie that will blind this Self through its long series of future incarnations. All of you who waver on the path of Theosophy and of the occult sciences, who tremble on the golden threshold of Truth, the only Truth still open to you, since all the others have failed, one after the other—look the Great Reality now offering itself to you straight in the face. These words are for the mystically inclined only, for them

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alone they will be of some importance; for those who have already made their choice they will prove vain and useless. But you Occultists, Kabalists and Theosophists, you know well that a word as old as the world, though new to you, has been sounded at the beginning of this cycle, and lies potentially, although not articulate for those others, in the sum of the ciphers of the year 1889; you know that a note, never before heard by the men of the present era, has just been sounded, and that a new kind of thought has arisen, fostered by the evolutionary forces. This thought differs from all that has ever been produced in the 19th Century; yet it is identical with what was the keynote and the keystone of every century, especially the last one: "Absolute Freedom of Human Thought."

Why try to kill, to suppress, that which cannot be destroyed? Why fight when one has no other choice than either to allow oneself to be lifted up to heaven on the crest of the spiritual tide, beyond stars and universes, or to be swallowed in the gaping abyss of the ocean of matter? Vain are your efforts

to plumb the un-soundable in search of the roots of that matter so glorified in our century; for these roots grow in Spirit and in the Absolute, and do not exist, though being eternal. This continuous contact with flesh, blood, and bones, with the illusion of differentiated matter only blinds you; and the more you advance in the realm of chemical and impalpable atoms the more will you become convinced that they exist only in your imagination. Do you believe that you will really discover all truths and all the realities of being there? But, death stands at the door of all of us, ready to close it on the soul of the beloved escaping from its prison, on that soul which alone gave reality to the body; and is love eternal to be likened to the molecules of that matter which changes and disappears?

But perhaps you are indifferent to all this; if so, of what importance to you are the love and the souls of those whom you loved, since you do not believe in these souls? Be it so. Your choice is already made. You have entered the path that crosses but the arid wastes of matter. You have doomed yourself to vegetate there through a long series of lives, content henceforth with feverish hallucinations instead of spiritual perceptions, with passions instead of love, with the rind instead of the fruit.

But you, friends and readers, who aspire to something more

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than the life of the squirrel in its ceaselessly revolving wheel; you who are not satisfied with the cauldron which is ever boiling without producing anything, you who do not mistake hollow echoes as old as the world for the divine voice of Truth, prepare yourselves for a future that few of you have dreamed of unless you have already set your feet upon the Path. For you have chosen a way which, in the beginning lined with thorns, will soon widen, and lead you straight to the Divine Truth. You are free to doubt at first; free not to accept on someone's word what is taught concerning the source and the cause of this Truth, but you can always listen to what the voice is saying, you can always watch the effects produced by the creative force which emerges from the depths of the unknown. The arid soil upon which our present generations are moving at the close of this age of spiritual starvation and material satiety, is in need of a sign, of a rainbow—symbol of

hope—above its horizon. For, of all past centuries, the nineteenth is the most criminal. It is criminal in its fearful selfishness, in its scepticism that scoffs at the mere idea of something beyond matter; in its idiotic indifference to all that is not the personal “I” — far more so than any of the centuries of barbaric ignorance and intellectual darkness. Our century must be saved from itself before its last hour strikes. Now is the time for action by all who see the sterility and foolishness of an existence blinded by materialism and so ferociously indifferent to the fate of others. It is for them to devote their best energies, all their courage and all their efforts to bring about an intellectual reform. This reform cannot be accomplished except through Theosophy, and, let us say it, Occultism, or the Wisdom of the East. Many are the paths leading to it, but Wisdom is forever one. Artists foresee it, those who suffer dream of it, the pure in spirit know it. Those who work for others cannot remain blind before its reality even though they do not always know it by name. It is only the light-headed and empty-minded, the selfish and vain drones deafened by the sound of their own buzzing who can ignore this high ideal. They will live until life itself becomes an unbearable burden to them.

Let it be known, however, that these pages are not written for the masses. They are neither a call for reform nor an effort to win over to our views those who are happy in life. They are addressed only to those who are ready to understand them, to those

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who suffer, to those who are thirsty and hungry for any reality in this world of shifting shadows. And why should those not have enough courage to give up their frivolous ways of life, above all their pleasures and even some of their business interests, unless the care of these interests is a duty owed to their families or to others? No one is so busy or so poor that he cannot be inspired by a noble ideal to follow. Why hesitate to blaze a trail toward that ideal through all obstacles, all hindrances, all the daily considerations of social life, and to advance boldly until it is reached? Ah! those who would make this effort would soon find that the “narrow gate” and “the thorny path” lead to spacious valleys with unlimited horizons, to a state without death, for one rebecomes a God! It is true that the first requisites for getting there are absolute unselfishness and unlimited devotion to the interests of

others, and complete indifference as to the world and its opinions. To take the first step on this ideal path requires a perfectly pure motive; no frivolous thought must be allowed to divert our eyes from the goal; no hesitation, no doubt must fetter our feet. Yet, there are men and women perfectly capable of all this, and whose only desire is to live under the aegis of their Divine Nature. Let these, at least, have the courage to live this life and not to hide it from the sight of others! No one's opinion could ever be above the rulings of our own conscience, so, let that conscience, arrived at its highest development, be our guide in all our common daily tasks. As to our inner life, let us concentrate all our attention on our chosen Ideal, and let us ever look *beyond* without ever casting a glance at the mud at our feet. . . .

Those capable of such an effort are true Theosophists; all others are but members more or less indifferent, and quite often useless.

H. P. Blavatsky

*La Revue Theosophique*, March 21, 1889

### THE LAST SONG OF THE SWAN

I see before my race an age or so,  
And I am sent to show a path among the thorns,  
To take them in my flesh.  
Well, I shall lay my bones  
In some sharp crevice of the broken way;  
Men shall in better times stand where I fell,  
And singing, journey on in perfect bands  
Where I had trod alone. . . .

Theodore Parker

WHENCE the poetical but very fantastic notion—even in a myth—about swans singing their own funeral dirges? There is a Northern legend to that effect, but it is not older than the middle ages. Most of us have studied ornithology; and



in our own days of youth we have made ample acquaintance with swans of every description. In those trustful years of everlasting sunlight, there existed a mysterious attraction between our mischievous hand and the snowy feathers of the stubby tail of that graceful but harsh-voiced King of aquatic birds. The hand that offered treacherously biscuits, while the other pulled out a feather or two, was often punished; but so were the ears. Few noises can compare in cacophony with the cry of that bird—whether it be the “whistling” (*Cygnus Americanus*) or the “trumpeter” swan. Swans snort, rattle, screech and hiss, but certainly they do not sing, especially when smarting under the indignity of an unjust assault upon their tails. But listen to the legend. “When feeling life departing, the swan lifts high its head, and breaking into a long, melodious chant—a heart-rending song of death—the noble bird sends heavenward a melodious protest, a plaint that moves to tears man and beast, and thrills through the hearts of those who hear it.”

Just so, “those who hear it.” But who ever heard that song sung by a swan? We do not hesitate to proclaim the acceptation of such a statement, even as a poetical license, one of the numerous paradoxes of our incongruous age and human mind. We have no serious objection to offer—owing to personal feelings—to Fenelon,

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the Archbishop and orator, being dubbed the “Swan of Cambrai,” but we protest against the same dubious compliment being applied to Shakespeare. Ben Jonson was ill-advised to call the greatest genius England can boast of—the “sweet swan of Avon”; and as to Homer being nicknamed “the Swan of Meander”—this is simply a posthumous libel, which Lucifer can never disapprove of and expose in sufficiently strong terms.

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Let us apply the fictitious idea rather to things than to men, by remembering that the swan—a symbol of the Supreme Brahm and one of the *avatars* of the amorous Jupiter—was also a symbolical type of cycles; at any rate of the tail-end of every important cycle in human history. An emblem as strange, the readers may think, and one as difficult to account for. Yet it has its *raison*

*d'etre*. It was probably suggested by the swan loving to swim in circles, bending its long and graceful neck into a ring, and it was not a bad typical designation, after all. At any rate the older idea was more graphic and to the point, and certainly more logical, than the later one which endowed the swan's throat with musical modulations and made of him a sweet songster, and a seer to boot.

The last song of the present "Cyclic Swan" bodes us an evil omen. Some hear it screeching like an owl, and croaking like Edgar Poe's raven. The combination of the figures 8 and 9, spoken of in last month's editorial,\* has borne its fruits already. Hardly had we spoken of the dread the Cæsars and World-Potentates of old had for number 8, which postulates the *equality of all men*, and of its fatal combination with number 9—which represents the earth *under an evil principle*—when that principle began making sad havoc among the poor Potentates and the Upper Ten—their subjects. The Influenza has shown of late a weird and mysterious predilection for Royalty. One by one it has levelled its members through death to an absolute equality with their grooms and kitchen-maids. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* Its first victim was the Empress Dowager of Germany; then the ex-Empress of Brazil, the Duke d'Aosta, Prince William of Hesse Philippstal, the Duke of Montpensier, the Prince of Swarzburg Rudolstadt, and the wife of the Duke of Cambridge; besides a number of Generals, Ambassadors,

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\* "1890!—On the New Year's Morrow," *Lucifer* for January, 1890—see H.P.B. pamphlet, *Occult Symbols and Practice*, p. 8.—Eds.

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Statesmen, and their mothers-in-law. Where, when, at what victim shalt thou stop thy scythe, O "innocent" and "harmless" Influenza?

Each of these royal and semi-royal Swans has sung his last song, and gone "to that bourne" whence *every* "traveller returns,"—the aphoristical verse to the contrary, notwithstanding. Yea, they will now solve the great mystery for themselves, and Theosophy and its teaching will get more adherents and believers among royalty in "heaven," than it does among the said caste on earth.

*Apropos* of Influenza—miscalled the “Russian,” but which seems to be rather the scape-goat, while it lasts, for the sins of omission and commission of the medical faculty and its fashionable physicians—what is it? Medical authorities have now and then ventured a few words sounding very learned, but telling us very little about its true nature. They seem to have picked up now and then a clue of pathological thread pointing rather vaguely, if at all, to its being due to bacteriological causes; but they are as far off a solution of the mystery as ever. The practical lessons resulting from so many and varied cases have been many, but the deductions therefrom do not seem to have been numerous or satisfactory.

What is in reality that unknown monster, which seems to travel with the rapidity of some sensational news started with the object of dishonouring a fellow creature; which is almost ubiquitous; and which shows such strange discrimination in the selection of its victims? Why does it attack the rich and the powerful far more in proportion than it does the poor and the insignificant? Is it indeed only “an agile microbe” as Dr. Symes Thomson would make us think? And is it quite true that the *influential* Bacillus (no pun meant) has just been apprehended at Vienna by Drs. Jolles and Weichselbaum—or is it but a snare and a delusion like so many other things? Who knoweth? Still the face of our unwelcome guest—the so-called “Russian Influenza” is veiled to this day, though its body *is* heavy to many, especially to the old and the weak, and almost invariably fatal to invalids. A great medical authority on epidemics, Dr. Zedekauer, has just asserted that that disease has ever been the precursor of cholera—at St. Petersburg, at any rate. This is, to say the least, a very strange statement. That which is now called “influenza,” was known before as the *grippe*, and the latter was known in Europe as an epidemic, centuries

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before the cholera made its first appearance in so-called civilized lands. The biography and history of Influenza, *alias* “grippe,” may prove interesting to some readers. This is what we gather from authoritative sources.

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The earliest visit of it, as recorded by medical science, was to Malta in 1510. In 1577 the young influenza grew into a terrible epidemic, which travelled from

Asia to Europe to disappear in America. In 1580 a new epidemic of *grippe* visited Europe, Asia and America, killing *the old people, the weak and the invalids*. At Madrid the mortality was enormous, and in Rome alone 9,000 persons died of it. In 1590 the influenza appeared in Germany; thence passed, in 1593, into France and Italy. In 1658-1663 it visited Italy only; in 1669, Holland; in 1675, Germany and England; and in 1691, Germany and Hungary. In 1729 all Europe suffered most terribly from the “innocent” visitor. In London alone 908 men died from it the first week; upwards of 60,000 persons suffering from it, and 30 per cent dying from catarrh or influenza at Vienna. In 1732 and 1733, a new epidemic of the *grippe* appeared in Europe, Asia and America. It was almost as universal in the years 1737 and 1743, when London lost by death from it, during one week, over 1,000 men. In 1762, it raged in the British army in Germany. In 1775 an almost countless number of cattle and domestic animals were killed by it. In 1782, 40,000 persons were taken ill *on one day*, at St. Petersburg. In 1830, the influenza made a successful journey round the world — that only time — as *the first pioneer* of cholera. It returned again from 1833 to 1837. In the year 1847, it killed more men in London than the cholera itself had done. It assumed an epidemic character once more in France, in 1858.

We learn from the St. Petersburg *Novoyé Vremya* that Dr. Hirsh shows from 1510 to 1850 over 300 great epidemics of *grippe* or *influenza*, both general and local, severe and weak. According to the above-given data, therefore, the influenza having been this year very weak at St. Petersburg, can hardly be called “Russian.” That which is known of its characteristics shows it, on the contrary, as of a most impartially cosmopolitan nature. The extraordinary rapidity with which it acts, secured for it in Vienna the name of *Blitz catarrhe*. It has nothing in common with the ordinary *grippe*, so easily caught in cold and damp weather; and

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it seems to produce no special disease that could be localized, but only to act most fatally on the nervous system and especially on the lungs. Most of the deaths from influenza occur in consequence of lung-paralysis.

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All this is very significant. A disease which is epidemic, yet not contagious; which acts everywhere, in clean as in unclean places, in sanitary as well as in unsanitary localities, hence needing very evidently no centres of contagion to start from; an epidemic which spreads at once like an air-current, embracing whole countries and parts of the world; striking at the same time the mariner, in the midst of the ocean, and the royal scion in his palace; the starving wretch of the world's White-chapels, sunk in and soaked through with filth, and the aristocrat in his high mountain *sanitarium*, like Davos in Engadin,<sup>1</sup> where no lack of sanitary arrangements can be taken to task for it—such a disease can bear no comparison with epidemics of the ordinary, common type, *e.g.*, such as the cholera. Nor can it be regarded as caused by parasites or microscopical microbes of one or the other kind. To prove the fallacy of this idea in her case, the dear old influenza attacked most savagely Pasteur, the “microbe-killer,” himself, and his host of assistants. Does it not seem, therefore, as if the causes that produced influenza were rather cosmical than bacterial; and that they ought to be searched for rather in those abnormal changes in our atmosphere that have well nigh thrown into confusion and shuffled seasons all over the globe for the last few years—than in anything else?

It is not asserted for the first time now that all such mysterious epidemics as the present influenza are due to an abnormal exuberance of ozone in the air. Several physicians and chemists of note have so far agreed with the occultists, as to admit that the tasteless, colourless and inodorous gas known as oxygen—“the life supporter” of all that lives and breathes—does get at times into family difficulties with its colleagues and brothers, when it tries to get over their heads in volume and weight and becomes heavier than is its wont. In short—oxygen becomes ozone. That would account probably for the preliminary symptoms of influenza,

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<sup>1</sup> “Colonel the Hon. George Napier will be prevented from attending the funeral of his father, Lord Napier of Magdala, by a severe attack of influenza at Davos, Switzerland.” — The Morning Post of January 21, 1890.

Descending, and spreading on earth with an extraordinary rapidity, oxygen would, of course, produce a still greater combustion: hence the terrible heat in

the patient's body and the paralysis of rather weak lungs. What says Science with respect to ozone: "It is the exuberance of the latter under the powerful stimulus of electricity in the air, that produces in nervous people that unaccountable feeling of fear and depression which they so often experience before a storm." Again: "the quantity of ozone in the atmosphere varies with the meteorological condition *under laws so far unknown to science.*" A certain amount of ozone is necessary, they wisely say, for breathing purposes, and the circulation of the blood. On the other hand "too much of ozone irritates the respiratory organs, and an excess of more than 1% of it in the air kills him who breathes it." This is proceeding on rather occult lines. "The real ozone is the Elixir of Life," says *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 144, 2nd foot-note. Let the reader compare the above with what he will find stated in the same work about oxygen viewed from the hermetic and occult standpoint (*Vide* pp. 113 and 114, Vol. II) and he may comprehend the better what some Theosophists think of the present influenza.

It thus follows that the mystically inclined correspondent who wrote in *Novoyé Vremya* (No. 4931, Nov. 19th, old style, 1889) giving sound advice on the subject of the influenza, then just appeared—knew what he was talking about. Summarizing the idea, he stated as follows:

. . . It becomes thus evident that the real causes of this simultaneous spread of the epidemic all over the Empire under the most varied meteorological conditions and climatic changes—are to be sought elsewhere than in the unsatisfactory hygienical and sanitary conditions. . . . The search for the causes which generated the disease and caused it to spread is not incumbent upon the physicians alone, but *would be the right duty of meteorologists, astronomers, physicists, and naturalists in general*, separated officially and substantially from medical men.

This raised a professional storm. The modest suggestion was tabooed and derided; and once more an Asiatic country—China, this time—was sacrificed as a scapegoat to the sin of Fohat and his too active progeny. When royalty and the rulers of this sublunary sphere have been sufficiently decimated by influenza and other kindred and unknown evils, perhaps the turn of the Didymi of Science may come. This will be only a just punishment for

their despising the “occult” sciences, and sacrificing truth to personal prejudices.

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Meanwhile, the last death song of the cyclic Swan has commenced; only few are they who heed it, as the majority has ears merely not to hear, and eyes—to remain blind. Those who do, however, find the cyclic song sad, very sad, and far from melodious. They assert that besides influenza and other evils, half of the civilized world’s population is threatened with violent death, this time thanks to the conceit of the men of *exact* Science, and the all grasping selfishness of speculation. This is what the new craze of “electric lighting” promises every large city before the dying cycle becomes a corpse. These are facts, and not any “crazy speculations of *ignorant* Theosophists.” Of late Reuter sends almost daily such agreeable warnings as this on electric wires in general, and electric wires in America—especially:

Another fatal accident, arising from the system of overhead electric lighting wires, is reported today from Newburgh, New York State. It appears that a horse while being driven along touched an iron awning-post with his nose, and fell down as if dead. A man, who rushed to assist in raising the animal, touched the horse’s head-stall and immediately dropped dead, and another man who attempted to lift the first, received a terrible shock. The cause of the accident seems to have been that an electric wire had become slack and was lying upon an iron rod extending from the awning-post to a building, and that the full force of the current was passing down the post into the ground. The insulating material of the wire had become thoroughly saturated with rain. (*Morning Post*, Jan. 21.)

This is a cheerful prospect, and looks indeed as if it were one of the “last songs of the Swan” of *practical* civilization. But, there *is* balm in Gilead—even at this eleventh hour of our jaw-breaking and truth-kicking century. Fearless clergymen summon up courage and dare to express publicly their actual feelings, with thorough contempt for “the utter humbug of the cheap ‘religious talk’ which obtains in the present day.”<sup>2</sup> They are daily mustering new forces; and hitherto rabidly conservative daily papers fear not to allow their

correspondents, when occasion requires, to fly into the venerable faces of *Cant*, and Mrs. Grundy. It is true that the subject

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<sup>2</sup>Revd. Hugh B. Chapman, Vicar St. Luke's, Camberwell, in *Morning Post*, January 21st.

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which brought out the wholesome though unwelcome truth, in the *Morning Post*, was worthy of such an exception. A correspondent, Mr. W. M. Hardinge, speaking of Sister Rose Gertrude, who has just sailed for the Leper Island of Molokai suggests that—"a portrait of this young lady should somehow be added to one of our national galleries" and adds:

Mr. Edward Clifford would surely be the fitting artist. I, for one, would willingly contribute to the permanent recording, by some adequate painter, of whatever manner of face it may be that shrines so saintly a soul. Such a subject—too rare, alas, in England—should be more fruitful than precept.<sup>3</sup>

Amen. Of precepts and tall talk in fashionable churches people have more than they bargain for; but of really practical Christ-like work in daily life—except when it leads to the laudation and mention of names of the would-be philanthropists in public papers—we see *nil*. Moreover, such a subject as the voluntary Calvary chosen by Sister Rose Gertrude is "too rare" indeed, anywhere, without speaking of England. The young heroine, like her noble predecessor, Father Damien,<sup>4</sup> is a true Theosophist in daily life and practice—the latter the greatest ideal of every genuine follower of the Wisdom-religion. Before such work, of practical Theosophy, religion and dogma, theological and scholastic differences, nay even esoteric knowledge itself are but secondary accessories, accidental details. All these must give precedence to and disappear before Altruism (real Buddha- and Christ-like altruism, of course, not the theoretical twaddle of Positivists) as the flickering tongues of gas light in street lamps pale and vanish before the rising sun. Sister Rose Gertrude is not only a great and saintly heroine, but also a spiritual mystery, an Ego not to be fathomed on merely intellectual or even psychic lines. Very true, we hear of whole nunneries having volunteered for the same work at Molokai, and we readily believe it, though this statement is made more for the glorification of



Rome than for Christ and His work. But, even if true, the offer is no parallel. We have known nuns who were ready to walk across a prairie on fire to escape convent life. One of them confessed in an agony of despair that death was sweet and even the prospect of *physical tortures* in hell was preferable to life in a convent and its *moral* tortures. To such, the prospect of buying a few years of freedom and fresh air at the

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<sup>3</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Key to Theosophy," p. 239, what Theosophists think of Father Damien.

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price of dying from leprosy is hardly a sacrifice but a choice of the lesser of two evils. But the case of Sister Rose Gertrude is quite different. She gave up a life of personal freedom, a quiet home and loving family, all that is dear and near to a young girl, to perform unostentatiously a work of the greatest heroism, a most ungrateful task, by which she cannot even save from death and suffering her fellow men, but only soothe and alleviate their moral and physical tortures. She sought no notoriety and shrank from the admiration or even the help of the public. She simply did the bidding of *her* master—to the very letter. She prepared to go unknown and unrewarded in this life to an almost certain death, preceded by years of incessant physical torture from the most loathsome of all diseases. And she did it, not as the Scribes and Pharisees who perform their prescribed duties in the open streets and public Synagogues, but verily as the Master had commanded: alone, in the secluded closet of her inner life and face to face only with "her Father in secret," trying to conceal the grandest and noblest of all human acts, as another tries to hide a crime.

Therefore, we are right in saying that—in this our century at all events—Sister Rose Gertrude is, as was Father Damien before her—a *spiritual mystery*. She is the rare manifestation of a "Higher Ego," free from the trammels of all the elements of its Lower one; influenced by these elements only so far as the errors of her terrestrial sense-perceptions—with regard to religious form—seem to bear a true witness to that which is still human in her Personality—namely, her reasoning powers. Thence the ceaseless and untiring self-sacrifice of such natures to what appears *religious* duty, but which in sober truth is the

very essence and *esse* of the dormant Individuality—“divine compassion,” which is “no attribute” but verily “the law of laws, eternal Harmony, Alaya’s Self.”<sup>5</sup> It is this compassion, crystallized in our very being, that whispers night and day to such as Father Damien and Sister Rose Gertrude—“Can there be bliss when there are men who suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the others cry?” Yet, “Personality” —having been blinded by training and religious education to the real presence and nature of the Higher Self—recognizes not its voice, but confusing it in its helpless ignorance with the external and extraneous Form, which it was taught to regard as a divine Reality—it sends heavenward and outside instead of addressing

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<sup>5</sup> See “Voice of the Silence,” pp. 69 and 71.

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them inwardly, thoughts and prayers, the realization of which is in its Self. It says in the beautiful words of Dante Rossetti, but with a higher application:

. . . . . For lo! thy law is passed  
That this my love should manifestly be  
    To serve and honour thee;  
And so I do; and my delight is full,  
Accepted by the servant of thy rule.

How came this blindness to take such deep root in human nature? Eastern philosophy answers us by pronouncing two deeply significant words among so many others misunderstood by our present generation—*Maya* and *Avidya*, or “Illusion” and that which is rather the opposite of, or the absence of knowledge, in the sense of esoteric science, and not “ignorance” as generally translated.

To the majority of our casual critics the whole of the aforesaid will appear, no doubt, as certain of Mrs. Partington’s learned words and speeches. Those who believe that they have every mystery of nature at their fingers’ ends, as well as those who maintain that official science alone is entitled to solve for Humanity the problems which are hidden far away in the complex constitution of man — will never understand us. And, unable to realize our true meaning, they may, raising themselves on the patterns of modern negation, endeavour, as they

always have, to push away with their scientific mops the waters of the great ocean of occult knowledge. But the waves of *Gupta Vidya* have not reached these shores to form no better than a slop and puddle, and serious contest with them will prove as unequal as Dame Partington's struggle with the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Well, it matters little anyhow, since thousands of Theosophists will easily understand us. After all, the earth-bound watch-dog, chained to matter by prejudice and preconception, may bark and howl at the bird taking its flight beyond the heavy terrestrial fog—but it can never stop its soaring, nor can our inner perceptions be prevented by our official and limited five senses from searching for, discovering, and often solving, problems hidden far beyond the reach of the latter —hence, beyond also the powers of discrimination of those who deny a sixth and seventh sense in man.

The earnest Occultist and Theosophist, however, sees and recognizes psychic and spiritual mysteries and profound secrets of

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nature in every flying particle of dust, as much as in the giant manifestations of human nature. For him there exist proofs of the existence of a universal Spirit-Soul everywhere, and the tiny nest of the colibri offers as many problems as Brahmâ's golden egg. Yea, he recognizes all this, and bowing with profound reverence before the mystery of his own inner shrine, he repeats with Victor Hugo:

Le nid que l'oiseau bâtit  
Si petit  
Est une chose profonde.  
L'ceuf, oté de la forêt  
Manquerait  
A l'équilibre du monde.

*Lucifer*, February, 1890

PREMATURE AND  
PHENOMENAL GROWTHS

A Russian Theosophist in a letter dated November 1883, writes as follows:

The Petersburg and Moscow papers are greatly concerned with the miraculous growth of a child, which has been scientifically recorded by Medical papers. On the outskirts of Siberia, in a small village in the family of a peasant named Savelieff, a daughter was born in October 1881. The child, though very large at its birth, began exhibiting a phenomenal development only at the age of three months when she began teething. At five months she had all her teeth; at seven she began to walk, and at eight walked as well as any of us, pronounced words as might only a child two years old, and measured—nearly a yard in her height! When eighteen months old she spoke fluently, stood one arshene and a half (over four feet) in her stockings, was proportionately large; and with her very dark face, and long hair streaming down her back, talking as only a child 12 years old could talk, she exhibited moreover a bust and bosom as developed as those of a girl of seventeen! She is a marvel to all who know her from her birth. The local board of physicians from the neighbouring town took charge of her for scientific purposes.

We find the fact corroborated in the *Moscow Gazette*, the paper giving us, moreover, a second instance just come under the notice of science, of another such phenomenal growth.

A Herr Schromeyer of Hamburg, has a son, born in 1869—now a boy of 13, and his tenth child. From his birth he arrested every one's attention by his *supernaturally* rapid development. Instead of damaging, it seemed but to improve his health, which has been always excellent. A few months after his birth his muscular system increased so much, that when one year old [his] voice began to lose its childish tones and changed. Its deep basso attracted very soon the attention of some physicians. Soon after, his beard grew, and it became so thick as to compel his parents to shave it every two or three days. His infantine features, *very dark*, were gradually replaced by the face of an adult, and at five he was mistaken by every stranger for a young man of twenty. His limbs are normal, strictly proportionate and very fine. At six he was a full grown and perfectly developed

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young man. Professor Virchoff, the celebrated physiologist, accompanied

by several learned authorities, examined the boy several times, and is reported, when doubt as to the age of the boy had become no longer possible—to have given his certificate to the effect that the young boy was entirely and fully developed.

A similar case took place in a Georgian family of Asiatics, at Tiflis in the year 1865. A boy of four was found to have become a full adult. He was taken to the hospital and lived there under the eye of the Government physicians, who subjected him to the most extraordinary experiments,—of which, most likely, he died at the age of seven. His parents—superstitious and ignorant people—had made several attempts to kill him, under the impression he was the devil incarnate. There remains to this day a photograph of this bearded baby in the writer's family. Two other cases—nearly similar—the consequences of which were that two cousins in a village of Southern France, became respectively father and mother at the age of eight and seven, are on record in the Annals of Medicine. Such cases are rare; yet we know of more than a dozen well authenticated instances of the same from the beginning of this century alone.

We are asked to explain and give thereupon our “occult views.” We will try an explanation. We ask no one to believe; we simply give our personal opinion identical with that of other occultists. The latter statement, however, necessitates a small preface.

Every race and people has its old legends and prophecies concerning an unavoidable “End of the world,” the pious portions of civilized Christian nations having, moreover, evolved in advance a whole programme for the destruction of our planet. Thus the Millenarians of America and Europe expect an instantaneous disintegration of our earth, followed by a sudden disappearance of the wicked and the survival of the few elect. After this catastrophe, we are assured, the latter will remain in the service of “Christ, who upon his new advent will personally reign on earth a thousand years”—(on its *astral* skeleton, of course, since its physical body will have disappeared). The Mohammedans give another tale. The world's destruction will be preceded by the advent of an *Imam*, whose presence alone will cause the sudden death of the whole unclean brood of *Kaffirs*; the promised “Heaven” of Mohammed will then shift down its headquarters, and the paradisaical *Houris* will roam about

at the service of every faithful son of

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the Prophet. Hindus and Buddhists have again a different version; the former believe in the *Kalki* Avatar and the latter in the advent of Maitreya Buddha. The *true* Occultist however—whether Asiatic or European (the latter still to be found, *rara-avis* though he be) has a doctrine to this effect, which he has hitherto kept to himself. It is a theory, based on the correct knowledge of the *Past* and the never failing analogy in Nature to guide the Initiate in his prevision of future events—were even his psychic gifts to be denied and refused to be taken into account.

Now, what the Occultists say, is this: humanity is on the descending pathway of its cycle. The rear-guard of the 5th race is crossing slowly the apex of its evolution and will soon find itself having passed the turning point. And, as the descent is always more rapid than the ascent, men of the new coming (the 6th) race are beginning to drop in occasionally. Such children regarded in our days by official science as exceptional monstrosities, are simply the pioneers of that race. There is a prophecy in certain Asiatic old books couched in the following terms, the sense of which we may make clearer by adding to it a few words in brackets.

And as the fourth (race) was composed of Red-yellow which faded into Brown-white (bodies), so the fifth will fade out into white-brown (the white races becoming gradually darker). The sixth and seventh *Manushi* (men?) will be born adults; and will know of no old age, though their years will be many. As the Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali (ages) have been each decreasing in excellence (physical as well as moral) so the ascending—Dvapara, Treta, and Krita will be increasing in every excellence. As the life of man lasted 400 (years in the first, or Krita Yuga), 300 (years in Treta), 200 (years in Dvapara) and 100 (in the present Kali age); so in the next (the 6th Race) (the natural age of man) will be (gradually increased) 200, then 300 and 400 (in the two last yugas)

Thus we find<sup>1</sup> from the above that the characteristics of the race that will follow ours are—a darker skin, shortened period of infancy and old age, or in

other words a growth and development that in the present age (to the profane) appear quite miraculous.

It is not the sacred legends of the East alone that throw out hints on the future physiology of man. The Jewish Bible (See Genesis, Chap, vi, verse 4) implies as much, when speaking of antediluvian

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<sup>1</sup> The seven Rounds decrease and increase in their respective durations, as well as the seven races in each. Thus the 4th Rounds as well as every 4th race are the shortest, while the 1st and 7th Rounds as the 1st and 7th root races are the longest.

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racés (the 3rd race) it tells us, "There were giants in the earth, in those days," and makes a distinct difference between "the sons of God," and "the daughters of man." Therefore, to us, Occultists, believers in the knowledge of old, such isolated instances of premature development, are but so many more proofs of the end of one cycle and — the beginning of another.

*Theosophist*, January, 1884

### LE PHARE DE L'INCONNU\*

IT is written in an old book upon the Occult Sciences: "Gupta Vidya (Secret Science) is an attractive sea, but stormy and full of rocks. The navigator who risks himself thereon, if he be not wise and full of experience,<sup>1</sup> will be swallowed up, wrecked upon one of the thousand submerged reefs. Great billows, in colour like sapphires, rubies and emeralds, billows full of beauty and mystery will overtake him, ready to bear the voyager away towards other and numberless lights that burn in every direction. But these are will-o-the-wisps, lighted by the sons of Kâliya<sup>2</sup> for the destruction of those who thirst for life. Happy are they who remain blind to these false deceivers; more happy still those who never turn their eyes from the only true Beacon-light whose eternal flame burns in solitude in the depths of the water of the Sacred Science.

Numberless are the pilgrims that desire to enter those waters; very few are the strong swimmers who reach the Light. He who gets there must have ceased to be a number, and have become *all numbers*. He must have forgotten the illusion of separation, and accept only the truth of collective individuality.<sup>3</sup> He must “see with the ears, hear with the eyes,<sup>4</sup> understand the language of the rainbow, and have concentrated his six senses in his seventh sense.”<sup>5</sup>

The Beacon-light of Truth is Nature without the veil of the senses. It can be reached only when the adept has become absolute

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\* “The Beacon-Light of the Unknown.”

<sup>1</sup> Acquired under a Guru.

<sup>2</sup> The great serpent conquered by Krishna and driven from the river Yanuma into the sea, where the Serpent Kaliya took for wife a kind of Siren, by whom he had a numerous family.

<sup>3</sup> The illusion of the personality of the Ego, placed by our egotism in the first rank. In a word, it is necessary to assimilate the whole of humanity, live by it, for it, and in it; in other terms, cease to be “one,” and become “all” or the *total*.

<sup>4</sup> A Vedic expression. The senses, counting in the two mystic senses, are seven in Occultism; but an Initiate does not separate these senses from each other, any more than he separates his unity from Humanity. Every sense contains all the others.

<sup>5</sup> Symbology of colours. The Language of the prism, of which “the seven mother colours have each seven sons,” that is to say, forty-nine shades or “sons” between the seven, which graduated tints are so many letters or alphabetical characters. The language of colours has, therefore, fifty-six letters for the Initiate. Of these letters each septenary is absorbed by the mother colour, as each of the seven mother colours is absorbed finally in the white ray, Divine Unity symbolized by these colours.

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master of his personal self, able to control all his physical and psychic senses by the aid of his “seventh sense,” through which he is gifted also with the true wisdom of the gods—*Theosophia*.

Needless to say that the profane—the non-initiated, *outside the temple* or *profanes*,—judge of the “lights” and the “Light” above mentioned in a reversed sense. For them it is the Beacon-light of Occult truth which is the *Ignis fatuus*, the great will-o-the-wisp of human illusion and folly; and they



regard all the others as marking beneficent sand banks, which stop in time those who are excitedly sailing on the sea of folly and superstition.

“Is it not enough,” say our kind critics, “that the world by dint of isms has arrived at *Theosophism*, which is nothing but transcendental humbuggery (fumisterie), without the latter offering further us a réchauffée of mediæval magic, with its grand Sabbath and chronic hysteria?”

“Stop, stop, gentlemen. Do you know, when you talk like that, what *true* magic is, or the Occult Sciences? You have allowed yourselves in your schools to be stuffed full of the ‘diabolical sorcery’ of Simon the magician, and his disciple *Menander*, according to the good Father Ireneus, the too zealous Theodoret and the unknown author of *Philosophumena*. You have permitted yourselves to be told on the one hand that this magic came from the devil; and on the other hand that it was the result of imposture and fraud. Very well. But what do you know of the true nature of the system followed by Apollonius of Tyana, Iamblicus and other *magi*? And what is your opinion about the identity of the theurgy of Iamblicus with the ‘magic’ of the Simons and the Menanders? Its true character is only half revealed by the author of the *book De Mysteriis*.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless his explanations sufficed to convert Porphyry, Plotinus, and others, who from enemies to the *esoteric theory* became its most fervent adherents.” The reason is extremely simple.

True Magic, the theurgy of Iamblicus, is in its turn identical with the gnosis of Pythagoras, the *γνώσις τῶν ὄντων*, the *science of things* which are, and with the divine ecstasy of the Philaletheans, “the lovers of Truth.” But, one can judge of the tree only by its fruits. Who are those who have witnessed to the divine character

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<sup>6</sup> By Iamblicus, who used the name of his master, the Egyptian priest Abammon as a pseudonym.

A long series of men, who, had they been Christians, would have been canonized,—not by the decision of the Church, which has its partialities and predilections, but by that of whole nations, and by the *vox populi*, which is hardly ever wrong in its judgments. There is, for instance, Ammonius Saccas, called the *Theo-didaktos*, “God-instructed”; the great master whose life was so chaste and so pure, that Plotinus, his pupil, had not the slightest hope of ever seeing any mortal comparable to him. Then there is this same Plotinus who was for Ammonius what Plato was for Socrates—a disciple worthy of his illustrious master. Then there is Porphyry, the pupil of Plotinus,<sup>8</sup> the author of the biography of Pythagoras. Under the shadow of this divine gnosis, whose beneficent influence has extended to our own days, all the celebrated mystics of the later centuries have been developed, such as Jacob Boehme, Emanuel Swedenborg, and so many others. Madame Guyon is the feminine counterpart of Iamblicus. The Christian Quietists, the Mussulman Soufis, the Rosicrucians of all countries, drink the waters of that inexhaustible fountain—the Theosophy of the Neo-Platonists of the first centuries of the Christian Era. The gnosis preceded that era, for it was the direct continuation of the *Gupta Vidya* and of the Brahmâ-Vidya (“secret knowledge” and “knowledge of Brahmâ”) of ancient India, transmitted through Egypt; just as the theurgy of the Philaletheans was the continuation of the Egyptian mysteries. In any case, the point from which this “*diabolic*” magic starts, is the Supreme Divinity; its end and aim, the union of the divine spark which animates man with the parent-flame, which is the Divine all.

This consummation is the *ultima thule* of those Theosophists, who devote themselves entirely to the service of humanity. Apart from these, others, who are not yet ready to sacrifice everything, may occupy themselves with the transcendental sciences, such as Mesmerism, and the modern phenomena under all their forms. They have the right to do so according to the clause which specifies as one of the objects of the Theosophical Society “the investigation

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<sup>7</sup> Samadhi is a state of abstract contemplation, defined in Sanskrit terms that each require a whole sentence to explain them. It is a mental, or, rather, spiritual state, which is not dependent upon any perceptible object, and during which the *subject*, absorbed in the region of pure spirit, lives *in the Divinity*.

<sup>8</sup> He lived in Rome for 28 years, and was so virtuous a man that it was considered an honour to have him as guardian for the orphans of the highest patricians. He died without having made an enemy during those 28 years.-----

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of unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers latent in man.”

The first named are not numerous, — complete altruism being a *rara avis* even among modern Theosophists. The other members are free to occupy themselves with whatever they like. Notwithstanding this, and in spite of the openness of our proceedings, in which there is nothing mysterious, we are constantly called upon to explain ourselves, and to satisfy the public that we do not celebrate witches' Sabbaths, and manufacture broom-sticks for the use of Theosophists. This kind of thing, indeed, sometimes borders on the grotesque. When it is not of having invented a new “ism,” a religion extracted from the depths of a disordered brain, or else of humbugging that we are accused, it is of having exercised the arts of Circé upon men and beasts. Jests and satires fall upon the Theosophical Society thick as hail. Nevertheless it has stood unshaken during all the fourteen years during which that kind of thing has been going on: it is a “tough customer,” truly.

## II

After all, critics who judge only by appearances are not altogether wrong. There is Theosophy and Theosophy: the true Theosophy of the *Theosophist*, and the Theosophy of a Fellow of the Society of that name. What does the world know of true Theosophy? How can it distinguish between that of a Plotinus, and that of the false brothers? And of the latter the Society possesses more than its share. The egoism, vanity and self-sufficiency of the majority of mortals is incredible. There are some for whom their little personality constitutes the whole universe, beyond which there is no salvation. Suggest to one of these that the alpha and omega of wisdom are not limited by the circumference of his or her head, that his or her judgment could not be considered quite equal to that of Solomon, and straight away he or she accuses you of *anti-theosophy*. You have been guilty of blasphemy against the spirit, which will not be pardoned in this century, nor in the next. These people say, “I am Theosophy,” as Louis

XIV said "I am the State." They speak of fraternity and of altruism and only care in reality for that for which no one else cares—their little "me." Their egoism makes them fancy that it is they only who represent the

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temple of Theosophy, and that in proclaiming themselves to the world they are proclaiming Theosophy. Alas! the doors and windows of that "temple" are no better than so many channels through which enter, but very seldom depart, the vices and illusions characteristic of egoistical mediocrities.

These people are the white ants of the Theosophical Society, which eat away its foundations, and are a perpetual menace to it. It is only when they leave it that it is possible to breathe freely.

It is not such as these that can ever give a correct idea of practical Theosophy, still less of the transcendental Theosophy which occupies the minds of a little group of the elect. Every one of us possesses the faculty, the interior sense, that is known by the name of *intuition*, but how rare are those who know how to develop it! It is, however, only by the aid of this faculty that men can ever see things in their true colours. It is an *instinct of the soul*, which grows in us in proportion to the employment we give it, and which helps us to perceive and understand the realities of things with far more certainty than can the simple use of our senses and exercise of our reason. What are called good sense and logic enable us to see only the appearances of things, that which is evident to everyone. The *instinct* of which I speak, being a projection of our perceptive consciousness, a projection which acts from the subjective to the objective, and not *vice versa*, awakens in us spiritual senses and power to act; these senses assimilate to themselves the essence of the object or of the action under examination, and represent it to us as it really is, not as it appears to our physical senses and to our cold reason. "We begin with *instinct*, we end with omniscience," says Professor A. Wilder, our oldest colleague. Iamblicus has described this faculty, and certain Theosophists have been able to appreciate the truth of his description.

"There exists," he says, "a faculty in the human mind which is immeasurably superior to all those which are grafted or engendered in us. By it we can attain

to union with superior intelligences, finding ourselves raised above the scenes of this earthly life, and partaking of the higher existence and superhuman powers of the inhabitants of the celestial spheres. By this faculty we find ourselves liberated finally from the dominion of destiny (Karma), and we become, as it were, the arbiters of our own fates. For, when the most excellent parts in us find themselves filled with

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energy; and when our soul is lifted up towards essences higher than science, it can separate itself from the conditions which hold it in the bondage of everyday life; it exchanges its ordinary existence for another one, it renounces the conventional habits which belong to the external order of things, to give itself up to and mix itself with another order of things which reigns in that most elevated state of existence."

Plato has expressed the same idea in two lines: "The light and spirit of the Divinity are the wings of the soul. They raise it to communion with the gods, above this earth, with which the spirit of man is too ready to soil itself. . . . To become like the gods, is to become holy, just and wise. That is the end for which man was created, and that ought to be his aim in the acquisition of knowledge."

This is true Theosophy, inner Theosophy, that of the soul. But followed with a selfish aim Theosophy changes its nature and becomes *demonosophy*. That is why Oriental wisdom teaches us that the Hindu *Yogi* who isolates himself in an impenetrable forest, like the Christian hermit who, as was common in former times, retires to the desert, are both of them nothing but accomplished egoists. The one acts with the sole idea of finding a nirvanic refuge against reincarnation; the other acts with the unique idea of saving his soul,—both of them think only of themselves. Their motive is altogether personal; for, even supposing they attain their end, are they not like cowardly soldiers, who desert from their regiment when it is going into action, in order to keep out of the way of the bullets?

In isolating themselves as they do, neither the *Yogi* nor the "Saint" helps anyone but himself; on the contrary both show themselves profoundly indifferent to the fate of mankind whom they fly from and desert. Mount Athos<sup>9</sup> contains, perhaps, a few sincere fanatics; nevertheless even these have

without knowing it got off the only track that leads to the truth,—the path of Calvary, on which each one voluntarily bears the cross of humanity, and for humanity. In reality it is a nest of the coarsest kind of selfishness; and it is to such places that Adams' remark on monasteries applies: "There are solitary creatures there who seem to have fled from the rest of mankind for the sole pleasure of communing with the Devil *tete-a-tete*."

Gautama, the Buddha, only remained in solitude long enough

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<sup>9</sup> A celebrated Grecian monastery.

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to enable him to arrive at the truth, which he devoted himself from that time on to promulgate, begging his bread, and living for humanity. Jesus retired to the desert only for forty days, and died for this same humanity. Apollonius of Tyana, Plotinus, Iamblicus, while leading lives of singular abstinence, almost of asceticism, lived in the world and *for* the world. The greatest ascetics and *saints* of our days are not those who retire into inaccessible places, but those who pass their lives in travelling from place to place, doing good and trying to raise mankind; although, indeed, they may avoid Europe, and those civilized countries where no one has any eyes or ears except for himself, countries divided into two camps—of Cains and Abels.

Those who regard the human soul as an emanation of the Deity, as a particle or ray of the universal and Absolute soul, understand the parable of the *Talents* better than do the Christians. He who hides in the earth the *talent* which has been given him by his "Lord," will lose that talent, as the ascetic loses it, who takes it into his head to "save his soul" in egoistical solitude. The "good and faithful servant" who doubles his capital, by harvesting for *him who has not sown*, because he had not the means of doing so, and who reaps for the poor who have not scattered the grain, acts like a true altruist. He will receive his recompense, just because he has worked for another, without any idea of remuneration or reward. That man is the altruistic Theosophist, while the other is an egoist and a coward.

The Beacon-light upon which the eyes of all real Theosophists are fixed is the same towards which in all ages the imprisoned human soul has struggled. This Beacon, whose light shines upon no earthly seas, but which has mirrored itself in the sombre depths of the primordial waters of infinite space, is called by us, as by the earliest Theosophists, "Divine Wisdom." That is the last word of the esoteric doctrine; and, in antiquity, where was the country, having the right to call itself civilized, that did not possess a double system of Wisdom, of which one part was for the masses, and the other for the few,—the exoteric and the esoteric? This name, Wisdom, or, as we say sometimes, the "Wisdom Religion" or *Theosophy*, is as old as the human mind. The title of *Sages*—the priests of this worship of truth—was its first derivative. These names were afterwards transformed into *philosophy*, and *philosophers*—the "lovers of science" or of wisdom. It is to Pythagoras that we owe that name, as also that of *gnosis*, the system of

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ἡ γνῶσις τῶν ὄντων "the knowledge of things as they are," or of the essence that is hidden beneath the external appearances. Under that name, so noble and so correct in its definition, all the masters of antiquity designated the aggregate of our knowledge of things human and divine. The sages and *Brachmânes* of India, the magi of Chaldea and Persia, the hierophants of Egypt and Arabia, the prophets or *Nabi* of Judea and of Israel, as well as the philosophers of Greece and Rome, have always classified that science in two divisions—the *esoteric*, or the true, and the *exoteric*, disguised in symbols. To this day the Jewish Rabbis give the name of *Mercabah* to the body or vehicle of their religious system, that which contains within it the higher knowledge, accessible only to the initiates, and of which higher knowledge it is only the husk.

We are accused of mystery, and we are reproached with making a secret of the higher Theosophy. We confess that the doctrine which we call *gupta vidya* (secret science) is only for the few. But where were the masters in ancient times who did not keep their teachings secret, for fear they would be profaned? From Orpheus and Zoroaster, Pythagoras and Plato, down to the Rosicrucians, and to the more modern Free-Masons, it has been the invariable rule that the disciple must gain the confidence of the master before receiving from him the supreme and final word. The most ancient religions have always had their

greater and lesser mysteries. The neophytes and catechumens took an inviolable oath before they were accepted. The Essenes of Judea and Mount Carmel required the same thing. The *Nabi* and the *Nazars* (the “separated ones” of Israel), like the lay *Chelas* and the *Brahmâcharyas* of India, differed greatly from each other. The former could, and can, be married and remain in the world, while they are studying the sacred writings up to a certain point; the latter, the *Nazars* and the *Brahmâcharyas*, have always been entirely vowed to the mysteries of initiation. The great schools of Esotericism were international, although exclusive, as is proved by the fact that Plato, Herodotus and others, went to Egypt to be initiated; while Pythagoras, after visiting the Brahmins of India, stopped at an Egyptian sanctuary, and finally was received, according to Iamblicus, at Mount Carmel. Jesus followed the traditional custom, and justified his reticence by quoting the well known precept:

Give not the sacred things to the dogs,  
Cast not your pearls before the swine,  
Lest these tread them under their feet,  
And lest the dogs turn and rend you.

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Certain ancient writings—known, for that matter, to the bibliophiles—personify Wisdom; which they represent as emanating from *Ain-Soph*, the Parabrahm of the Jewish Kabbalists, and make it the associate and companion of the manifested Deity. Thence its sacred character with every people. Wisdom is inseparable from divinity. Thus we have the Vedas coming from the mouth of the Hindu “*Brahmâ*” (the *logos*); the name Buddha comes from Budha, “Wisdom,” divine intelligence; the Babylonian *Nebo*, the *Thot* of Memphis, *Hermes* of the Greeks, were all gods of esoteric wisdom.

The Greek Athena, Metis and Neitha of the Egyptians, are the prototypes of Sophia-Achamoth, the feminine wisdom of the Gnostics. The Samaritan *Pentateuch* calls the book of Genesis *Akamauth*, or “Wisdom,” as also two fragments of very ancient manuscripts, “the Wisdom of Solomon,” and “the Wisdom of *Iasous* (Jesus).” The book called *Mashalim* or “Sayings and Proverbs of Solomon,” personifies Wisdom by calling it “the helper of the (Logos) creator,” in the following terms, (literally translated):



I (a) H V (e) H \* possessed me from the beginning.  
But the first emanation in the eternities,  
I appeared from all antiquity, the primordial. —  
From the first day of the earth;  
I was born before the great abyss.  
And when there were neither springs nor waters,  
When he traced the circle on the face of the deep,  
I was with him Amun.  
I was his delight, day by day.

This is exoteric, like all that has reference to the personal gods of the nations. The Infinite cannot be known to our reason, which can only distinguish and define;—but we can always conceive the abstract idea thereof, thanks to that faculty higher than our reason,—*intuition*, or the spiritual instinct of which I have spoken. Only the great initiates, who have the rare power of throwing themselves into the state of Samadhi,—which can be but imperfectly translated by the word *ecstasy*, a state in which one ceases to be the conditioned and personal “I,” and becomes

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\* J H V H , or Jahveh (Jehovah) is the *Tetragrammaton*, consequently the Emanated Logos and the creator; the All, without beginning or end,—Ain-Soph—not being able to create, nor wishing to create, in its quality of the Absolute.

one with the All,—only those can boast of having been in contact with the *infinite*: but no more than other mortals can they describe that state in words.

These few characteristics of *true* theosophy and of its practice, have been sketched for the small number of our readers who are gifted with the desired intuition.

Do our benevolent critics always know what they are laughing at? Have they the smallest idea of the work which is being performed in the world and the mental changes that are being brought about by that Theosophy at which they smile? The progress already due to our literature is evident, and, thanks to the untiring labours of a certain number of Theosophists, it is becoming recognized even by the blindest. There are not a few who are persuaded that Theosophy will be the philosophy and the law, if not the religion of the future. The party of reaction, captivated by the *dolce far niente* of conservatism, feel all this, hence come the hatred and persecution which call in criticism to their aid. But criticism, inaugurated by Aristotle, has fallen far away from its primitive standard. The ancient philosophers, those sublime ignoramuses as regards modern civilization, when they criticised a system or a work, did so with impartiality, and with the sole object of amending and improving that with which they found fault. First they studied the subject, and then they analyzed it. It was a service rendered, and was recognized and accepted as such by both parties. Does modern criticism always conform to that golden rule? It is very evident that it does not.

Our judges of today are far below the level even of the philosophical criticism of Kant. Criticism, which takes unpopularity and prejudice for its canons, has replaced that of "pure reason"; and the critic ends by tearing to pieces with his teeth everything he does not comprehend, and especially whatever he does not care in the least to understand. In the last century—the golden age of the goose-quill—criticism was biting enough sometimes; but still it did justice. Caesar's wife might be suspected, but she was never condemned without being heard in her defence. In our century Montyon prizes<sup>10</sup> and public statues are for him who

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<sup>10</sup> Prizes instituted in France during the last century by the Baron de Montyon for those who, in various ways, benefitted their fellow men.—*Ed.*

invents the most murderous engine of war; today, when the steel pen has replaced its more humble predecessor, the fangs of the Bengal tiger or the teeth of the terrible saurian of the Nile would make wounds less cruel and less deep

than does the steel nib (*bec*) of the modern critic, who is almost always absolutely ignorant of that which he tears so thoroughly to pieces.

It is some consolation, perhaps, to know that the majority of our literary critics, trans-atlantic and continental, are ex-scribblers who have made a fiasco in literature, and are revenging themselves now for their mediocrity upon everything they come across. The small blue wine, insipid and doctored, almost always turns into very strong vinegar. Unfortunately the reporters of the press in general—hungry poor devils whom we would be sorry to grudge the little they make, even at our expense—are not our only or our most dangerous critics. The bigots and the materialists—the sheep and goats of religions—having placed us in turn in their *index expurgatorius*, our books are banished from their libraries, our journals are boycotted, and ourselves subjected to the most complete ostracism. One pious soul, who accepts literally the miracles of the Bible, following with emotion the ichthyographical investigations of Jonas in the whale's belly, or the trans-ethereal journey of Elias, when like a salamander he flew off in his chariot of fire, nevertheless regards the Theosophists as wonder-mongers and cheats. Another—*âme damnée* of Hæckel,—while he displays a credulity as blind as that of the bigot in his belief in the evolution of man and the gorilla from a common ancestor (considering the total absence of every trace in nature of any connecting link whatever), nearly dies with laughing when he finds that his neighbour believes in occult phenomena and psychic manifestations. Nevertheless, neither the bigot nor the man of science, nor even the academician, counted among the number of the "Immortals," can explain to us the smallest of the problems of existence. The metaphysicians who for centuries have studied the phenomena of being in their first principles, and who smile pityingly when they listen to the wanderings of Theosophy, would be greatly embarrassed to explain to us the philosophy or even the cause of dreams. Which of them can tell us why all the mental operations,—except reasoning, which faculty alone finds itself suspended and paralysed,—go on while we dream with as much activity and energy as when we are awake? The disciple of Herbert

Spencer would send anyone to the biologist who squarely asked him that question. But he, for whom digestion is the *alpha* and *omega* of every dream,—

like hysteria, that great Proteus with a thousand forms, which is present in every psychic phenomenon—can by no means satisfy us. Indigestion and hysteria are, in fact, twin sisters, two goddesses, to whom the modern psychologist has raised an altar at which he has constituted himself the officiating priest. But this is his business so long as he does not meddle with the gods of his neighbours.

From all this it follows that, since the Christian characterises Theosophy as the “accursed science” and the forbidden fruit; since the man of science sees nothing in metaphysics but “the domain of the crazy poet” (Tyndall); since the “reporter” touches it only with poisoned forceps; and since the missionaries associate it with idolatry and “the benighted Hindu,”—it follows, we say, that poor *Theo-Sophia* is as shamefully treated as she was when the ancients called her the Truth,—while they relegated her to the bottom of a well. Even the “Christian” Kabbalists, who love so much to mirror themselves in the dark waters of this deep well, although they see nothing there but the reflection of their own faces, which they mistake for that of the Truth,—even the Kabbalists make war upon us. Nevertheless, all that is no reason why Theosophy should have nothing to say in its own defence, and in its favour; or that it should cease to assert its right to be listened to, or why its loyal and faithful servants should neglect their duty by acknowledging themselves beaten.

“The accursed science,” you say, good Ultramontanes? You should remember, nevertheless, that the tree of science is grafted on the tree of life. That the fruit which you declare “forbidden,” and which you have proclaimed for sixteen centuries to be the cause of the original sin that brought death into the world,—that this fruit, whose flower blossoms on an immortal stem, was nourished by that same trunk, and that therefore it is the only fruit which can insure us immortality. You also, good Kabbalists, ignore,—or wish to ignore,—that the allegory of the earthly paradise is as old as the world, and that the tree, the fruit and the sin had once a far profounder and more philosophic signification than they have today,—when the secrets of initiation are lost.

Protestantism and Ultramontanism are opposed to Theosophy, just as they are opposed to everything not emanating from themselves;

as Calvinism opposed the replacing of its two fetishes, the Jewish Bible and Sabbath, by the Gospel and the Christian Sunday; as Rome opposed secular education and Free-masonry. Dead-letter and theocracy have, however, had their day. The world must move and advance under penalty of stagnation and death. Mental evolution progresses *pari passu* with physical evolution, and both advance towards the One Truth,—which is the heart of the system of Humanity, as evolution is the blood. Let the circulation stop for one moment and the heart stops at the same time, and it is all up with the human machine! And it is the servants of Christ who wish to kill, or at least paralyze, the Truth by the blows of a club which is called “the letter that kills!” But the end is nigh. That which Coleridge said of political despotism applies also to religious. The Church, unless she withdraws her heavy hand, which weighs like a nightmare on the oppressed bosoms of millions of believers whether they resent it or not, and whose reason remains paralyzed in the clutch of superstition, the ritualistic Church is sentenced *to give up its place to Religion* and—to die. Soon it will have but a choice. For once the people become enlightened about the truth which it aides with so much care, one of two things will happen, the Church will either perish *by* the people; or else, if the masses are left in ignorance and in slavery to the dead letter, it will perish *with* the people. Will the servants of eternal Truth,—out of which Truth they have made a squirrel that runs round an ecclesiastical wheel,—will they show themselves sufficiently *altruistic* to choose the first of these alternative necessities? Who knows!

I say it again; it is only theosophy, well understood, that can save the world from despair, by reproducing social and religious reform—a task once before accomplished in history, by Gautama, the Buddha: a peaceful reform, without one drop of blood spilt, each one remaining in the faith of his fathers if he so chooses. To do this he will only have to reject the parasitic plants of human fabrication, which at the present moment are choking all religions and churches in the world. Let him accept but the essence, which is the same in all: that is to say, the spirit which gives life to man in whom it resides, and renders him immortal. Let every man inclined to go on find his ideal,—a star before him to guide him. Let him follow it, without ever deviating from his path; and he is almost certain to reach the Beacon-light of

life—the Truth: no matter whether he seeks for and finds it at the bottom of a cradle or of a well.

#### IV

Laugh, then, at the science of sciences without knowing the first word of it! We will be told, perhaps, that such is the literary right of our critics. With all my heart. If people always talked about what they understood, they would only say things that are true, and—that would not always be so amusing. When I read the criticisms now written on Theosophy, the platitudes and the stupid ridicule employed against the most grandiose and sublime philosophy in the world,—one of whose aspects only is found in the noble ethics of Philalethes,—I ask myself whether the Academies of any country have ever understood the Theosophy of the Philosophers of Alexandria better than they understood us now? What does anyone know, what can he know, of Universal Theosophy, unless he has studied under the masters of wisdom? and understanding so little of Iamblicus, Plotinus and even Proclus, that is to say, of the Theosophy of the third and fourth centuries, people yet pride themselves upon delivering judgment on the Neo-Theosophy of the nineteenth!

Theosophy, we say, comes to us from the extreme East, as did the Theosophy of Plotinus and Iamblicus and even the mysteries of ancient Egypt. Do not Homer and Herodotus tell us, in fact, that the ancient Egyptians were “Ethiopians of the East,” *who came from Lanka or Ceylon*, according to their descriptions? For it is generally acknowledged that the people whom those two authors call *Ethiopians of the East* were no other than a colony of very dark skinned Aryans, the Dravidians of Southern India, who took an already existing civilization with them to Egypt. This migration occurred during the prehistoric ages which Baron Bunsen calls *pre-Menite* (before Menes) but which ages have a history of their own, to be found in the ancient annals of Kalouka Batta. Besides, and apart from the esoteric teachings, which are not divulged to a mocking public, the historical researches of Colonel Vans Kennedy, the great rival in India of Dr. Wilson as a Sanskritist, show us that pre-Assyrian Babylonia was the home of Brahmanism, and of the Sanskrit as a sacerdotal language. We know also, if Exodus is to be believed, that Egypt had, long

before the time of Moses, its diviner, its hierophants and its magicians, that is to say, before the XIX dynasty. Finally Brugsh Bey sees in many of the gods of Egypt, immigrants from beyond the Red Sea—and the great waters of the Indian Ocean.

Whether that be so or not, Theosophy is a descendant in direct line of the great tree of universal Gnosis, a tree the luxuriant branches of which, spreading over the whole earth like a great canopy, gave shelter at one epoch—which biblical chronology is pleased to call “antediluvian”—to all the temples and to all the nations of the earth. That gnosis represents the aggregate of all the sciences, the accumulated wisdom (savoir) of all the gods and demi-gods incarnated in former times upon the earth. There are some who would like to see in these, the fallen angels and the enemy of mankind; these sons of God who, seeing that the daughters of men were beautiful, took them for wives and imparted to them the secrets of heaven and earth. Let them think so. We believe in Avatars and in divine dynasties, in the epoch when there were, in fact, “giants upon the earth,” but we altogether repudiate the idea of “fallen angels” and of Satan and his army.

“What then is your religion or your belief?” we are asked. “What is your favourite study?”

“The Truth,” we reply. The truth wherever we can find it; for, like Ammonius Saccas, our greatest ambition would be to reconcile the different religious systems, to help each one to find the truth in his own religion, while obliging him to recognize it in that of his neighbour. What does the name signify if the thing itself is essentially the same? Plotinus, Iamblicus and Apollonius of Tyana, had all three, it is said, the wonderful gifts of prophecy, of clairvoyance, and of healing, although belonging to three different schools. Prophecy was an art that was cultivated by the Essenes and the *B’ni Nebim* among the Jews, as well as by the priests of the pagan oracles. Plotinus’s disciples attributed miraculous powers to their master; Philostratus has claimed the same for Apollonius while Iamblicus had the reputation of surpassing all the other Eclectics in Theosophic theurgy. Ammonius declared that all moral and practical wisdom was contained in the books of Thoth or Hermes Trismegistus. But Thoth means “a college,” school or assembly, and the works of that name,

according to the *Theodidactos*, were identical with the doctrines of the sages of the extreme East. If Pythagoras

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acquired his knowledge in India (when even now he is mentioned in old manuscripts under the name of Yavanachárya,<sup>11</sup> the Greek Master), Plato gained his from the books of Thoth-Hermes. How it happened that the younger Hermes, the god of the shepherds, surnamed "the good shepherd," who presided over divination and clairvoyance became identical with Thoth (or Thot) the deified sage, and the author of the *Book of the Dead*,—the esoteric doctrine only can reveal to Orientalists.

Every country has had its saviours. He who dissipates the darkness of ignorance by the help of the torch of science, thus discovering to us the truth, deserves that title as a mark of our gratitude quite as much as he who saves us from death by healing our bodies. Such an one awakens in our benumbed souls the faculty of distinguishing the true from the false, by kindling a divine flame, hitherto absent, and he has the right to our grateful worship, for he has become our creator. What matters the name or the symbol that personifies the abstract idea, if that idea is always the same and is true! Whether the concrete symbol bears one title or another, whether the saviour in whom we believe has for an earthly name Krishna, Buddha, Jesus or Æsculapius,—also called "the saviour god" Σώτηρ,—we have but to remember one thing: symbols of divine truths were not invented for the amusement of the ignorant; they are the *alpha* and *omega* of philosophic thought.

Theosophy being the way that leads to truth, in every religion, as in every science, occultism is, so to say, the touchstone and universal solvent. It is the thread of Ariadne given by the master to the disciple who ventures into the labyrinth of the mysteries of being; the torch that lights him through the dangerous maze of life, for ever the enigma of the Sphinx. But the light thrown by this torch can be discerned only by the eye of the awakened soul—by our spiritual senses; it blinds the eye of the materialist as the sun blinds that of the owl.

Having neither dogma nor ritual,—these two being but fetters, the material body which suffocates the soul,—we do not employ the "ceremonial magic" of



the Western Kabalists; we know its dangers too well to have anything to do with it. In the T.S. every Fellow is at liberty to study what he pleases, provided he

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<sup>11</sup> A term which comes from the words *Yavana* or “the Ionian.” and *achârya*, “professor or master.”

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does not venture into unknown paths which would of a certainty lead him to *black magic*,—the sorcery against which Éliphas Lévi so openly warned the public. The occult sciences are dangerous for him who understands them imperfectly. Anyone who gave himself up to their practice by himself, would run the risk of becoming insane; and those who study them would do well to unite in little groups of from three to seven. These groups ought to be uneven in numbers in order to have more power; a group, however little cohesion it possesses, forming a single united body, wherein the senses and perceptions of those who work together complement and mutually help each other, one member supplying to another the quality in which he is wanting,—such a group will always end by becoming a perfect and invincible body. “Union is strength.” The moral of the fable of the old man bequeathing to his sons a bundle of sticks which were never to be separated is a truth which will forever remain axiomatic.

## V

“The disciples (Lanous) of the law of the Heart of Diamant (magic) will help each other in their lessons. The grammarian will be at the service of him who looks for the soul of the metals (chemist)” etc.—(Catechism of the *Gupta-Vidja*).

The ignorant would laugh if they were told that in the Occult sciences, the alchemist can be useful to the philologist and *vice versa*. They would understand the matter better, perhaps, if they were told that by this substantive (grammarian or philologist), we mean to designate one who makes a study of the universal language of corresponding symbols, although only the members of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society can understand clearly what

the term “philologist” means in that sense. All things in nature have correspondences and are mutually interdependent. In its abstract sense, Theosophy is the white ray, from which arise the seven colours of the solar spectrum, each human being assimilating one of these rays to a greater degree than the other six. It follows that seven persons, each imbued with his special ray, can help each other mutually. Having at their service the septenary bundle of rays, they have the seven forces of nature-

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at their command. But it follows also that, to reach that end, the choosing of the seven persons who are to form a group, should be left to an expert,—to an initiate in the science of occult rays.

But we are here upon dangerous ground, where the Sphinx of esotericism runs the risk of being accused of mystification. Still, orthodox science furnishes a proof of the truth of what we say, and we find a corroboration in physical and materialistic astronomy. The sun is one, and its light shines for every one; it warms the ignorant as well as the astronomers. As to the hypotheses about our luminary, its constitution and nature,—their name is *legion*. Not one of these hypotheses contains the whole truth, or even an approximation to it. Frequently they are only fictions soon to be replaced by others. For it is to scientific theories more than to anything else in this world below that the lines of Malherbe are applicable:

. . . Et rose, elle a vècu ce que vivent les roses,

L'espace d'un matin.

Nevertheless, whether they adorn or not the altar of Science, each of these theories may contain a fragment of truth. Selected, compared, analysed, pieced together, all these hypotheses may one day supply an astronomical axiom, a fact in nature, instead of a chimera in the scientific brain.

This is far from meaning that we accept as an increment of truth every axiom accepted as true by the Academies. For instance, in the evolution and phantasmagorical transformations of the sun spots,—Nasmyth's theory at the present moment,—Sir John Herschell began by seeing in them the inhabitants of the sun, beautiful and gigantic angels. William Herschell, maintaining a

prudent silence about these celestial salamanders, shared the opinion of the elder Herschell, that the solar globe was nothing but a beautiful metaphor, a *maya*—thus announcing an occult axiom. The sun spots have found a Darwin in the person of every astronomer of any eminence. They were taken successively for planetary spirits, solar mortals, columns of volcanic smoke (engendered, one must think, in brains academical), opaque clouds, and finally for shadows in the shape of the leaves of the willow tree, (“willow leaf theory”). At the present day the sun is degraded. According to men of science it is nothing but a gigantic coal, still aglow, but prepared to go out in the grate of our solar system.

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Even so with the speculations published by Fellows of the Theosophical Society, when the authors of these, although they belong to the Theosophical fraternity, have never studied the true esoteric doctrines. These speculations can never be other than hypotheses, no more than coloured with a ray of truth, enveloped in a chaos of fancy and sometimes of unreason. By selecting them from the heap and placing them side by side, one succeeds, nevertheless, in extracting a philosophic truth from these ideas. For, let it be well understood, theosophy has this in common with ordinary science, that it examines the reverse side of every apparent truth. It tests and analyses every fact put forward by physical science, looking only for the essence and the ultimate and occult constitution in every cosmical or physical manifestation, whether in the domain of ethics, intellect, or matter. In a word, Theosophy begins its researches where materialists finish theirs.

“It is then metaphysics that you offer us!” it may be objected, “Why not say so at once.”

No, it is not metaphysics, as that term is generally understood, although it plays that part sometimes. The speculations of Kant, of Leibnitz, and of Schopenhauer belong to the domain of metaphysics, as also those of Herbert Spencer. Still, when one studies the latter, one cannot help dreaming of Dame Metaphysics figuring at a *bal masqué* of the Academical Sciences, adorned with a false nose. The metaphysics of Kant and of Leibnitz—as proved by his monads—is above the metaphysics of our days, as a balloon in the clouds is above a pumpkin in the field below. Nevertheless this balloon, however much

better it may be than the pumpkin, is too artificial to serve as a vehicle for the truth of the occult sciences. The latter is, perhaps, a goddess too freely uncovered to suit the taste of our savants, so modest. The metaphysics of Kant taught its author, without the help of the present methods or perfected instruments, the identity of the constitution and essence of the sun and the planets; and Kant *affirmed*, when the best astronomers, even during the first half of this century, still *denied*. But this same metaphysics did not succeed in proving to him the true nature of that essence, any more than it has helped modern physics, notwithstanding its noisy hypotheses, to discover that true nature.

Theosophy, therefore, or rather the occult sciences it studies, is something more than simple metaphysics. It is, if I may be

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allowed to use the double terms, *meta*-metaphysics, *meta*-geometry, etc., etc., or a universal transcendentalism. Theosophy rejects the testimony of the physical senses entirely, if the latter be not based upon that afforded by the psychic and spiritual perceptions. Even in the case of the most highly developed clairvoyance and clairaudience, the *final* testimony of both must be rejected, unless by those terms is signified the *φωτός* of Iamblicus, or the ecstatic illumination, the *ἀγωγή μαντεία* of Plotinus and of Porphyry. The same holds good for the physical sciences; the evidence of the reason upon the terrestrial plane, like that of our five senses, should receive the imprimatur of the sixth and seventh senses of the divine ego, before a fact can be accepted by the true occultist.

Official science hears what we say and—laughs. We read its “reports,” we behold the apotheoses of its self-styled progress, of its great discoveries,—more than one of which, while enriching the more a small number of those already wealthy, have plunged millions of the poor into still more terrible misery—and we leave it to its own devices. But, finding that physical science has not made a step towards the knowledge of the real nature and constitution of matter since the days of Anaximenes and the Ionian school, we laugh in our turn.

In that direction, the best work has been done and the most valuable scientific discoveries of this century have, without contradiction, been made by the great

chemist Mr. William Crookes.<sup>12</sup> In his particular case, a remarkable intuition of occult truth has been of more service to him than all his great knowledge of physical science. It is certain that neither scientific methods, nor official routine, have helped him much in his discovery of radiant matter, or in his researches into *protyle*, or primordial matter.<sup>13</sup>

## VI

That which the Theosophists who hold to orthodox and official science try to accomplish in their own domain, the Occultists or the Theosophists of the “inner group” study according to the method of the esoteric school. If up to the present this method has demonstrated its superiority only to its students, that is to say,

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<sup>12</sup> Member of the Executive Council of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, and President of the Chemical Society of Great Britain.

<sup>13</sup> The homogeneous, non-differentiated element which he calls *meta-element*

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to those who have pledged themselves by oath not to reveal it, that circumstance proves nothing against it. Not only have the terms *magic* and *theurgy* been never even approximately understood, but even the name *Theosophy* has been disfigured. The definitions thereof which are given in dictionaries and encyclopaedias are as absurd as they are grotesque. Webster, for instance, in explanation of the word *Theosophy* assures his readers that it is “a direct connection or communication with God and superior spirits”; and, further on, that it is “the attainment of *superhuman* and *supernatural* knowledge and powers by *physical processes* (!?) as by the theurgic operations of some ancient Platonists, or by the chemical processes of the German fire philosophers.” This is nonsensical verbiage. It is precisely as if we were to say that it is possible to transform a crazy brain into one of the calibre of Newton’s, and to develop in it a genius for mathematics by riding five miles every day upon a wooden horse.

Theosophy is synonymous with *Gnanâ-Vidya*, and with the *Brahma-Vidya*<sup>14</sup> of the Hindus, and again with the *Dzyan* of the trans-Himalayan adepts, the science of the *true* Raj-Yogas, who are much more accessible than one thinks. This science has many schools in the East. But its offshoots are still more numerous, each one having ended by separating itself from the parent stem, — the true Archaic Wisdom, — and varying in its form.

But, while these forms varied, departing further with each generation from the light of truth, the basis of initiatory truths remained always the same. The symbols used to express the same idea may differ, but in their hidden sense they always do express the same idea. Ragon, the most erudite mason of all the “Widow’s sons,” has said the same. There exists a sacerdotal language, the “mystery language,” and unless one knows it well, he cannot go far in the occult sciences. According to Ragon “to build or found a town” meant the same thing as to “found a religion”; therefore, that phrase when it occurs in Homer is equivalent to the expression in the Brahmins, to distribute the “Soma juice.” It means, “to found an esoteric school,” not “a religion” as Ragon pretends. Was he mistaken? We do not think so. But as a Theosophist belonging to the esoteric section dare not tell to an ordinary member

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<sup>14</sup> The meaning of the word *Vidya* can only be rendered by the Greek term *Gnosis*, the knowledge of hidden and spiritual things; or again, the knowledge of Brahm, that is to say, of the God that contains all the gods.

of the Theosophical Society the things about which he has promised to keep silent, so Ragon found himself obliged to divulge merely relative truths to his pupils. Still, it is certain that he had made at least an elementary study of “the mystery language.”

“How can one learn this language?” we may be asked. We reply: study all religions and compare them with one another. To learn thoroughly requires a teacher, a *guru*; to succeed by oneself needs more than genius: it demands inspiration like that of Ammonius Saccas. Encouraged in the Church by Clement of Alexandria and by Athenagoras, protected by the learned men of the synagogue and of the academy, and adored by the Gentiles, “he learned the *language of the mysteries* by teaching the common origin of all religions, and

a common religion." To do this, he had only to teach according to the ancient canons of Hermes which Plato and Pythagoras had studied so well, and from which they drew their respective philosophies. Can we be surprised if, finding in the first verses of the gospel according to St. John the same doctrines that are contained in the three systems of philosophy above mentioned, he concluded with every show of reason that the intention of the great Nazarene was to restore the sublime science of ancient wisdom in all its primitive integrity? We think as did Ammonius. The biblical narrations and the histories of the gods have only two possible explanations: either they are great and profound allegories, illustrating universal truths, or else they are fables of no use but to put the ignorant to sleep.

Therefore the allegories,—Jewish as well as Pagan,—contain all the truths that can only be understood by him who knows the mystical language of antiquity. Let us see what is said on this subject by one of our most distinguished Theosophists, a fervent Platonist and a Hebraist, who knows his Greek and Latin like his mother tongue, Professor Alexander Wilder,<sup>15</sup> of New York:

The root idea of the Neo-Platonists was the existence of one only and supreme Essence. This was the *Diu*, or "Lord of the Heavens" of the Aryan nations, identical with the *Iao* (*Iao*) of the Chaldeans and Hebrews, the *Iabe* of the Samaritans, the *Tiu* or *Tuiseo* of the Norwegians, the *Duw* of the ancient tribes of Britain, the *Zeus* of those of Thrace, and the *Jupiter* of the Romans. It was the *Being*—(non-Being), the *Facit*, one and supreme. It is from it that all other beings proceeded *by emanation*. The moderns have, it seems, substituted for this

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<sup>5</sup> The first Vice-President of the Theosophical Society when it was founded.

their theory of *evolution*. Perchance someday a wiser man than they will combine these systems in a single one. The names of these different divinities seem often to have been invented with little or no regard to their etymological meaning, but chiefly on account of some particular mystical

signification attached to the numerical value of the letters employed in their orthography.

This *numerical* signification is one of the branches of the *mystery language*, or the ancient sacerdotal language. This was taught in the “Lesser Mysteries,” but the language itself was reserved for the high initiates alone. The candidate must have come victorious out of the terrible trials of the Greater Mysteries before receiving instruction in it. That is why Ammonius Saccas, like Pythagoras, obliged his disciples to take an oath never to divulge the higher doctrines to any one to whom the preliminary ones had not already been imparted, and who, therefore, was not ready for initiation. Another sage, who preceded him by three centuries, did the same by his disciples, in saying to them that he spoke “in similes” (or parables) “because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given . . . because in seeing they see not, and in hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.”

Therefore the “similes” employed by Jesus were part of the “language of the mysteries,” the sacerdotal tongue of the initiates. Rome has lost the key to it: by rejecting theosophy and pronouncing her anathema against the occult sciences,—she loses it for ever.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

*La Revue Theosophique*, May, 1889

*Theosophist*, July, August, September, 1889

## WORLD-IMPROVEMENT OR WORLD-DELIVERANCE

### CORRESPONDENCE

You yourself must make an effort. The Tathâgatas are only preachers.—If a man find no prudent companion, let him walk alone like a king who has left his conquered country behind. It is better to live alone; there is no companionship with



the *fools*. Let a man walk alone; let him commit no sin, with few wishes—like an elephant in the forest.

*Dhammapada*: 61, 276, 329, 330

*Sutta Nipata*: I. 3, §§ 12 and 13

*To the Editor of Lucifer*

A VERY important paragraph which you wrote in No. 3 of your “*Revue Theosophique*,” published in Paris, May 21st, 1889 (pp. 6 and 7), has caused very serious doubts in the minds of some of your readers in Germany—doubts, probably caused by our misunderstanding you or by your shortness of expression. Will you permit me to state our view of the case, and will you have the kindness to give us on this basis your opinion of it publicly, perhaps in *Lucifer*?

You were speaking of Indian “yogis” and European “saints” and said:

La sagesse orientale<sup>1</sup> nous apprend que le *yogi* Indou qui s’isole dans un forêt impénétrable, ainsi que l’*hermite* Chrétien qui se retire, comme aux temps jadis le désert, ne sont tous deux que des égoïstes accomplis. L’un, agit dans l’unique but de trouver dans l’essence une et nirvanique refuge contre la réincarnation; l’autre, dans le but de sauver son âme,—tous les deux ne pensent qu’à eux-mêmes. Leur motif est tout *personnel*; car, en admettant qu’ils atteignent le but, ne sont-ils pas comme le soldat poltron, qui déserte l’*armée* au moment de l’action, pour se préserver des balles? En s’isolant ainsi, ni le *yogi*, ni le “*saint*,” n’aident personne autre qu’eux-mêmes; ils se montrent, par contre, *profondément indifférents* au sort de l’*humanité* qu’ils *fui*ent et *désertent*.

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[The Eastern Wisdom<sup>1</sup> teaches us that the Indian *yogi* who retires to the jungle, as well as the Christian *hermit* who used to repair to the desert are, both of them, simply perfect egotists. The one is moved solely by the hope of finding in the Nirvanic state an escape from reincarnation; the other acts but to save his own soul—neither of them has a thought but for himself. The motive is purely *personal*, for, even admitting that they achieve their object, are they not the same as the cowardly soldier who deserts the *army* at the moment of battle in order to save himself from shot and

shell? In thus isolating themselves, neither yogi nor “*saint*” benefits anyone but himself; on the contrary, they show themselves to be *utterly indifferent* to the fate of the *humanity* they *avoid* and *desert*.]

You do not plainly say what you expect a true sage to do; but further on you refer to our Lord, the Buddha, and to what *He* did. We readily accept His example as well as His teachings for our ideal rule; but from those stanzas I have quoted above, it appears, that what he expected his disciples to do, does not quite agree with what you seem to expect from them.<sup>2</sup>

(1) The editor of *Lucifer* and the *Revue Théosophique*, pleads guilty to an omission. She ought to have qualified, “*la sagesse Orientale*” by adding the adjective ‘*ésoterique*.’

(2) The Western disciples and followers of the Lord Buddha’s ethics lay very little stress on the dead letter (and often fanciful) translations of Buddhist *Sutras* by European Orientalists. From such scholars as Messrs. Max Müller and Weber, down to the last amateur Orientalist who dabbles in Buddhism disfigured by translation and proudly boasts of his knowledge, no Sanskrit or Pali scholar has so far understood correctly that which is taught; witness Monier Williams’ fallacious assumption that Buddha never taught anything *esoteric*! Therefore neither the *Dhammapada* nor the *Sutta Nipata* are an exception, nor a proof to us in their now mutilated and misunderstood text. Nagarjuna laid it down, as a rule that “every Buddha has both a revealed and a mystic doctrine.” The “*exoteric* is for the multitudes and new disciples,” to whom our correspondent evidently belongs. This plain truth was understood even by such a prejudiced scholar as the Rev. J. Edkins, who passed almost all his life in China studying Buddhism, and who says in his “*Chinese Buddhism*”:

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He taught that all the world, or the three worlds, in fact, every existence, is pain, or leading to pain and grief. World and existence is pain and evil *per se*. It is a mistake (*avidya*) to believe that desire can be satisfied. All worldly desires lead in the end to dissatisfaction, and the desire (the thirst) to live is the cause of all evil. Only those who are striving to deliver (to save or to redeem) themselves from all existence (from their thirst for existence); leading the “*happy life*” of a perfect bhikshu, only those are sages; only those attain nirvana and, when they die, paranirvana, which is absolute and changeless being.<sup>3</sup>

No doubt some sort of development or so-called improvement, evolution and involution, is going on in the world; but just for this reason the Buddha taught (like Krishna before him), that the world is, "unreality, maya, avidya." Every actual form of existence has *become*, has grown to be what it is; it will continue *changing* and will have an end, like it had a beginning as a form. *Absolute being* without "form" and "name," this alone is true reality, and is worth striving at for a real sage.<sup>4</sup>

Now what did our Lord, the Buddha, do and how did He live?

(Ch. iii.) "The esoteric was for the Bodhisattvas and advanced pupils, such as Kashiapa. It is not communicated in the form of definite language, and *could not, therefore, be transmitted by Anandas as definite doctrine among the Sutras. Yet, it is virtually contained in the Sutras.* For example, the "Sutra of the Lotus of the good Law," which is regarded as containing the cream of the revealed doctrine, is to be viewed as a sort of original document *of the esoteric teaching, while it is in form exoteric.*" [Italics are ours.]

Moreover we perceive that our learned correspondent has entirely misunderstood the fundamental idea in what we wrote in our May editorial, "*Le Phare de l'Inconnu*" in the *Revue Théosophique*. We protest against such an interpretation and will prove that it errs in the course of this article.

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(<sup>3</sup>) An exoteric and frequent mistake. Nirvana may be reached during man's life, and after his death in the Manvantara or life-kalpa he belongs to. *Paranirvana* ("beyond" Nirvana) is reached only when the Manvantara has closed and during the "night" of the Universe or *Pralaya*. Such is the esoteric teaching.

(<sup>4</sup>) Just so; and this is the theosophical teaching.

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He did not in any way try to *improve the world*; he did not strive to realise socialistic problems, to solve the labour question or to better the *worldly* affairs of the poor, nor the rich either; he did not meddle with science, he did not teach cosmology and such like,\* quite on the contrary; he lived in the most *unworldly* manner, he begged for his food and taught his disciples to do the same; he left, and taught his disciples to leave, all worldly life and affairs,

to give up their families and to remain homeless, like he did and like he lived himself.<sup>5</sup>

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\* *Malunka Sutta* in Spence Hardy, "Manual of Buddhism," p. 375. *Saymuttaka Nikāya* at the end of the work. (Vol. iii. of "Phayre MS.;" also *Cullavagga*, ix. 1, 4.)

(<sup>5</sup>) Quite right again. But to live "like he lived himself" one has to remain *as an ascetic* among the multitudes, or the *world*, for 45 years. This argument therefore, goes directly against our correspondent's main idea. That against which we protested in the criticized article was not the *ascetic life*, *i.e.*, the life of one entirely divorced, morally and mentally, from the world, the ever-changing *maya*, with its false deceptive pleasures, but the life of a *hermit*, useless to all and as useless to himself, in the long run; at any rate *entirely selfish*. We believe we rightly understand our learned critic in saying that the point of his letter lies in the appeal to the teaching and practice of the Lord Gautama Buddha in support of withdrawal and isolation from the world, as contrasted with an opposite course of conduct. And here it is where his mistake lies and he opens himself to a severer and more just criticism than that he would inflict on us.

The Lord Gautama was never a *hermit*, save during the first six years of his ascetic life, the time it took him to enter fully "on the Path." In the "Supplementary account of the three religions" (*San-Kiea-yi-su*) it is stated that in the *seventh* year of his exercises of abstinence and solitary meditation, Buddha thought, "I had better eat, lest the heretics should say that Nirvana is attained in famishing the body." Then he ate, sat for his transformation for six more days and on the seventh day of the second month obtained his first *Samadhi*. Then, having "attained the perfect view of the highest truth," he arose and went to Benares where he delivered his first discourses. From that time forward for nearly half a century, he *remained in the world*, teaching the world salvation. His first disciples were nearly all Upasakas (lay

Against this cannot be brought forward, that these are only the teachings of the Hinayana system and that perhaps the Mahayana of the Northern Buddhists is the only right one; for this latter lays even more stress than the former on the *self-improvement* and continued *retirement* from the world of the bhikshu, *until* he has reached the perfection of a Buddha. True, the Mahayana system says, that not *every* Arahant has already attained highest perfection; it distinguishes Cravanas, Pratyekabuddhas and Bodhisattvas, of whom the

latter only are considered the true spiritual sons of the Buddha, who are to be Buddhas themselves in their final future life and who have already realised the highest state of ecstasy, the Bodhi state, which is next to Nirvana.

Until a bhikshu or arhat has sufficiently progressed in perfection and wisdom, “playing at” Buddha and fixing himself up as an example or as a teacher to the world, is likely not only to throw him entirely off his path, but also to cause annoyance to those who *are* truly qualified for such work and who *are* fit to serve as ideal examples for others. None of *us* is a Buddha, and I do not know which of us might be a Bodhisattva; not everyone *can* be one, and not everyone was by the Buddha himself expected to *become* one, as is clearly and repeatedly expressed in the Saddharma Pundarika, the principal Mahayana work.<sup>6</sup> Never brothers), the neophytes being permitted to continue in their positions in social life and not even required to join the monastic community. And those who did, were generally sent by the Master, to travel and proselytize, instructing in the doctrine of the four miseries all those with whom they met.

(<sup>6</sup>) Our correspondent is too well read in Buddhist *Sutras* not to be aware of the existence of the esoteric system taught *precisely* in the *Yogacharya* or the contemplative Mahayana schools. And in that system the hermit or yogi life, except for a few years of preliminary teaching, *is strongly objected to* and called selfishness. Witness Buddha in those superb pages of *Light of Asia* (Book the Fifth) when arguing with and reprimanding the self-torturing Yogis, whom, “sadly eyeing,” the Lord asks:

“ . . . Wherefore add ye ills to life  
Which is so evil?”

When told in answer that they stake brief agonies to gain the larger joys of Nirvana, what does He say? This:

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the less, admitting for argument’s sake, that we were somehow fit to serve as specimen sages for “the world” and to improve “humanity”—now what *can* and what *ought* we to do then?

We certainly can have nothing to do with humanity in the sense of the "world," nothing with *worldly affairs* and *their* improvement. What else should we do, than to be "*profondément indifferents*" to them, to "*fuir et désertter*" them? Is not this "army" which we are deserting, just that "humanity" which the Dhammapada rightly terms "the fools"; and is it not just that "worldly life" which our Lord taught us to quit? What else should we strive at then but to take "refuge against re-incarnation," refuge with the Buddha, his dharma and his sangha!

"Yet if they last  
A myriad years . . . they fade at length,  
Those joys . . . Speak! Do your Gods endure  
For ever, brothers?"  
"Nay," the Yogis said,  
"Only great Brahm endures; the Gods but live."

Now if our correspondent understood as he should, these lines rendered in blank verse, yet word for word as in the *Sutras*, he would have a better idea of the esoteric teaching than he now has; and, having understood it, he would not oppose what we said; for not only was self-torture, selfish solicitude, and life in the jungle simply for one's own salvation condemned in the *Mahayana* (in the real esoteric system, not the mutilated translations he reads) but even *renunciation of Nirvana for the sake of mankind* is preached therein. One of its fundamental laws is, that ordinary morality is insufficient to deliver one from rebirth; one has to practise the six Paramitas or cardinal virtues for it: 1. Charity, 2. Chastity, 3. Patience, 4. Industry, 5. Meditation, 6. Ingenuousness (or openness of heart, sincerity). And how can a *hermit* practise charity or industry if he runs away from man? Bodhisattvas, who, having fulfilled all the conditions of Buddhahood, have the right to forthwith enter Nirvana, prefer instead, out of unlimited pity for the suffering ignorant world, to renounce this state of bliss and become *Nirmanakayas*. They don the *Sambhogakaya* (the invisible body) in order to serve mankind, *i.e.*, to *live a sentient life after death* and suffer immensely at the sight of human miseries (most of which, being Karmic, they are not at liberty to relieve) for the sake of having a chance of inspiring a few with the desire of learning the truth and thus saving themselves. (By the bye, all that Schlagintweit and others have written about the Nirmanakaya

body is erroneous.) Such is the true meaning of the Mahayana teaching. "I believe that not all the Buddhas enter Nirvana," says, among other things, the disciple of the Mahayana school in his address to "the Buddhas (or Budhisattvas) of confession"—referring to this secret teaching.

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(7) The quotation with which our correspondent heads his letter *does not* bear the interpretation he puts upon it. No one acquainted with the spirit of the metaphors used in Buddhist philosophy would read it as Mr. Hübbe Schleiden does. The man advised to walk "like a king who has left his conquered country behind," implies that he who has conquered his passions and for whom worldly *maya* exists no longer, need not lose his time in trying to convert those who will not believe in him, but had better leave them alone to their Karma; but it certainly does not mean that they are fools intellectually. Nor does it imply that the disciples should leave the world; "Our Lord" taught us as much as "the Lord Jesus" did, the "Lord Krishna" and other "Lords" all "Sons of God"—to quit the "worldly" life, not *men*, least of all suffering, ignorant Humanity. But surely neither, the Lord Gautama Buddha less than any one of the above enumerated, would have taught us the monstrous and selfish doctrine of remaining "*profondément indifferents*" to the woes and miseries of mankind, or to *desert* those who cry daily and hourly for help to us, more favoured than they. This is an outrageously selfish and cruel system of life, by whomsoever adopted! It is neither Buddhistic, nor Christian, nor theosophical, but the nightmare of a doctrine of the worst schools of Pessimism, such as would be probably discountenanced by Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann themselves!

Our critic sees in the "army" of Humanity—those "fools" that the *Dhammapada* alludes to. We are sorry to find him calling himself *names*, as we suppose he still belongs to Humanity, whether he likes it or not. And if he tells us in the exuberance of his modesty that he is quite prepared to fall under the flattering category, then we answer that no true Buddhist ought, agreeably to the Dhammapadic injunctions, to accept "companionship" with him. This does not promise him a very brilliant future with "the Buddha, his dharma and his Sangha." To call the whole of Humanity "fools" is a risky thing, anyhow; to treat as such that portion of mankind which groans and suffers under the

burden of its national and individual Karma, and refuse it, under this pretext, help and sympathy—is positively revolting. He who does not say with the Master: “Mercy alone opens the gate to save the whole race of mankind” is unworthy of that Master.

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But we further think, that the Buddha—as in every other respect—was quite right also on this point, even if one considers it as a scientist, as an historian or as a psychologist, not as a bhikshu. What real and essential improvement of the “world” can be made? Perhaps in carrying out socialistic problems a state might be arrived at, where every human individual would be sufficiently cared for, so that he *could* addit more *spare* time to his spiritual self-improvement if he *wished* to do so; but if he does *not wish* to improve *himself*, the best social organization will not make or help him do so. On the contrary, my own experience, at least, is just the reverse. The spiritually or rather mystically highest developed living human individual I know is a poor common weaver and moreover consumptive, who was until lately in such a position employed in a cotton-mill, that he was as much treated as a dog, like most labourers are, by their joint-stock employers. Still this man is in his inner life quite independent of his worldly misery; his heavenly or rather divine peace and satisfaction is at any time his refuge, and no one can rob him of that. He fears no death, no hunger, no pain, no want, no injustice, no cruelty!<sup>8</sup>

You will concede, I suppose, that Karma is not originated by external causes, but only by each individual for himself. Anyone who has made himself fit for and worthy of a good opportunity, will surely find it; and if you put another unworthy one into the very best of circumstances, he will not avail himself of them properly; they will rather serve *him* to draw him down into the mire which is his delight.

But perhaps you reply: it is, nevertheless, our duty to create

(<sup>8</sup>) And yet this man lives *in*, and with the world, which fact does not prevent his *inner* “Buddhaship”; *nor* shall he ever be called a “deserter” and a coward, epithets which he would richly deserve had he abandoned his wife and family, instead of working *for them*, not for his own “dear” self.



as many good opportunities as we can, for humanity in general, that all those who are worthy of them, might find them all the sooner. Quite right! we fully agree and we are certainly doing our best in this respect. But will this improve the *spiritual* welfare of "humanity"? Never, not by an atom, we think. Humanity, as a *whole*, will always remain comparatively the same "fools," which they have always been. Suppose we had succeeded in establishing an ideal organization of mankind, do you think these "fools" would be any the wiser by it, or any the more satisfied and happy?<sup>9</sup> Certainly not, they would always invent new wants, new pretensions, new claims; the "world" will for ever go on striving for "worldly perfection" only. Our present social organization is greatly improved on the system of the middle-ages: still, is our present time any the happier, any the more satisfied than our ancestors have been at the time of the Niebelunge or of King Arthur? I think, if there has been any change in satisfaction, it was for the worse; our present time is more greedy and less content than any former age. Whoever expects his *self*-improvement by means of any *world*-improvement or any external means and causes, has yet to be sorely undeceived; and happy for him if this experience will come to him before the *end* of his present life!

A very clever modern philosopher has invented the theory that the best plan to get rid of this misery of the "world," would be our giving ourselves up to it the best we could, in order to hasten this evil process to its early end.—Vain hope! Avidya is as endless as it is beginningless. A universe has a beginning and has an end, but others will begin and end after it, just like one day follows the other; and as there has been an endless series of worlds before, thus will there be an endless series afterwards. Causality can never have had a beginning nor can it have an end. And every "world," that will ever be, will always be "world," that is pain and "evil."<sup>10</sup>

(<sup>9</sup>) This is no business of ours, but that of their respective Karma. On this principle we should have to deny to every starving wretch a piece of bread, because, forsooth, he will be just as hungry tomorrow?

(<sup>10</sup>) And therefore, *Sauve qui peut*, [Save himself who can], is our correspondent's motto? Had the—

All Honoured, Wisest, Best, most Pitiful,

## The Teacher of Nirvana, and the Law

taught the heartless principle *Après moi le déluge*, I do not think that the learned editor of the Sphinx would have had much of a chance of being converted to Buddhism as he is now. Very true that his Buddhism seems to be no better than the exoteric dry and half-broken rind, of European fabrication, of that grand fruit of altruistic mercy, and pity for all that lives—real Eastern Buddhism and especially its esoteric doctrines.

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Therefore, like Karma, also *deliverance*, redemption or salvation (from the world) can never be any otherwise than “*personal*,” or let us rather say “*individual*.” The world, of course, can never be delivered from itself, from the “*world*,” from pain and evil. And *no one* can be delivered therefrom by anyone else. —You certainly do not teach vicarious atonement! Or, *can* anyone save his neighbour? Can one apple make ripe another apple hanging next to it?<sup>11</sup>

Now what else can we do but live the “*happy life*” of bhikshus without wants, without pretensions, without desires? And if your good example calls or draws to us others who seek for the same happiness, then we try to teach them the best we can. But this is another rather doubtful question to us! Not only are we not properly fit to teach, but if we were, we require proper persons to be taught, persons who are not only willing, but who are also fit to listen to us.<sup>12</sup>

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(<sup>11</sup>) No; but the apple can either screen its neighbour from the sun, and, depriving it of its share of light and heat, prevent its ripening, or sharing with it the dangers from worms and the urchin’s hand, thus diminish that danger by one half. As to Karma this is again a misconception. There is such a thing as a *national*, besides a personal or *individual* Karma in this world. But our correspondent seems to have either never heard of it, or misunderstood once more, in his own way.

(<sup>12</sup>) *Fais que dois, advienne que pourra* [One should do what is to be done, happen what may]. When did the Lord Buddha make a preliminary selection in his audiences? Did he not, agreeably to allegory and History, preach and convert demons and gods, bad and good men? Dr. Hübbe Schleiden seems more Catholic than the Pope, more prim than an old-fashioned English

In spite of all these difficulties and quite conscious of our own incompetency, we nevertheless venture now to publish books and journals, in which we try to explain Indian religio-philosophy to the best of our understanding. Thus every one who has eyes may read it, and who has ears may hear it—if his good Karma is ripening! What else do you expect *us agnams* to do?<sup>13</sup> Are we not rather to be blamed already, that we undertake such work, for which we—*not* being Buddhas, nor even Bodhisattvas—are as badly qualified as a recruit is fit to serve as general field-marshal. And if you cannot find fault with us, can you say that those “yogis” or “saints” whom you seem to blame in your above passage, were in a better position and could have done more? If, however, they were, *what* ought they to have done?

We are fully aware that a true Buddhist and a sage, or—if you like—theosophist, must always be every inch an *altruist*. And when we are acting altruistically, it is perhaps no bad sign in regard to what we someday might *become*; but everything at its proper time: where competency does not keep pace with altruism in development and in display, it might do more harm than good. Thus we feel even not quite sure whether our conscience ought not to blame us for our well-intended, but pert work; and the only excuse we can find for our thus giving way to the prompt-house-wife, and certainly more squeamish than Lord Buddha ever was. “Teach vicarious atonement?” certainly we do not. But it is safer (and more modest at any rate) to make too much of one’s neighbours and fellow-men than to look at every one as on so much dirt under one’s feet. If I am a fool, it is no reason why I should see a fool in everyone else. We leave to our critic the difficult task of discerning who is, and who *is not* fit to listen to us, and, in the absence of positive proof, prefer postulating that every man has a responsive chord in his nature that will vibrate and respond to words of kindness and of truth.

(<sup>13</sup>) We expect you not to regard everyone else as an “*agnam*”—*if* by this word an *ignoramus* is meant. To help to deliver the world from the curse of *Avidya* (ignorance) we have only to learn from those who know more than we do, and teach those who know less. This is just the object we have in view in spreading theosophical literature and trying to explain “Indian *religio*-philosophy.”

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feelings of our heart is, that those persons who really might be properly qualified, do *not* come forward, do *not* help us, do *not* do this evidently necessary work!<sup>14</sup>

Yours respectfully,

Hübbe-Schleiden

Neuhausen, *Munich*, June 1st, 1889

(<sup>14</sup>) An apocalyptic utterance this. I think, however, that I dimly understand. Those who are “properly qualified, do *not* come forward, do *not* help us, do *not* do this evidently necessary work.” Don’t they? How *does* our pessimistic correspondent *know*? I “guess” and “surmise” that they do, and very much so. For had the T.S. and its members been left to their own fate and Karma, there would not be much of it left today, under the relentless persecutions, slander, scandals, purposely set on foot, and the malicious hatred of our enemies—*open* and *secret*.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

*Lucifer*, July, 1889

## WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR FELLOW-MEN?

### CORRESPONDENCE

You have obliged my friends and myself by answering or annotating my letter to you in your number of July 15th. Will you allow us to continue this discussion? Several letters which I have received in consequence of this correspondence not only from Germany, but also from England,<sup>1</sup> make it appear likely that your readers on the other side of the Channel also take an interest in this all-important question. As the purport of my former communication has been misunderstood, I have now made this question the title of my present letter, in order to emphasize the point. My friends and I did

not ask: Shall we do *anything* for our fellow-men or *nothing*? but: *What* shall we do for them?

You agree with us—as your note 4 to my last letter (pg. 431) unmistakably shows—that the ultimate Goal which the mystic or the occultist have to strive for, is not perfection in existence (the “world”) but *absolute being*: that is, we have to strive for deliverance from all existence in any of the three worlds or planes of existence. The difference of opinions, however, is this: Shall we now, nevertheless, assist all our fellow-men indiscriminately in their *worldly* affairs; shall we occupy ourselves with their national and individual Karma, in order to help them to improve the “world” and to live happily *in* it; shall we strive *with* them to realize socialistic problems, to further science, arts and industries, to teach them cosmology, the evolution of man and of the universe, etc., etc.,—or on the other hand, shall we only do the best we can to show our fellow-men the road of wisdom that will lead them *out* of the world and as straight as possible towards their acknowledged goal of absolute existence (*Para-Nirvana, Moksha, Atma*)? Shall we consequently only work for those who are willing to get rid of all individual existence and yearning to be delivered from all selfishness, from all strivings, who are longing only for eternal peace?

*Answer.* As the undersigned accepts for her views and walk in life no authority dead or living, no system of philosophy or religion but one—*namely, the esoteric teachings of ethics and philosophy of those*

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<sup>1</sup> Perchance also, from Madras? —[ED.]

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*she calls “Masters”*—answers have, therefore, to be given strictly in accordance with these teachings. My first reply then is: Nothing of that which is conducive to help man, collectively or individually, to live—not “happily”—but less *unhappily* in this world, ought to be indifferent to the Theosophist-Occultist. It is no concern of his whether his help benefits a man in his *worldly* or *spiritual* progress; his first duty is to be ever ready to help if he can, without stopping to philosophize. It is because our clerical and lay Pharisees too often offer a Christian dogmatic tract, instead of the simple bread

of life to the wretches they meet—whether these are starving physically or morally —that pessimism, materialism and despair win with every day more ground in our age. Weal and woe, or happiness and misery, are relative terms. Each of us finds them according to his or her predilections; one in worldly, the other in intellectual pursuits, and no one system will ever satisfy all. Hence, while one finds his pleasure and rest in family joys, another in “Socialism” and the third in a “longing only for eternal peace,” there may be those who are starving for truth, in every department of the science of nature, and who consequently are yearning to learn the esoteric views about “cosmology, the evolution of man and of the Universe.” —H.P.B.

According to our opinion the latter course is the right one for a mystic; the former one we take to be a statement of our views. Your notes to my former letter are quite consistent with this view, for in your note 3 you say: “Paranirvana is reached only when the Manvantara has closed and during the ‘night’ of the universe or Pralaya.” If the final aim of paranirvana *cannot* be attained individually, but only solidarily by the whole of the present humanity, it stands to reason, that in order to arrive at our consummation we have not only to do the best we can for the suppression of our own self, but that we have to work first for the world-process to hurry all the worldly interests of Hottentots, and the European vivisectioners, having sufficiently advanced to see their final goal of salvation, are ready to join us in striving towards that deliverance.

*Answer.* According to our opinion as there is no essential difference between a “mystic” and a “Theosophist-Esotericist” or Eastern Occultist, the above cited course is *not* “the right one for a mystic.” One, who while “yearning to be delivered from all selfishness” directs at the same time all his energies only to that portion of humanity which is of his own way of thinking, shows himself not only very *selfish* but is guilty of prejudice and partiality. When saying that *Para*, or *Parinirvana* rather, is reached only at the Manvantaric close, I never meant to imply the “planetary” but the whole *Cosmic* Manvantara, *i.e.*, at the end of “an *age*” of Brahmâ, not one “Day.” For

the terrestrial *mankind* but that of every “man” or “*manu*-bearing” globe, star, sun or planet) will reach “solidarily” Parinirvana, and even then it will not be the whole mankind, but only those portions of the mankinds which will have made themselves ready for it. Our correspondent’s remark about the “Hottentots” and “European vivisectors” seems to indicate to my surprise that my learned Brother has in his mind only our little unprogressed *Terrene* mankind?—H.P.B.

*You* have the great advantage over us, that you speak with absolute certainty on all these points, in saying: “this is the esoteric doctrine,” and “such is the teaching of my masters.” *We* do not think that we have any such certain warrant for *our* belief; on the contrary, we want to learn, and are ready to receive, wisdom, wherever it may offer itself to us. We know of no authority or divine revelation; for, as far as we accept Vedantic or Buddhistic doctrines, we only do so because we have been convinced by the reasons given; or, where the reasons prove to be beyond our comprehension, but where our intuition tells us: this, nevertheless, is likely to be true, we try our best to make our understanding follow our intuition.

*Answer.* I speak “with absolute certainty” only so far as my own *personal* belief is concerned. Those who have not the *same warrant* for their belief as I have, would be very credulous and foolish to accept it on blind faith. Nor does the writer believe any more than her correspondent and his friends in any “authority” let alone “divine revelation”! Luckier in this than they are, I need not even rely in this as they do on my *intuition*, as there is no *infallible* intuition. But what I do believe in is (1), the unbroken oral teachings revealed by living *divine* men during the infancy of mankind to the elect among men; (2), that it has reached us *unaltered*; and (3) that the Masters are thoroughly versed in the science based on such uninterrupted teaching.—H.P.B.

In reference, therefore, to your note 5, it was not, nor is it, our intention “to inflict any criticism on you”; on the contrary we should never waste time with opposing anything we think wrong; we leave that to its own fate; but we try rather to get at positive information or arguments, wherever we think they may offer themselves. Moreover, we have never denied, nor shall we ever forget,

that we owe you great and many thanks for your having originated the present movement and for having made popular many striking ideas hitherto foreign to European civilization. We

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should now feel further obliged to you, if you (or your masters) will give us some reasons, which could make it appear likely to us, why paranirvana could *not* be attained by any *jiva* at any time (*a*), and why the final goal can only be reached solidarily

*Answer (a)*. There is some confusion here. I never said that no *jiva* could attain Parinirvana, nor meant to infer that “the final goal can only be reached solidarily” by our present humanity. This is to attribute to me an ignorance to which I am not prepared to plead guilty, and in his turn my correspondent has misunderstood me. But as every system in India teaches several kinds of *pralayas* as also of Nirvanic or “Moksha” states, Dr. Hübbe Schleiden has evidently confused the *Prakrita* with the *Naimittika* Pralaya, of the Visishtadwaita Vedantins. I even suspect that my esteemed correspondent has imbibed more of the teachings of this particular sect of the three Vedantic schools than he had bargained for; that his “Brahmin Guru” in short, of whom there are various legends coming to us from Germany, has coloured his pupil far more with the philosophy of Sri Ramanujacharya, than with that of Sri Sankaracharya. But this is a trifle connected with circumstances beyond his control and of a Karmic character. His aversion to “Cosmology” and other sciences including theogony, and as contrasted with “Ethics” pure and simple, dates also from the period he was taken in hand by the said learned guru. The latter expressed it personally to us, after his sudden *salto mortali* from esotericism—too difficult to comprehend and therefore to teach,—to *ethics* which any one who knows a Southern language or two of India, can impart by simply translating his texts from philosophical works with which the country abounds. The result of this is, that my esteemed friend and correspondent talks Visishtadwaitism as unconsciously as M. Jourdain talked “prose,” while believing he argues from the Mahayâna and Vedantic standpoint—pure and simple. If otherwise, I place myself under correction. But



how can a Vedantin speak of *Jivas* as though these were *separate* entities and independent of Jivatma the one universal soul! This is a purely Visishtadwaita doctrine which asserts that Jivatma is different in each individual from that in another individual? He asks “why parinirvana could *not* be attained by any jiva at any time.” We answer that if by “jiva” he means the “Higher Self” or the *divine ego* of man, only—then we say it may reach Nirvana, not Parinirvana, but even this, only when one becomes *Jivanmukta*, which does *not* mean “at any time.” But if he understands by “Jiva” simply the *one life* which, the Visishtadwaitas say is contained in every particle of matter, separating it from the *sarira* or body that contains it, then, we do not understand at all what he means. For, we do not agree that Parabrahm only *pervades* every Jiva, as well as each particle of matter, but say that Parabrahm is inseparable from every Jiva, as from every particle of matter since it is the *absolute*, and that it is in truth that Jivatma itself *crystallized*—for want of a better word. Before I answer his questions, therefore, I must know whether he means by Parinirvana,

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the same as I do, and of which of the *Pralayas* he is talking. Is it of the *Prakrita* Maha Pralaya, which takes place every 311,040,000,000,000 years; or of the *Naimittika* Pralaya occurring after each *Brahma Kalpa* equal to 1,000 Maha Yugas, or which? Convincing reasons can be given then only when two disputants understand each other. I speak from the esoteric standpoint almost identical with the Adwaita interpretation; Dr. Hübbe Schleiden argues from that of—let him say *what* system, for, lacking omniscience, I cannot tell.—H.P.B.

by the whole of the humanity living at present. In order to further this discussion, I will state here some of the reasons which appear to speak against this view, and I will try to further elucidate some of the consequences of acting in accordance with each of these two views:

1. The unselfishness of the Altruist has a very different character according to which of the two views he takes. To begin with *our* view, the true Mystic who believes that he can attain deliverance from the world and from his individuality independent of the Karma of any other entities, or of the whole humanity, is an Altruist, because and so far as he is a monist, that is to say, on account of the *tat twam asi*. Not the form or the individuality, but the *being* of all

entities is the same and is his own; in proportion as he feels his own *avidya*, *agnana* or unwisdom, so does he feel that of other entities, and has compassion with them on that

(b). To feel “compassion” without an adequate practical result ensuing from it is not to show oneself an “Altruist” but the reverse. Real self-development on the esoteric lines is *action*. “Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes *an action* in a deadly sin.” (*Vide The Two Paths* in the “Voice of the Silence,” p. 31.)—H.P.B.

account, (b) To take now the other view: Is not the altruism of an occultist who sees himself tied to the Karma of all his fellow-men, and who, on that account, labours for and with them, rather an egotistical one? For is not at the bottom of his “unselfishness” the knowledge that he cannot work out his own salvation at any lesser price? The escape from selfishness for such a man is self-sacrifice for the “world”; for the mystic, however, it is self-sacrifice to the eternal, to absolute being. Altruism is certainly considered one of the first requirements of any German Theosopher —we can or will not speak for others—but we are rather inclined to think that altruism had never been demanded in this country in the former sense (of self-sacrifice *for* the “world”), but only in the latter sense of self-sacrifice to the eternal.(c)

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(c). An Occultist does not feel “himself tied to the Karma of all his fellow men,” no more than one man feels his legs motionless because of the paralysis of another man’s legs. But this does not prevent the fact that the legs of both are evolved from, and contain the same ultimate essence of the one life. Therefore, there can be no *egotistical* feeling in his labours for the less favoured brother. Esoterically, there is no other *way, means* or *method* of sacrificing oneself “to the eternal” than by working and sacrificing oneself for the collective spirit of Life, embodied in, and (for us) represented in its highest divine aspect by Humanity alone. Witness the *Nirmanakâya*,—the sublime doctrine which no Orientalist understands to this day but which Dr. Hübbe Schleiden can find in the II<sup>nd</sup> and III<sup>rd</sup> Treatises in the “*Voice of the Silence*.” Naught else shows forth the eternal; and in no other way than this can any mystic or occultist *truly* reach the eternal, whatever the Orientalists and the vocabularies of Buddhist terms may say, for

the real meaning of the *Trikâya*, the triple power of Buddha's embodiment, and of Nirvana in its triple negative and positive definitions has ever escaped them.

If our correspondent believes that by calling himself "theosopher" in preference to "theosophist" he escapes thereby any idea of *sophistry* connected with his views, then he is mistaken. I say it in all sincerity, the opinions he expresses in his letters are in my humble judgment the very fruit of sophistry. If I have misunderstood him, I stand under correction. — H.P.B.

2. It is a misunderstanding, if you think in your note 5, that we are advocating entire "withdrawal or isolation from the world." We do so as little as yourself, but only recommend an "ascetic life," as far as it is necessary to prepare anyone for those tasks imposed upon him by following the road to *final* deliverance from the world. But the consequence of your view seems to lead to joining the world in a *worldly* life, and until good enough reasons are given for it, we do not approve of this conduct. That we should have to join our fellow men in all their *worldly* interests and pursuits, in order to assist them and hasten them on to the solidary and common goal, is contrary to our intuition. (a) To answer, (a) It is difficult to find out how the view expressed in my last answer can lead to such an inference, or where have I advised my brother Theosophists to join men "in all their *worldly* interests and pursuits!" Useless to quote here again that which is said in note I, for every one can turn to the passage and see that I have said nothing of the kind. For one precept I can give a dozen. "Not nakedness, not plaited hair, not dirt, not fasting or lying on the earth . . . not sitting motionless, can purify one who has not overcome desires," says *Dhammapada* (chap. I, 141). "Neither abstinence from fish or flesh, nor going naked, nor the shaving of the head, nor matted hair, etc., etc., will cleanse a man not free from delusions" *Amagandha Sutta* (7, II). This is what I meant. Between salvation through dirt and stench, like St. Labro and some Fakirs, and worldly life with an eye to every interest, there is a long way. Strict asceticism in the midst of the world, is more meritorious than avoiding those who do not think as we do, and thus losing an opportunity of showing them the truth. — H.P.B.

strive for the deliverance *from* the world by furthering and favouring the world-process seems rather a round-about method. Our inclination leads us to retire from all *worldly* life, and to work apart—from a monastery or otherwise— together with and for all *those* fellow-men who are striving for the same goal of deliverance, and who are willing to rid themselves of all karma, their own as well as that of others. We would assist also *all* those who have to remain in worldly life, but who are already looking forward to the same goal of release, and who join us in doing their best to attain this end. We make no secret of our aims or our striving; we lay our views and our reasons before *anyone* who will hear them, and we are ready to receive amongst us *anyone* who will *honestly* join us. (b) Above all, however, we are doing

(b). So do we. And if, not all of us live up to our highest ideal of wisdom, it is only because we are *men* not gods, after all. But there is one thing, however, we never do (those in the esoteric circle, at any rate): *we set ourselves as examples to no men*, for we remember well that precept in Amagandha Sutta that says: “Self-praise, disparaging others, conceit, evil communications (denunciations), these constitute (moral) uncleanness”; and again, as in the *Dhammapada*, “The fault of others is easily perceived, but that of oneself is difficult to perceive; the faults of others one lays open as much as possible, but one’s own fault one hides, as a cheat hides the bad die from the gambler.” —H.P.B.

our best to live up to our highest ideal of wisdom; and perhaps the good example may prove to be more useful to our fellow-men than any organized propaganda of teaching.

By the bye, in your note you couple together *Schopenhauer* and *Eduard von Hartmann*. In this question, however, both are of opposite opinions. Schopenhauer, like most German mystics and theosophers, represents the views of Vedanta and (exoteric) Buddhism, that final salvation can, and can only, be individually attained independent of time and the karma of others. Hartmann, however, verges much more towards your opinion, for he does not believe in *individual* consummation and deliverance from the

Indian philosophy, an error, and demands of everyone as an altruistic duty to give himself up to the world-process, and to do his best in order to hasten its end. (He is the “clever modern philosopher” whom I have mentioned on page 435).(c)

(c). As I have never read von Hartmann, and know very little of Schopenhauer, nor do they interest me, I have permitted myself only to bring them forward as examples of the worst kind of pessimism; and you corroborate what I said, by what you state of Hartmann. If, however, as you say, Hartmann thinks “Indian philosophy an error,” then he cannot be said to *verge* toward *my* opinion, as I hold quite a contrary view. India might return the compliment with interest.—H.P.B.

3. There is, and can be, no doubt that Vedanta and (exoteric) Buddhism do not hold your view, but ours. Moreover, one could scarcely dispute that Lord Buddha—whatever esoteric doctrine he may have taught—founded monasteries, or that he favoured and assisted in doing so. Whether he expected all his disciples to become Bodhisattvas may be doubtful, but he certainly pointed out the “happy life” of a Bhikshu as the road to salvation; he expressly abstained from teaching cosmology or any worldly science; he never meddled with the worldly affairs of men, but every assistance he rendered them was entirely restricted to showing them the road to deliverance from existence. And just the same with Vedanta. It prohibits any attachment to worldly views and interests, or enquiries after cosmology or evolution *a fortiori* socialism and any other world-improvement. All this Vedanta calls *Agnana* (Buddhism: *Avidya*), while Gnana or wisdom—the only aim of a sage (*Gnani*)—is but the striving for the realization of the eternal (true reality, *Atma*).*(a)*

*Answer (a)*. It depends on what you call Vedanta—whether the Dwaita, the Adwaita, or the Visishtadwaita. That we differ from all these, is no news, and I have spoken of it repeatedly. Yet in the esotericism of the *Upanishads*, when correctly understood, and our esotericism, there will not be found much difference. Nor have I ever disputed any of the facts about Buddha as now brought forward; although these are facts from only his *exoteric* biography. Nor has he invented or drawn from his inner consciousness the philosophy he

taught, but only the method of his rendering it. Buddhism being simply esoteric *Bodhism* taught before him secretly in the *arcana* of the Brahminical temples, contains, of course, more than one doctrine of which the Lord Buddha never spoke of in public. But this shows

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in no way that he did not teach them to his Arhats. Again, between “attachment to worldly views or interests” and the study of Cosmology, which is *not* “a worldly science” however, there is an abyss. One pertains to religious and philosophical asceticism, the other is necessary for the study of *Occultism*—which is not Buddhistic, but universal. Without the study of cosmogony and theogony which teach the hidden value of every force in Nature and their direct correspondence to, and relation with, the forces in man (or the principles) no occult psychophysics or *knowledge of man as he truly is, is possible*. No one is forced to study esoteric philosophy unless he likes it, nor has anyone ever confused Occultism with Buddhism or Vedantism.—H.P.B.

*Agnani* (misprinted in the July number page 436: *agnam*) signified just the same as what is rendered by “fool” in the English translations of the Dhammapada and the Suttas. It is never understood “intellectually” and certainly does not mean an *ignoramus*, on the contrary, the scientists are rather more likely to be *agnanis* than any “uneducated” mystic. *Agnani* expresses always a relative notion. *Gnani* is anyone who is striving for the self-realization of the eternal; a *perfect gnani* is only the *jivanmukta*, but anyone who is on the road of development to this end may be (relatively) called *gnani*, while anyone who is less advanced is comparatively an *agnani*. As, however, every *gnani* sees the ultimate goal *above* himself, he will call himself an *agnani*, until he has attained *jivanmukta*; moreover, no true mystic will ever call any fellow-man a “fool” in the intellectual sense of the word, for he lays very little stress on intellectuality. To him anyone is a “fool” only in so far as he cares for (worldly) existence and strives for anything else than wisdom, deliverance, paranirvana. And this turn of mind is entirely a question of the “will” of the individuality. The “will” of the *agnani* is carrying him from spirit into matter (descending arch of the cycle), while the “will” of the *gnani* disentangles him from matter and makes him soar up towards “spirit” and out of all existence. This question of

overcoming the “dead point” in the circle is by no means one of intellectuality; it is quite likely that a sister of mercy or a common labourer may have turned the corner while the Bacons, Goethes, Humboldts, &c., may yet linger on the descending side of existence tied down to it by their individual wants and desires.(b)

(b). *Agnam*, instead of *agnani* was of course a printer’s mistake. With such every Journal and Magazine abounds, in Germany, I suppose, as much as in England, and from which Lucifer is no more

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free than the *Sphinx*. It is the printer’s and the proof-reader’s Karma. But it is a worse mistake, however, to translate *Agnani* by “fool,” all the Beals, Oldenbergs, Webers, and Hardys, to the contrary. Gnana (or, Jnâna, rather) is Wisdom certainly, but even more, for it is the spiritual knowledge of things divine, unknown to all but those who attain it—and which saves the *Jivanmuktas* who have mastered both Karmayoga and Jnânayoga. Hence, if all those who have not jnâna (or gnana) at their fingers’ end, are to be considered “fools” this would mean that the whole world save a few Yogis is composed of fools, which would be *out-carlyleing* Carlyle in his opinion of his countrymen. *Ajnâna*, in truth, means simply “ignorance of the true Wisdom,” or literally, “Wisdomless” and not at all “fool.” To explain that the word “fool” is “never understood intellectually” is to say nothing, or worse, an Irish bull, as, according to every etymological definition and dictionary, a *fool* is one who is “deficient in intellect” and “destitute of reason.” Therefore, while thanking the kind doctor for the trouble he has taken to explain so minutely the vexed Sanskrit term, I can do so only in the name of Lucifer’s readers, not for myself, as I knew all he says, *minus* his risky new definition of “fool” and *plus* something else, probably as early as on the day when he made his first appearance into this world of *Maya*. No doubt, neither Bacon, Humboldt, nor even the great Hæckel himself, the “light of Germany,” could ever be regarded as “gnanis”; but no more could any European I know of, however much he may have rid himself of all “individual wants and desires.” —H.P.B.

4. As we agree, that all existence, in fact, the whole world and the whole of its evolutionary process, its joys and evils, its gods and its devils,

are *Maya* (illusion) or erroneous conception of the true reality: how can it appear to us worth while to assist and to promote this process of misconception?(a)

*Answer (a)*. Precisely, because the term *maya*, just like that of “agnana” in your own words—expresses only a *relative* notion. The world . . . “its joys and evils, its gods and devils,” and men to boot, are undeniably, when compared with that awful reality *everlasting eternity*, no better than the productions and tricks of *maya*, illusion. But there the line of demarcation is drawn. So long as we are incapable of forming even an approximately correct conception of this *inconceivable* eternity, for us, who are just as much an *illusion* as anything else outside of that eternity, the sorrows and misery of that greatest of all illusions—human life in the universal *mahamaya*—for us, I say, such sorrows and miseries are a vivid and a very sad reality. A shadow from your body, dancing on the white wall, is a reality so long as it is there, for yourself and all who can see it; because a reality is just as relative as an illusion. And if one “illusion” does not help another “illusion” of the same kind to study and recognise the true nature of Self, then, I fear, very few of us will ever get out from the clutches of *maya*.—H.P.B.

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5. Like all world-existence, time and causality also are only *Maya* or—as Kant and Schopenhauer have proved beyond contradiction—are only *our* conditioned notions, *forms* of *our* intellection. Why then should any moment of time, or one of our own unreal forms of thought, be more favourable to the attainment of paranirvana than any other? To this paranirvana, Atma, or true reality, any manvantara is just as unreal as any pralaya. And this is the same with regard to *causality*, as with respect to *time*, from whichever point of view you look at it. If from that of absolute reality, all causality and karma are unreal, and to realize this *unreality* is the secret of deliverance from it. But even if you look at it from the *agnana-view*, that is to say, taking existence for a reality, there can never (in “time”) be an end—nor can there have been a beginning—of causality. It makes, therefore, no difference whether any world is in pralaya or not; also Vedanta rightly says that during any pralaya the *karana*



*sharira* (causal body, agnana) of Ishvara and of all jivas, in fact, of all existence, is continuing. (b) And how could this be other-

(b). This is again a *Visishtadwaita* interpretation, which we do not accept in the esoteric school. We cannot say, as they do that while the gross bodies alone perish, the *sukshma* particles, which they consider uncreated and indestructible and the only real things, alone remain. Nor do we believe any Vedantin of the Sankaracharya school would agree in uttering such a heresy. For this amounts to saying that *Manomaya* Kosha, which corresponds to what we call *Manas*, mind, with its volitious feelings and even *Kamarupa* the vehicle of the lower *manas*, also survives during *pralaya*. See page 185 in *Five Years of Theosophy* and ponder over the three classifications of the human principles. Thence it follows that the *Karana Sarira* (which means simply the *human Monad* collectively or the reincarnating ego), the “causal body” cannot continue; especially if, as you say, it is *agnana*, ignorance or the *wisdomless* principle, and even agreeably with your definition “a fool.” The idea alone of this “fool” surviving during any *pralaya*, is enough to make the hair of any Vedanta philosopher and even of a full blown Jivanmukta, turn grey, and thrust him right back into an “agnani” again. Surely as you formulate it, this must be a *lapsus calami*? And why should the *Karana Sarira* of Iswara let alone that of “all Jivas (!) be necessary during *pralaya* for the evolution of another universe? Iswara, whether as a personal god, or an *intelligent* independent principle, *per se*, every Buddhist whether esoteric or exoteric and orthodox, will reject; while some Vedantins would define him as Parabrahm *plus* maya (only, *i.e.*, a conception valid enough

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during the reign of maya, but not otherwise. That which remains during *pralaya* is the eternal potentiality of every condition of *Pragna* (consciousness) contained in that plane or *field* of consciousness, which the Adwaita calls *Chidakasan* and *Chinmatra* (abstract consciousness), which, being absolute, is therefore perfect *unconsciousness* — as a *true* Vedantin would say. — H.P.B.

wise? After the destruction of any universe in *pralaya*, must not another appear? Before our present universe must there not have been an infinite number of other universes? How could this be, if the cause of existence did not last through any *pralaya* as well as through any *kalpa*? And if so, why should

any pralaya be a more favourable moment for the attainment of paranirvana than any manvantara?

6. But if then one moment of time and one phase of causality were more favourable for this than any other: why should it just be *any* pralaya after a manvantara, not the end of the *maha-kalpa* or at least that of a *kalpa*. In any kalpa (of 4,320 millions of earthly years) there are 14 manvantaras and pralayas and in each maha-kalpa (of 311,040 milliards of earthly years) there are (36,000 X 14) 504,000 manvantaras and pralayas. Why is this opportunity of paranirvana offered just so often and not oftener, or not once only at the end of each universe. In other words, why can paranirvana only be obtained by spurts and in batches; why, if it cannot be attained by any individuality at its *own* time, why must one wait only for the whole of one's present fellow-humanity; why not also for all the animals, plants, amoebas and protoplasms, perhaps also for the minerals of our planet—and why not also for the entities on all the other stars of the universe?(a)

*Answer (a).* As Dr. Hübbe Schleiden objects in the form of questions to statements and arguments that have never been formulated by me, I have nothing to say to this. —H.P.B.

7. But, it appears, the difficulty lies somewhat deeper still. That which has to be overcome, in order to attain paranirvana, is the erroneous conception of separateness, the selfishness of individuality, the "thirst for existence" (*trishna, tanha*). It stands to reason, that this sense of individuality can only be overcome individually: How can this process be dependent on other individualities or anything else at all? Selfishness in the *abstract* which is the cause of all existence, in fact, *Agnana* and *Maya*, can never

WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR FELLOW-MEN?

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be *all together* removed and extinguished. Agnana is as endless as it is beginningless, and the number of jivas (atoms?) is absolutely infinite; if the jivas of a whole universe were to be extinguished in paranirvana, jivaship and agnana would not be lessened by one atom. In fact, both are mere unreality and misconception. Now, why should just one batch of humanity have to unite, in order to get rid each of his own misconception of reality?(b)

(b). Here again the only “unreality and misconception” I can perceive are his own. I am glad to find my correspondent so learned, and having made such wonderful progress since I saw him last some three years ago, when still in the fulness of his *agnana*; but I really cannot see what all his arguments refer to?—  
H.P.B.

Summing up, I will now give three instances of the difference in which, I think a Mystic or (exoteric) Buddhist, Bhikshu or Arhat, on the one side, and an occultist or theosophist on the other, would act, if both are fully consistent with their views and principles. Both will certainly use any opportunity which offers itself to do good to their fellow-men; but the good which they will try to do, will be of a different kind.

Supposing they meet a poor, starving wretch, with whom they share their only morsel of bread: the mystic will try to make the man understand that the body is only to be kept up, because that entity which lives in it has a certain spiritual destination, and that this destination is nothing less than getting rid of all existence, and, at the same time, of all wants and desires; that having to beg for one’s food is no real hardship, but might give a happier life than that of rich people with all their imaginary worries and pretensions, that, in fact, the life of a destitute who *is* nothing and who *has* nothing in the world, is the “happy life”—as Buddha and Jesus have shown—when it is coupled with the right aspiration to the eternal, the only true and unchangeable reality, the divine peace. If the mystic finds that the man’s heart is incapable of responding to any keynote of such true religiousness, he will leave him alone, hoping that, at some future time, he too will find out that all his worldly wants and desires are insatiable and unsatisfying, and that after all true and final happiness can only be found in striving for the eternal.—Not so the occultist. He will know that he himself *cannot* finally realise the eternal, until every other human individuality has likewise gone through all the worldly aspirations and has been weaned from them. He will,

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therefore, try to assist this poor wretch first in his worldly affairs; he will perhaps teach him some trade or handicraft by which he can earn his daily bread, or he will plan with him some socialistic scheme for bettering the worldly position of the poor.

*Answer.* Here the “Mystic” acts precisely as a “Theosophist or Occultist” of the Eastern school would. It is extremely interesting to learn where Dr. Hübbe Schleiden has studied “Occultists” of the type he is describing? If it is in Germany, then pitying the Occultist who *knows* “that he himself *cannot* realize the eternal” until every human soul has been weaned from “worldly aspirations” I would invite him to come to London where other Occultists who reside therein would teach him better. But then why not qualify the “Occultist” in such case and thus show his nationality? Our correspondent mentions with evident scorn, “Socialism” in this letter, as often as he does “Cosmology”? We have but two English Socialists, so far, in the T.S. of which two every Theosophist ought to be proud and accept them as his exemplar in practical Buddha- and Christ-like charity and virtues. Such socialists—two active altruists full of unselfish love and charity and ready to work for all that suffers and needs help—are decidedly worth ten thousand Mystics and other *Theosophers*, whether German or English, who talk instead of acting and sermonize instead of teaching. But let us take note of our correspondent’s second instance.—H.P.B.

Secondly, supposing further the mystic and the occultist meet two women, the one of the “Martha” sort, the other of the “Mary” character. The mystic will first remind both that everyone has, in the first instance, to do his or her duty conscientiously, be it a compulsory or a self-imposed duty. Whatever one has once undertaken and wherever he or she has contracted any obligation towards a fellow-being, this has to be fulfilled “up to the uttermost farthing.” But, on the other hand, the mystic will, just for this very reason, warn them against creating for themselves new attachments to the world and worldly affairs more than they find absolutely unavoidable. He will again try to direct the whole of their attention to their final goal and kindle in them every spark of high and genuine aspiration to the eternal.—Not so the occultist. He may also say all that the mystic has said and which fully satisfies “Mary”; as “Martha,” however, is not content with this and thinks the subject rather tedious and wearisome, he will have compassion with her worldliness and teach her some esoteric cosmology or speak to her of the possibilities of developing psychic powers and so on.

*Answer.* Is the cat out of the bag at last? I am asked to “oblige” our correspondent by answering questions, and instead of clear statements, I find no better than transparent hints against the working methods of the T.S.! Those who go against “esoteric cosmology” and the development of psychic powers are not forced to study either. But I have heard these objections four years ago, and they too, were started by a certain “Guru” we are both acquainted with, when that learned “Mystic” had had enough of Chelaship and suddenly developed the ambition of becoming a Teacher. They are stale.—H.P.B.

Thirdly, supposing our mystic and our occultist meet a sick man who applies to them for help. Both will certainly try to cure him the best they can. At the same time, both will use this opportunity to turn their patient’s mind to the eternal if they can; they will try to make him see that everything in the world is only the *just* effect of some cause, and that, as he is consciously suffering from his present illness, he himself *must* somewhere have consciously given the corresponding and adequate cause for his illness, either in his present or in any former life; that the only way of getting finally rid of all ills and evils is, not to create any more causes, but rather to abstain from all doing, to rid oneself of every avoidable want and desire, and in this way to lift oneself above all causality (karma). This, however, can only be achieved by putting good objects of aspiration into the place of the bad, the better object into that of the good, and the best into that of the better; directing, however, one’s whole attention to our highest goal of consummation and living in the eternal as much as we can, this is the *only* mode of thought that will *finally* deliver us from the imperfections of existence.

If the patient cannot see the force of this train of argument or does not like it, the mystic will leave him to his own further development, and to some future opportunity which might bring the same man near him again, but in a more favourable state of mind.

Not so the occultist. He will consider it his duty to stick to this man to whose Karma, as to that of everyone else, he is irremediably and unavoidably bound; he will not abandon him until he has helped him on to such an advanced state of true spiritual development that he begins to see his final goal and to aspire

to it “with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might.” In the meantime, however, the occultist will try to prepare him for that by helping him to arrange his worldly life in a manner as favourable to such an aspiration as possible. He will make him

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see that vegetarian or rather fruit-diet is the only food fully in accordance with human nature; he will teach him the fundamental rules of esoteric hygienics; he will show him how to make the right use of vitality (mesmerism), and as he does not feel any aspiration for the nameless and formless eternal, he will meanwhile make him aspire for esoteric knowledge and for occult powers.

Now, will you do us the great favour to show us reasons *why* the mystic is wrong and the occultist right, or why paranirvana should not be attained by any individuality and at any time, when its *own* karma has been burnt by *gnana* in *samadhi*, and independent of the karma of any other individual or that of humanity.

Yours sincerely,

Hübbe-Schleiden

Neuhaugen bei *München*, September, 1889

*Answer.* As no Occultist of my acquaintance would act in this supposed fashion no answer is possible. We theosophists, and especially your humble servant, are too occupied with our work to lose time at answering supposititious cases and fictions. When our prolific correspondent tells us *whom* he means under the name of the “Occultist” and *when* or *where* the latter has acted in that way, I will be at his service. Perhaps he means some Theosophist or rather member of the T.S. under this term? For I, at any rate, never met yet an “Occultist” of that description. As to the closing question I believe it was sufficiently answered in the earlier explanations of this reply.

Yours, as sincerely,

*Lucifer*, October, 1889

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## MY BOOKS

SOME time ago, a Theosophist, Mr. R—, was travelling by rail with an American gentleman, who told him how surprised he had been by his visit to our London Headquarters. He said that he had asked Mdme. Blavatsky what were the best Theosophical works for him to read, and had declared his intention of procuring *Isis Unveiled*, when to his astonishment she replied, "Don't read it, *it is all trash.*"

Now I did not say "trash" so far as I remember; but what I did say in substance was: "Leave it alone; *Isis* will not satisfy you. Of all the books I have put my name to, this particular one is, in literary arrangement, the worst and most confused." And I might have added with as much truth that, carefully analysed from a strictly literary and critical standpoint, *Isis* was full of misprints and misquotations; that it contained useless repetitions, most irritating digressions, and to the casual reader unfamiliar with the various aspects of metaphysical ideas and symbols, as many apparent contradictions; that much of the matter in it ought not to be there at all and also that it had some very gross mistakes due to the many alterations in proof-reading in general, and word corrections in particular. Finally, that the work, for reasons that will be now explained, has no system in it; and that it looks in truth, as remarked by a friend, as if a mass of independent paragraphs having no connection with each other, had been well shaken up in a waste-basket, and then taken out at random and—published.

Such is also now my sincere opinion. The full consciousness of this sad truth dawned upon me when, for the first time after its publication in 1877, I read the work through from the first to the last page, in India in 1881. And from that date to the present, I have never ceased to say what I thought of it, and to give my honest opinion of *Isis* whenever I had an opportunity for so doing. This was done to the great disgust of some, who warned me that I was spoiling its sale;

but as my chief object in writing it was neither personal fame nor gain, but something far higher, I cared

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little for such warnings. For more than ten years this unfortunate “master-piece,” this “monumental work,” as some reviews have called it, with its hideous metamorphoses of one word into another, thereby entirely transforming the meaning,<sup>1</sup> with its misprints and wrong quotation-marks, has given me more anxiety and trouble than anything else during a long life-time which has ever been more full of thorns than of roses.

But in spite of these perhaps too great admissions, I maintain that *Isis Unveiled* contains a mass of original and never hitherto divulged information on occult subjects. That this is so, is proved by the fact that the work has been fully appreciated by all those who have been intelligent enough to discern the kernel, and pay little attention to the shell, to give the preference to the idea and not to the form, regardless of its minor shortcomings. Prepared to take upon myself—*vicariously* as I will show—the sins of all the external, purely literary defects of the work, I defend the ideas and teachings in it, with no fear of being charged with conceit, since *neither ideas nor teaching are mine*, as I have always declared; and I maintain that both are of the greatest value to mystics and students of Theosophy. So true is this, that when *Isis* was first published, some of the best American papers were lavish in its praise—even to exaggeration, as is evidenced by the quotations below.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Witness the word “planet” for “cycle” as originally written, corrected by some unknown hand, (Vol. I., p. 347, 2nd par.), a “correction” which shows Buddha teaching that there is no rebirth on this planet(!) when the contrary is asserted on p. 346, and the Lord Buddha is said to teach how to “avoid” *reincarnation*; the use of the word “planet,” for *plane*, of “Monas” for *Manas*; and the sense of whole ideas sacrificed to the grammatical form, and changed by the substitution of wrong words and erroneous punctuation, etc., etc., etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Isis Unveiled*; a master key to the mysteries of ancient and modern science and theology. By H. P. Blavatsky, Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society. 2 vols., royal 8vo., about 1,500 pages, cloth, \$7.50. Fifth Edition.



“This monumental work . . . about everything relating to magic, mystery, witchcraft, religion, spiritualism, which would be valuable in an encyclopaedia.” —*North American Review*.

“It must be acknowledged that she is a remarkable woman, who has read more, seen more, and thought more than most wise men. Her work abounds in quotations from a dozen different languages, not for the purpose of a vain display of erudition, but to substantiate her peculiar views . . . her pages are garnished with foot-notes establishing, as her authorities, some of the profoundest writers of the past. To a large class of readers, this remarkable work will prove of absorbing interest . . . demands the earnest attention of thinkers, and merits an analytic reading.” —*Boston Evening Transcript*.  
“The appearance of erudition is stupendous. Reference to and quotations from the most unknown and obscure writers in all languages abound, interspersed with allusions to writers of the highest repute, which have evidently been more than skimmed through.” —*N.Y. Independent*.

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The first enemies that my work brought to the front were Spiritualists, whose fundamental theories as to the spirits of the dead communicating in *propria personâ* I upset. For the last fifteen years—ever since this first publication—an incessant shower of ugly accusations has been poured upon me. Every libellous charge, from immorality and the “Russian spy” theory down to my acting on false pretences, of being a chronic fraud and a *living lie*, an habitual drunkard, an emissary of the Pope, paid to break down Spiritualism, and Satan incarnate. Every slander that can be thought of has been brought to bear upon my private and public life. The fact *that not a single one of these charges has ever been substantiated*; that from the first day of January to the last of December, year after year, I have lived surrounded by friends and foes like as in a glass-house,—nothing could stop these wicked, venomous, and thoroughly unscrupulous tongues. It has been said at various times by my ever active opponents that (1) *Isis Unveiled* was simply a rehash of Éliphas Lévi and a few old alchemists; (2) that it was written by me under the dictation of Evil Powers and the *departed spirits* of Jesuits (*sic*); and finally

(3) that my two volumes had been compiled from MSS, (never

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“An extremely readable and exhaustive essay upon the paramount importance of re-establishing the Hermetic Philosophy in a world which blindly believes that it has outgrown it.”—*N.Y. World*. “Most remarkable book of the season.”—*Com. Advertiser*. “[To] Readers who have never made themselves acquainted with the literature of mysticism and alchemy, the volume will furnish the materials for an interesting study—a mine of curious information.”—*Evening Post*. “They give evidence of much and multifarious research on the part of the author, and contain a vast number of interesting stories. Persons fond of the marvellous will find in them an abundance of entertainment.”—*New York Sun*. “A marvellous book both in matter and manner of treatment. Some idea may be formed of the rarity and extent of its contents when the index alone comprises fifty pages, and we venture nothing in saying that such an index of subjects was never before compiled by any human being. . . . But the book is a curious one and will no doubt find its way into libraries because of the unique subject matter it contains . . . will certainly prove attractive to all who are interested in the history, theology, and the mysteries of the ancient world.”—*Daily Graphic*. “The present work is the fruit of her remarkable course of education, and amply confirms her claims to the character of an adept in secret science, and even to the rank of a hierophant in the exposition of its mystic lore.”—*New York Tribune*. “One who reads the book carefully through, ought to know everything of the marvellous and mystical, except perhaps, the passwords. *Isis* will supplement the *Anacalypsis*. Whoever loves to read Godfrey Higgins will be delighted with Mme. Blavatsky. There is a great resemblance between their works. Both have tried hard to tell everything apocryphal and apocalyptic. It is easy to forecast the reception of this book. With its striking peculiarities, its audacity, its versatility, and the prodigious variety of subjects which it notices and handles, it is one of the remarkable productions of the century.”—*New York Herald*.

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before heard of), which Baron de Palm—he of the cremation and double-burial fame—had left behind him, and which I had found in his trunk!<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, friends, as unwise as they were kind, spread abroad that which was really the truth, a little too enthusiastically, about the connection of my Eastern Teacher and other Occultists with the work; and this was seized upon by the enemy and exaggerated out of all limits of truth. It was said that the whole

of *Isis* had been dictated to me *from cover to cover* and *verbatim* by these invisible Adepts. And, as the imperfections of my work were only too glaring, the consequence of all this idle and malicious talk was, that my enemies and critics inferred—as well they might—that either these invisible inspirers had no existence, and were part of my “fraud,” or that they lacked the cleverness of even an average good writer.

Now, no one has any right to hold me responsible for what any one may say, but only for that which I myself state orally, or in public print over my signature. And what I say and maintain is this: Save the direct quotations and the many afore specified and mentioned misprints, errors and misquotations, and the general make-up of *Isis Unveiled*, for which I am in no way responsible, (a) every word of information found in this work or in my later writings, comes from the teachings of our Eastern Masters; and (b) that many a passage in these works has been written by me *under their dictation*. In saying this no *supernatural* claim is urged, for no *miracle* is performed by such a dictation. Any moderately intelligent person, convinced by this time of the many possibilities of hypnotism (now accepted by science and under full scientific investigation), and of the phenomena of *thought-transference*, will easily concede that if even a hypnotized subject, a mere irresponsible medium, *hears the unexpressed thought* of his hypnotizer, who can thus transfer his thought to him—even to repeating the words read by the hypnotizer mentally from a book—then my claim has nothing impossible in it. Space and distance do not exist for thought; and if two persons are in perfect mutual psycho-magnetic *rapport*, and of these two, one is a great Adept

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<sup>3</sup>This Austrian nobleman, who was in complete destitution at New York, and to whom Colonel Olcott had given shelter and food, nursing him during the last weeks of his life—left nothing in MS. behind him but bills. The only effect of the baron was an old valise, in which his “executors” found a battered bronze Cupid, a few foreign Orders (imitations in pinchbeck and paste, as the gold and diamonds had been sold); and a few shirts of Colonel Olcott’s, which the ex-diplomat had annexed without permission.

in Occult Sciences, then thought-transference and dictation of whole pages, become as easy and as comprehensible at the distance of ten thousand miles as the transference of two words across a room.

Hitherto, I have abstained—except on very rare occasions—from answering any criticism on my works, and have even left direct slanders and lies unrefuted, because in the case of *Isis* I found almost every kind of criticism justifiable, and in that of “slanders and lies,” my contempt for the slanderers was too great to permit me to notice them. Especially was it the case with regard to the libellous matter emanating from America. It has all come from one and the same source, well known to all Theosophists, a *person* most indefatigable in attacking me personally for the last twelve years,<sup>4</sup> though I have never seen or met the creature. Neither do I intend to answer him now. But, as *Isis* is now attacked for at least the tenth time, the day has come when my perplexed friends and that portion of the public which may be in sympathy with Theosophy, are entitled to the whole truth—*and nothing but the truth*. Not that I seek to excuse myself in anything even before them or to “explain things.” It is nothing of the kind. What I am determined to do is to give *facts*, undeniable and not to be gainsaid, simply by stating the peculiar, well known to many but now almost forgotten, circumstances, under which I wrote my first English work. I give them *seriatim*.

(1) When I came to America in 1873, I had not spoken English—which I had learned in my childhood colloquially—for over thirty years. I could understand when I read it, but could hardly speak the language.

(2) I had never been at any college, and what I knew I had taught myself; I have never pretended to any scholarship in the sense of modern research; I had then hardly read any scientific European works, knew little of Western philosophy and sciences. The little which I had studied and learned of these, disgusted me with its materialism, its limitations, narrow cut-and-dried spirit of dogmatism, and its air of superiority over the philosophies and sciences of antiquity.

(3) Until 1874 I had never written one word in English, nor

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<sup>4</sup>I will not name him. There are names which carry a moral stench about them, unfit for

any decent journal or publication. His words and deeds emanate from the *cloaca maxima* of the Universe of matter and have to return to it, without touching me.

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had I published any work in any language. Therefore—

(4) I had not the least idea of literary rules. The art of writing books, of preparing them for print and publication, reading and correcting proofs, were so many close[d] secrets to me.

(5) When I started to write that which developed later into *Isis Unveiled*, I had no more idea than the man in the moon what would come of it. I had no plan; did not know whether it would be an essay, a pamphlet, a book, or an article. I knew that *I had to write it*, that was all. I began the work before I knew Colonel Olcott well, and some months before the formation of the Theosophical Society.

Thus, the conditions for becoming the author of an English theosophical and scientific work were hopeful, as everyone will see. Nevertheless, I had written enough to fill four such volumes as *Isis* before I submitted my work to Colonel Olcott. Ofcourse he said that everything save the pages dictated—had to be rewritten. Then we started on our literary labours and worked together every evening. Some pages the English of which he had corrected, I copied: others which would yield to no mortal correction, he used to read aloud from my pages, Englishing them verbally as he went on, dictating to me from my almost undecipherable MSS. It is to him that I am indebted for the English in *Isis*. It is he again who suggested that the work should be divided into chapters, and the first volume devoted to Science and the second to Theology. To do this, the matter had to be re-shifted, and many of the chapters also; repetitions had to be erased, and the literary connection of subjects attended to. When the work was ready, we submitted it to Professor Alexander Wilder, the well-known scholar and Platonist of New York, who after reading the matter, recommended it to Mr. Bouton for publication. Next to Colonel Olcott, it is Professor Wilder who did the most for me. It is he who made the excellent *Index*, who corrected the Greek, Latin and Hebrew words, suggested quotations and wrote the greater part of the *Introduction* "Before the Veil." If this was not acknowledged in the work, the fault is not mine, but because it was Dr. Wilder's express wish that his name should not appear except in footnotes. I have never made a secret of

it, and every one of my numerous acquaintances in New York knew it. When ready the work went to press.

From that moment the real difficulty began. I had no idea of

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correcting galley proofs; Colonel Olcott had little leisure to do so; and the result was that I made a mess of it from the beginning. Before we were through with the first three chapters, there was a bill for six hundred dollars for corrections and alterations, and I had to give up the proof-reading. Pressed by the publisher, Colonel Olcott doing all that he possibly could do, but having no time except in the evenings, and Dr. Wilder far away at Jersey City, the result was that the proofs and pages of *Isis* passed through a number of willing but not very careful hands, and were finally left to the tender mercies of the publisher's proof-reader. Can one wonder after this if "Vaivaswata" (Manu) became transformed in the published volumes into "Viswamitra," that thirty-six pages of the Index were irretrievably lost, and quotation-marks placed where none were needed (as in some of my own sentences!), and left out entirely in many a passage cited from various authors? If asked why these fatal mistakes have not been corrected in a subsequent edition, my answer is simple: the plates were stereotyped; and notwithstanding all my desire to do so, I could not put it into practice, as the plates were the property of the publisher; I had no money to pay for the expenses, and finally the firm was quite satisfied to let things be as they are, since, notwithstanding all its glaring defects, the work—which has now reached its seventh or eighth edition, is still in demand.

And now—and perhaps in consequence of all this—comes a new accusation: I am charged *with wholesale plagiarism* in the Introductory Chapter "Before the Veil"!

Well, had I committed plagiarism, I should not feel the slightest hesitation in admitting the "borrowing." But all "parallel passages" to the contrary, as I have not done so, I do not see why I should confess it; even though "thought transference" as the *Pall Mall Gazette* wittily calls it, is in fashion, and at a premium just now. Since the day when the American press raised a howl against Longfellow, who, borrowing from some (then) unknown German

translation of the Finnish epic, the *Kalevala*, published it as his own superb poem, *Hiawatha*, and forgot to acknowledge the source of his inspiration, the Continental press has repeatedly brought out other like accusations. The present year is especially fruitful in such "thought transferences." Here we have the Lord Mayor of the City of London, repeating word for word an old forgotten sermon by Mr. Spurgeon and swearing he had never read or heard

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of it. The Rev. Robert Bradlaugh writes a book, and forthwith the *Pall Mall Gazette* denounces it as a verbal copy from somebody else's work. Mr. Harry de Windt, the Oriental traveller, and a F.R.G.S. to boot, finds several pages out of his just published *A Ride to India, across Persia and Beluchistan*, in the *London Academy* paralleled with extracts from *The Country of Belochistan*, by A. W. Hughes, which are identical *verbatim et literatim*. Mrs. Parr denies in the *British Weekly* that her novel *Sally* was borrowed consciously or unconsciously from Miss Wilkins' *Sally*, and states that she had never read the said story, nor even heard the author's name, and so on. Finally, everyone who has read *La Vie de Jésus*, by Renan, will find that he has plagiarised by *anticipation*, some descriptive passages rendered in flowing verse in the *Light of the World*. Yet even Sir Edwin Arnold, whose versatile and recognised genius needs no borrowed imagery, has failed to thank the French Academician for his pictures of Mount Tabor and Galilee in prose, which he has so elegantly versified in his last poem. Indeed, at this stage of our civilisation and *fin de siècle*, one should feel highly honoured to be placed in such good and numerous company, even as a—plagiarist. But I cannot claim such a privilege and, simply for the reason already told that out of the whole Introductory chapter "Before the Veil," I can claim as my own only certain passages in the Glossary appended to it, the Platonic portion of it, that which is now denounced as "a bare-faced plagiarism" having been written by Professor A. Wilder.

That gentleman is still living in or near New York, and can be asked whether my statement is true or not. He is too honourable, too great a scholar, to deny or fear anything. He insisted upon a kind of *Glossary*, explaining the Greek and Sanskrit names and words with which the work abounds, being appended to an Introduction, and furnished a few himself. I begged him to give me a short

summary of the Platonic philosophers, which he kindly did. Thus from p. 11 down to 22 the text is his, save a few intercalated passages which break the Platonic narrative, to show the identity of ideas in the Hindu Scriptures. Now who of those who know Dr. A. Wilder personally, or by name, who are aware of the great scholarship of that eminent Platonist, the editor of so many learned works,<sup>5</sup> would be insane enough to accuse

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<sup>5</sup>A. Wilder, M.D., the editor of *Serpent and Siva Worship*, by Hyde Clarke and C. Staniland Wake; of *Ancient Art and Mythology*, by Richard Payne Knight, to which the editor has appended an Introduction, Notes translated into English and a new and complete Index; of *Ancient Symbol Worship*, by Hodder M. Westropp and C. Staniland Wake, with an Introduction, additional Notes and Appendix by the editor; and finally, of *The Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries; "A Dissertation*, by Thomas Taylor, translator of 'Plato,' 'Plotinus,' 'Porphyry,' 'Jamblichus,' 'Proclus,' 'Aristotle,' etc., etc., etc.," edited with Introduction, Notes, Emendations, and Glossary, by Alexander Wilder, M.D.; and the author of various learned works, pamphlets and articles for which we have no space here. Also the editor of the "Older Academy," a quarterly journal of New York, and the translator of the *Mysteries*, by Jamblichus.

#### MY BOOKS

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him of "plagiarising" from any author's work! I give in the footnote the names of a few of the Platonic and other works he has edited. The charge would be simply preposterous!

The fact is that Dr. Wilder must have either forgotten to place quotes before and after the passages copied by him from various authors in his Summary; or else, owing to his very difficult handwriting, he has failed to mark them with sufficient clearness. It is impossible, after the lapse of almost fifteen years, to remember or verify the facts. To this day I had imagined that this disquisition on Platonists was his, and never gave a further thought to it. But now enemies have ferretted out unquoted passages and proclaim louder than ever "the author of *Isis Unveiled*," to be a plagiarist and a fraud. Very likely more may be found, as that work is an inexhaustible mine of misquotations, errors and blunders, to which it is impossible for me to plead "guilty" in the ordinary



sense. Let then the slanderers go on, only to find in another fifteen years as they have found in the preceding period, that whatever they do, *they cannot ruin Theosophy, nor even hurt me*. I have no author's vanity; and years of unjust persecution and abuse have made me entirely callous to what the public may think of me—personally.

But in view of the facts as given above; and considering that—

(a) The language in *Isis* is not mine; but (with the exception of that portion of the work which, as I claim, was *dictated*), may be called only a sort of translation of my facts and ideas into English;

(b) It was not written for the public,—the latter having always been only a secondary consideration with me—but for the use of Theosophists and members of the Theosophical Society to which *Isis* is dedicated;

(c) Though I have since learned sufficient English to have been enabled to edit two magazines—the *Theosophist* and *Lucifer*—yet, to the present hour I never write an article, an editorial or

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even a simple paragraph, without submitting its English to close scrutiny and correction.

Considering all this and much more, I ask now every impartial and honest man and woman whether it is just or even fair to criticize my works—*Isis*, above all others—as one would the writings of a born American or English author! What I claim in them as my own is only the fruit of my learning and studies in a department, hitherto left uninvestigated by Science, and almost unknown to the European world. I am perfectly willing to leave the honour of the English grammar in them, the glory of the quotations from scientific works brought occasionally to me to be used as passages for comparison with, or refutation by, the old Science, and finally the general make-up of the volumes, to every one of those who have helped me. Even for the *Secret Doctrine* there are about half-a-dozen Theosophists who have been busy in editing it, who have helped me to arrange the matter, correct the imperfect English, and prepare it for print.

But that which none of them will ever claim from first to last, is the fundamental doctrine, the philosophical conclusions and teachings. Nothing of that have I invented, but simply given it out as I have been taught; or as quoted by me in the *Secret Doctrine* (Vol. I, p. 46 [xlvi]) from Montaigne: "I have here made only a nosegay of culled (Eastern) flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the string that ties them."

Is any one of my helpers prepared to say that I have not paid the full price for the string?

April 27, 1891

H. P. Blavatsky

*Lucifer*, May, 1891

### MISTAKEN NOTIONS ON THE "SECRET DOCTRINE"

EVER since the publication of the *Secret Doctrine* Students of Theosophy (outside the inner ring of Occult Sciences) have complained that the teachings contained in the work do not satisfy them. One, mentioning the lengthy and rabid abuse of it by an old, though really insignificant, if brutal, enemy, takes me to task for leaving a door open to such criticism by taking too little into account modern science and modern thought(1); another complains that my explanations are not complete; thus, he says:

For the last ten years, I have been a close reader of theosophical literature. I have read and re-read the *Secret Doctrine* and collated passages, and nothing is more disheartening than to find some of the best explanations on Occult points, just as they begin to grow a little lucid, marred by a reference to some exoteric philosophy or religion, which breaks up the train of reasoning and leaves the explanation unfinished. . . . We can understand parts, but we cannot get a succinct idea, particularly of the teachings as to Parabrahm (the Absolute), the 1st and 2nd Logos, Spirit, Matter, Fohat, etc., etc.

This is the direct and natural result of the very mistaken notion that the work I have called the "Secret Doctrine" had ever been intended by me to dovetail with modern Science, or to explain "occult points." I was and still am more concerned with *facts* than with scientific hypotheses. My chief and only object was to bring into prominence that the basic and fundamental principles of every exoteric religion and philosophy, old or new, were from first to last but the echoes of the primeval "Wisdom Religion." I sought to show that the Tree of Knowledge, like Truth itself, was *One*; and that, however differing in form and color, the foliage of the twigs, the trunk and its main branches were still those of the same old Tree, in the shadow of which had developed and grown the (now) esoteric religious philosophy of the races that preceded our present mankind on earth.

This object, I believe I have carried out as far as it could be carried, in the first two volumes of the *Secret Doctrine*. It was

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not the occult philosophy of the esoteric teachings that I undertook to explain to the world at large, for then the qualification of "Secret" would have become like the *secret* of "Polichinelle" shouted in the manner of a stage *a parte*; but simply to give *that which could be given out*, and to parallel it with the beliefs and dogmas of the past and present nations, thus showing the original source of the latter and how disfigured they had become. If my work is, at this day of materialistic assumptions and universal iconoclasm, too premature for the masses of the profane—so much the worse for those masses. But it was not too premature for the earnest students of theosophy—except those, perhaps, who had hoped that a treatise on such intricate correspondences as exist between the religions and philosophies of the almost forgotten Past, and those of the modern day, could be as simple as a shilling "shocker" from a railway stall. Even one system of philosophy at a time, whether that of Kant or of Herbert Spencer, of Spinoza or of Hartmann, requires more than a study of several years. Does it not therefore, stand to reason that a work which compares several dozens of philosophies and over half-a-dozen of world-religions, a work which has to unveil the roots with the greatest precautions, as it can only *hint* at the secret blossoms here and there—cannot be comprehended at a first reading, nor

even after several, unless the reader elaborates for himself a system for it? That this can be done and *is* done is shown by the “Two Students of the E.S.” They are now synthesizing the “Secret Doctrine,” and they do it in the most lucid and comprehensive way, in this magazine. No more than any one else have they understood that work immediately after reading it. But they went to work in dead earnest. They indexed it for themselves, classifying the contents in two portions—the *exoteric* and the *esoteric*; and having achieved this preliminary labor, they now present the former portion to the readers at large, while storing the latter for their own practical instruction and benefit. Why should not every earnest theosophist do the same?

There are several ways of acquiring knowledge: (*a*) by accepting blindly the dicta of the church or modern science; (*b*) by rejecting both and starting to find the truth for oneself. The first method is easy and leads to social respectability and the praise of men; the other is difficult and requires more than ordinary devotion to truth, a disregard for direct personal benefits and an

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unwavering perseverance. Thus it was in the days of old and so it is now, except perhaps, that such devotion to truth has been more rare in our own day than it was of yore. Indeed, the modern Eastern student’s unwillingness to think for himself is now as great as Western exactions and criticism of other people’s thoughts.

He demands and expects that his “Path” shall be engineered with all the selfish craft of modern comfort, macadamized, laid out with swift railways and telegraphs, and even telescopes, through which he may, while sitting at his ease, survey the works of other people; and while criticizing them, look out for the easiest, in order to play at the Occultist and Amateur Student of Theosophy. The real “Path” to esoteric knowledge is very different. Its entrance is overgrown with the brambles of neglect, the travesties of truth during long ages block the way, and it is obscured by the proud contempt of self-sufficiency and with every verity distorted out of all focus. To push over the threshold alone, demands an incessant, often unrequited labor of years, and once on the other side of the entrance, the weary pilgrim has to toil up on foot, for the narrow way leads to forbidding mountain heights, unmeasured and unknown, save to

those who have reached the cloud-capped summit before. Thus must he mount, step by step, having to conquer every inch of ground before him by his own exertions; moving onward, guided by strange land marks the nature of which he can ascertain only by deciphering the weather-beaten, half-defaced inscriptions as he treads along, for woe to him, if, instead of studying them, he sits by coolly pronouncing them "indecipherable." The "Doctrine of the Eye" is *maya*; that of the "Heart" alone, can make of him an elect.

Is it to be wondered that so few reach the goal, that so many are called, but so few are chosen? Is not the reason for this explained in three lines on page 27 of the "Voice of the Silence"? These say that while "The first repeat in pride 'Behold, *I know*,' the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess, 'thus have I heard' "; and hence, become the only "chosen."

*Lucifer*, June, 1890

H. P. Blavatsky

### SEEMING "DISCREPANCIES"

To the Editor of the "Theosophist"

I have lately been engaged in devoting a few evenings' study to your admirable article, "Fragments of Occult Truth," which deserves far more attention than a mere casual reading. It is therein stated that the translated *Ego cannot* span the abyss separating its state from ours, or that it cannot descend into our atmosphere and reach us; that it attracts but cannot be attracted, or, in short, that no departed Spirit can visit us.

In Vol. I., page 67, of "Isis," I find it said that many of the *spirits*, subjectively controlling mediums, are human disembodied *spirits*, that their being benevolent or wicked in quality largely depends upon the medium's private morality, that "they cannot materialise, but only project their ætherial reflections on the atmospheric waves." On page 69: "Not everyone can attract *human spirits*, who likes. One of the most powerful attractions of our

departed ones is their strong affection for those whom they have left on earth. It draws them irresistibly, by degrees, into the current of the astral light vibrating between the person sympathetic to them and the universal soul." On page 325: "Sometimes, but rarely, the planetary spirits . . . produce them (subjective manifestations); *sometimes the spirits of our translated and beloved friends, &c.*"

From the foregoing it would appear as if both teachings were not uniform, but it may be that *souls*, instead of *spirits*, are implied, or that I have misunderstood the meaning.

Such difficult subjects are rather puzzling to Western students, especially to one who, like myself, is a mere tyro, though always grateful to receive knowledge from those who are in a position to impart such.

Yours, &c.,

Caledonian Theosophist

9th January, 1882

— — —

Editor's Note.—It is to be feared that our valued Brother has both misunderstood our meaning in "Isis" and that of the

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"Fragments of Occult Truth." Read in their correct sense, the statements in the latter do not offer the slightest discrepancy with the passages quoted from "Isis," but both teachings are uniform.

Our "Caledonian" Brother believes that, because it is stated in "Isis," that "many, among those who control the medium *subjectively*, are *human disembodied spirits*," and in the "Fragments," in the words of our critic, that "the Ego cannot span the abyss separating its state from ours . . . cannot descend into our atmosphere, . . . or, in short, that no departed Spirit can visit us" — there is a contradiction between the two teachings? We answer — "None at all." We

reiterate both statements, and will defend the proposition. Throughout “Isis” — although an attempt was made in the *Introductory Chapter* to show the great difference that exists between the terms “soul” and “spirit” — one the *reliquiæ* of the *personal* Ego, the other the pure essence of the spiritual Individuality — the term “spirit” had to be often used in the sense given to it by the Spiritualists, as well as other similar conventional terms, as, otherwise, a still greater confusion would have been caused. Therefore, the meaning of the three sentences, cited by our friend, should be thus understood :

On page 67 wherein it is stated that many of the *spirits*, subjectively *controlling* mediums, are human disembodied spirits,” &c., the word “controlling” must not be understood in the sense of a “spirit” possessing himself of the organism of a medium; nor that, in each case, it is a “spirit”; for often it is but a *shell* in its preliminary stage of dissolution, when most of the physical intelligence and faculties are yet fresh and have not begun to disintegrate, or *fade out*. A “spirit,” or the spiritual *Ego*, cannot *descend* to the medium, but it can *attract* the spirit of the latter to itself, and it can do this only during the two intervals—before and after its “gestation period.” Interval the first is that period between the physical death and the merging of the spiritual Ego into that state which is known in the Arhat esoteric doctrine as “Bar-do.” We have translated this as the “gestation” period, and it lasts from a few days to several years, according to the evidence of the adepts. Interval the second lasts so long as the merits of the old *Ego* entitle the being to reap the fruit of its reward in its new regenerated Ego-ship. It occurs after the gestation period is over, and the new spiritual Ego is reborn—like the fabled Phoenix from its ashes—from the old one. The locality, which the former inhabits, is called

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by the northern Buddhist Occultists “Devachan,” the word answering, perhaps, to Paradise or the Kingdom of Heaven of the Christian elect. Having enjoyed a time of bliss, proportionate to his deserts, the new *personal* Ego gets re-incarnated into a *personality* when the remembrance of his previous Ego-ship, of course, fades out, and he can “communicate” no longer with his fellow-men on the planet he has left forever, as the individual he was there known to be. After numberless re-incarnations, and on numerous planets and in various spheres,

a time will come, at the end of the Maha-Yug or great cycle, when each individuality will have become so spiritualised that, before its final absorption into the *One All*, its series of past *personal* existences will marshal themselves before him in a retrospective order like the many days of someone period of a man's existence.

The words—"their being benevolent or wicked in quality largely depends upon the medium's private morality"—which conclude the first quoted sentence mean simply this: a pure medium's *Ego* can be drawn to and made, for an instant, to unite in a magnetic (?) relation with a real disembodied spirit, whereas the soul of an *impure* medium can only confabulate with the *astral* soul, or "shell," of the deceased. The former possibility explains those extremely rare cases of direct writing in recognized autographs, and of messages from the higher class of disembodied intelligences. We should say then that the personal morality of the medium would be a fair test of the genuineness of the manifestation. As quoted by our friend, "affection to those whom they have left on earth" is "one of the most powerful attractions" between two loving spirits—the embodied and the disembodied one.

Whence the idea, then, that the two teachings are "not uniform"? We may well be taxed with too loose and careless a mode of expression, with a misuse of the foreign language in which we write, with leaving too much unsaid and depending unwarrantably upon the imperfectly developed intuition of the reader. But there never was, nor can there be, any radical discrepancy between the teachings in "Isis" and those of this later period, as both proceed from one and the same source—the Adept Brothers.

*Theosophist*, June, 1882

"ISIS UNVEILED" AND THE  
"THEOSOPHIST" ON REINCARNATION

IN *Light* (July 8) C.C.M. quotes from the *Theosophist* (June 1882) a sentence which appeared in the *Editor's Note* at the foot of an article headed "Seeming



Discrepancies.” Then, turning to the review of “The Perfect Way” in the same number, he quotes at length from “an authoritative teaching of *the later period*,” as he adds rather sarcastically. Then, again, a long paragraph from *Isis*. The three quotations and the remarks of our friend run thus:

“There never was, nor can there be, any radical discrepancy between the teachings in ‘Isis’ (‘Isis Unveiled’) and those of this later period, as both proceed from one and the same source —the Adept Brothers.” (*Editor’s Note* in “Seeming Discrepancies.”)

Having drawn the attention of his readers to the above assertion C.C.M. proceeds to show—as he thinks—its fallacy:

“To begin with, re-incarnation—if other worlds besides this are taken into account—is the regular routine of nature. But re-Incarnation in the next higher objective world is one thing; re-Incarnation on this earth is another. *Even that takes place over and over again till the highest condition of humanity, as known on this earth, is attained, but not afterwards, and here is the clue to the mystery. . . .* But once let a man be as far perfected by successive re-incarnations as the present race will permit, and then his next re-incarnation will be among the early growths of the next higher world, where the earliest growths are far higher than the highest here. *The ghastly mistake that the modern re-incarnationists make is in supposing that there can be a return on this earth to lower bodily forms*”;—not, therefore, that man is re-incarnated as man again and again upon this earth, for that is laid down as truth in the above cited passages in the most positive and explicit form.” (*Review* of T.P.W. in the *Theosophist*.)

And now for “Isis”:

“We will now present a few fragments of this mysterious doctrine of re-Incarnation—as distinct from metempsychosis —which we have from an authority. Re-Incarnation, *i.e.*, the

appearance of the same individual—or rather, of his astral monad—twice on the same planet is not a rule in nature; it is an exception, like the teratological phenomenon of a two-headed infant. It is preceded by a

violation of the laws of harmony of nature and happens only when the latter, seeking to restore its disturbed equilibrium, violently throws back into earth-life the astral monad, which has been tossed out of the circle of necessity by crime or accident. Thus in cases of abortion, of infants dying before a certain age, and of congenital and incurable idiocy, nature's original design to produce a perfect human being has been interrupted. Therefore, while the gross matter of each of these several entities is suffered to disperse itself at death through the vast realm of being, the immortal Spirit and astral monad of the individual—the latter having been set apart to animate a frame, and the former to shed its divine light on the corporeal organization—must try a second time to carry out the purpose of the creative intelligence. *If reason has been so far developed as to become active and discriminative, there is no re-incarnation on this earth, for the three parts of the triune man have been united together, and he is capable of running the race. But when the new being has not passed beyond the condition of monad, or when, as in the idiot, the trinity has not been completed, the immortal spark which illuminates it has to re-enter on the earthly planet, as it was frustrated in its first attempt. . . . Further, the same occult doctrine recognizes another possibility, albeit so rare and so vague that it is really useless to mention it. Even the modern Occidental Occultists deny it, though it is universally accepted in Eastern countries.*"

...

This is the occasional return of the terribly depraved human Spirits which have fallen to the eighth sphere—it is unnecessary to quote the passage at length. Exclusive of that rare and doubtful possibility, then "Isis" —I have quoted from volume I, pp. 351-2—allows only three cases—abortion, very early death, and idiocy—in which re-incarnation on this earth occurs.

I am a long-suffering student of the mysteries, more apt to accuse my own stupidity than to make "seeming discrepancies" an occasion for scoffing. But after all, two and three will not make just four; black is not white, nor, in reference to plain and definite statements, is "Yes" equivalent to "No." If there is one thing which I ardently desire to be taught, it is the truth about this same question of re-Incarnation. I hope I am not, as a dutiful Theosophist, expected to reconcile the statement of

“Isis” with that of this authoritative Reviewer. But there is one consolation. The accomplished authoress of “Isis” cannot have totally forgotten the teaching on this subject therein contained. She, therefore, certainly did not dictate the statements of the Reviewer. If I may conjecture that Koot Hoomi

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stands close behind the latter, then assuredly Koot Hoomi is not, as has been maliciously suggested, an alias for Madame Blavatsky.

“C.C.M.”

We hope not—for Koot Hoomi’s sake. Mme. B. would become too vain and too proud, could she but dream of such an honour. But how true the remark of the French classic: *La critique est aisée, mais l’art est difficile*—though we feel more inclined to hang our diminished head in sincere sorrow and exclaim: *Et tu Brute!*—than to quote old truisms. Only, where that (even) “seeming discrepancy” is to be found between the two passages—except by those who are entirely ignorant of the occult doctrine—will be certainly a mystery to every Eastern Occultist who reads the above and who studies at the same school as the reviewer of “The Perfect Way.” Nevertheless the latter is chosen as the weapon to break our head with. It is sufficient to read No. I of the *Fragments of Occult Truth*, and ponder over the septenary constitution of man into which the triple human entity is divided by the occultists, to perceive that the “astral” *monad* is not the “Spiritual” *monad* and *vice versa*. That there is no discrepancy whatsoever between the two statements, may be easily shown, and we hope will be shown, by our friend the “reviewer.” The most that can be said of the passage quoted from *Isis* is, that it is incomplete, chaotic, vague, perhaps—clumsy, as many more passages in that work, the first literary production of a foreigner, who even now can hardly boast of her knowledge of the English language. Therefore, in the face of the statement from the very correct and excellent review of “The Perfect Way”—we say again that “Reincarnation, *i.e.*, the appearance of the same individual—or rather, of his *astral monad* (or the *personality* as claimed by the modern Reincarnationists)—twice on the same planet is not a rule in nature “and that it is an exception.” Let us try once more to explain our meaning. The reviewer

speaks of the “Spiritual Individuality” or the *Immortal Monad* as it is called, *i.e.* the 7th and 6th Principles in the *Fragments*. In *Isis* we refer to the *personality* or the *Finite* astral monad, a compound of imponderable elements composed of the 5th and 4th principles. The former as an emanation of the one absolute is indestructible; the latter as an elementary compound is finite and doomed sooner or later to destruction with the exception of the more spiritualized portions of the 5th principle (the *Manas* or mind) which are assimilated by the 6<sup>th</sup>-----

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principle when it follows the 7th to its “gestation state” to be reborn or not reborn, as the case may be, in the *Arupa Loka* (the Formless World). The seven principles, forming, so to say, a *triad* and a *Quaternary*, or, as some have it a “Compound *Trinity*” subdivided into a triad and two duads may be better understood in the following groups of Principles:—

Group I

- 7. *Atma*—“Pure Spirit.”
- 6. *Buddhi*—“Spiritual Soul or Intelligence.”

Spirit

*Spiritual Monad* or “Individuality” —and its *vehicle*. Eternal and indestructible.

Group II

- 5. *Manas*—“Mind or Animal Soul.”
- 4. *Kama-rupa*—“Desire” or “Passion” Form.

Soul

*Astral Monad*—or the *personal Ego* and its vehicle.

Survives Group III and is destroyed after a time, unless,—*reincarnated* as said under exceptional circumstances.

Group III

- 3. *Linga-sarira*—“Astral or Vital Body.”

Body

Compound Physical, or the “*Earthly Ego*.” The three die

2. *Jiva*—“Life Principle.”
1. *Stool-sarira*—“Body.”

together *invariably*.

And now we ask,—where is the “discrepancy” or contradiction? Whether man was good, bad, or indifferent, Group II has to become either a “shell,” or to be once or several times more reincarnated under “exceptional circumstances.” There is a mighty difference in our Occult doctrine between an *impersonal* Individuality, and an individual *Personality*. C.C.M. will not be reincarnated; nor will he be in his next re-birth C.C.M., but quite a new being, born of the thoughts and deeds of C.C.M.: his own creation, the child and fruit of his present life, the effect of the *causes* he is now producing. Shall we say then with the Spiritists that C.C.M., the man, we know, will be re-born again? No; but that his divine Monad will be clothed thousands of times yet before the end of the Grand Cycle, in various human forms, every one of them a *new* personality. Like a mighty tree that clothes itself every spring with a new foliage, to see it wither and die

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towards autumn, so the eternal Monad prevails through the series of smaller cycles, ever the same, yet ever changing and putting on, at each birth, a new garment. The bud, that failed to open one year, will re-appear in the next; the leaf that reached its maturity and died a natural death—can never be re-born on the same tree again. While writing *Isis*, we were not permitted to enter into details; hence—the vague generalities. We are told to do so now—and we do as we are commanded.

And thus, it seems, after all, that “two and three” will “make just four,” if the “three” was only *mistaken* for that number. And, we have heard of cases when that, which was universally regarded and denounced as something *very* “black”—shockingly so—suddenly re-became “white,” as soon as an additional light was permitted to shine upon it. Well, the day may yet come when even the much misunderstood occultists will appear in such a light. *Vaut mieux tard que jamais!*

Meanwhile we will wait and see whether C.C.M. will quote again from our present answer—in *Light*.

*Theosophist*, August, 1882

### “IT’S THE CAT!”

*(Dedicated to those Members of the T.S. whom the cap may fit.)*

Let ignominy brand thy hated name;  
Let modest matrons at thy mention start;  
And blushing virgins when they read our annals  
Skip o’er the guilty page that holds thy legend,  
And blots the noble work . . .

—Shakespeare

An excuse is worse and more terrible than a lie;  
for an excuse is a lie guarded.

—Pope

THE woman gave me of the tree, and I did eat,” said the first man, the first sneak and coward, thus throwing his own share of the blame upon his helpless mate. This may have been “*worse than a lie*” according to Pope, yet, in truth—it was not one. Lie was not born with the first man or woman either. The Lie is the product of later civilization, the legitimate child of Selfishness—ready to sacrifice to itself the whole of mankind—and of Hypocrisy, often born of fear. The original sin for which, agreeably to the orthodox Sunday School teaching, the whole world was cursed, drowned, and went unforgiven till the year 1 a.d.—is not the *greatest* sin. The descendants of Adam improving upon their grandsire’s transgression, invented lie and added to it excuse and prevarication. “It’s the cat” is a saying that may have originated with the antediluvians, whenever an *actual sin* had been committed and a scapegoat was needed. But it required the post-diluvians to father on the “cat” even that which had never been committed at all; that which was an invention of the fertile brain of the slanderers, who never hesitate to lie most outrageously whenever they feel inclined to ventilate a grudge against a brother or

neighbour. Fruits of atonement, Children of redemption, we lie and sin the more readily for that. No "shame on us," but:

"IT'S THE CAT!"

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*Hail* to the policy that first began

To temper with the heart to hide its thoughts,

is the world's motto. Is not the World one gigantic lie? Is there anything under the sun that offers such rich variety and almost countless degrees and shades as lying does? Lying is the policy of our century, from Society lying, as a necessity imposed upon us by culture and good breeding, up to individual lying, *i.e.*, uttering a good, square unmitigated lie, in the shape of false witness, or as the Russian proverb has it:—"shifting off a sin from a diseased on to a healthy head." Oh *lie*—legion is thy name! Fibs and lies are now the cryptogamic excrescences on the soil of our moral and daily lives as toadstools are those of forest swamps, and their respective orders are as large. Both are fungi; plants which delight in shadowy nooks, and form mildew, mold and smut on both the soil of moral life and that of physical nature. Oh, for that righteous tongue:

That will not sell its honesty, or tell a lie!

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As said, there are fibs and fibs, conscious and unconscious, hoaxes and impostures, deceptions and calumnies—the latter often followed by moral and physical ruin—mild perversions of truth or evasion, and deliberate duplicity. But there are also catchpenny lies, in the shape of newspaper chaff, and innocent misrepresentations, due simply to ignorance. To the latter order belong most of the newspaper statements regarding the Theosophical Society, and its official *scape-goat*—H. P. Blavatsky.

It has become a matter of frequent occurrence of late, to find in serious articles upon scientific subjects the name of "Esoteric Buddhism" mentioned, and oftener still that of "Mme. Blavatsky" taken in vain. The latter circumstance is

really very, *very* considerate, and—in one sense at any rate—*overwhelmingly* flattering!

To find one's humble name collated with those of Sir Monier Monier-Williams K.C.I.E. and Professor Bastian is an honour, indeed. When, for instance, the *great* Oxford lecturer chooses to make a few big and bold slashes into fact and truth—no doubt to please his pious audience—and says that Buddhism has never had any occult or esoteric system of doctrine which it withheld

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from the multitudes,—what happens? Forthwith, “Esoteric Buddhism” receives, metaphorically speaking, a black eye; the Theosophical Society, a kick or two; and finally, the gates of the journalistic poultry-yard being flung wide open, a vehement *sortie* against “Blavatsky” & Co. is effected by a flock of irritated geese sallying therefrom to hiss and peck at the theosophical heels. “Our Ancestors, have saved Rome!” they cackle, “let us save the British Empire from these *pretenders* to Buddhist knowledge!” Again: a lucky “correspondent” gets admittance into the sanctum of Professor Bastian. The German ethnologist, “dressed like an alchemist of the middle ages” and smiling at “questions concerning the *trances* of famous Fakirs,” proceeds to inform the interviewer that such trances never last more than “from five to six hours.” This—the alchemist-like dress, we suppose, helping to bring about a happy association of ideas—leads *presto*, in the American “Sabbath-breaking paper,” to a stern rebuke to our address. We read on the following day:

The famous Fakirs . . . however they may have imposed on other travellers, certainly did not do so on this quiet little German philosopher, Madame Blavatsky to the contrary notwithstanding.

Very well. And yet Professor Bastian, all the “correspondents” to the contrary notwithstanding, lays himself widely open to a most damaging criticism from the standpoint of *fact* and *truth*. Furthermore, we doubt whether Professor Bastian, a learned ethnologist, would ever refer to Hindu Yogis as *Fakirs*—the latter appellation being strictly limited and belonging only to *Mussulman* devotees. We doubt, still more, whether Professor Bastian, an



accurate German, would deny the frequent occurrence of the phenomenon that Yogis and these same “Fakirs,” remain in deep, death-like trance for days, and sometimes for weeks; or even that the former have been occasionally buried for forty consecutive days, and recalled to life again at the end of that period, as witnessed by Sir Claude Wade and others.

But all this is too ancient and too well authenticated history, to need substantiation. When “correspondents” will have learned the meaning, as well as the spelling of the term *dhyana*—which the said “correspondent” writes *diana*—we may talk with them of Yogis and Fakirs, pointing out to them the great difference between the two. Meanwhile, we may kindly leave them to their own hazy ideas: they are the “Innocents Abroad” in the realm of

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the far Orient, the blind led by the blind, and theosophical charity extends even to critics and hereditary foes.

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But there are certain other things which we cannot leave uncontradicted. While week after week, and day after day, the “Innocents” lost in the theosophical labyrinths, publish their own harmless fibs—“slight expansions of truth” somebody called them —they also often supplement them by the wicked and malicious falsehoods of casual correspondents—ex-members of the T.S. and their friends generally. These falsehoods generated in, and evolved from the depths of the inner consciousness of our relentless enemies, cannot be so easily disregarded. Although, since they hang like Mahommed’s coffin in the emptiness of rootless space, and so are a *denial* in themselves, yet they are so maliciously interspersed with hideous lies built on *popular* and already strongly-rooted prejudices that, if left uncontradicted, they would work the most terrible mischief. Lies are ever more readily accepted than truth, and are given up with more difficulty. They darken the horizons of theosophical centres, and prevent unprejudiced people from learning the exact truth about theosophy and its herald, the Theosophical Society. How terribly malicious and revengeful some of these enemies are, is evidenced by the fact that certain of them do not hesitate to perform a moral *hari-kari* upon themselves; to slay their own reputations for truthfulness for the pleasure of hitting hard—or *trying*, at

all events, to hit—those whom they hate. Why this hatred? Simply because a calumny, a wicked, groundless slander is often forgiven, and even forgotten; a *truth* told—never! Prevented from disproving that truth, for good reasons, their hatred is kindled—for we hate only what *we fear*. Thus they will *invent a lie*, cunningly grafting it on some utterly false, but nevertheless popular accusation, and raise anew the cry, “It’s the cat, the ca-a-t, the ca-a-t!” . . .

Success in such a policy depends, you see, on temperament and—*impudence*. We have a friend, who will never go to the trouble of persuading anyone to believe him on his “aye” or his “nay.” But, whenever he remarks that his words are doubted, he will say, in the quietest and most innocent way possible, “You know well *I am too impudent to lie!*” There is a great psychological

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truth hidden under this seeming paradox. Impudence often originates from two entirely opposite feelings: fearlessness and cowardice. A brave man will never lie; a coward lies to cover the fact of his being one, and a liar into the bargain. Such a character will never confess himself at fault no more than a vain man will; hence, whatever mischance happens to either, they will always try to lay it at the door of somebody else. It requires a great nobility of character, or a firm sense of one’s duty, to confess one’s mistakes and faults. Therefore, a scapegoat is generally chosen, upon whose head the sins of the guilty are placed by the transgressors. This scapegoat becomes gradually “the cat.”

Now the Theosophical Society has its own special, so to speak, its “family cat,” on which are heaped all the past, present and future iniquities of its Fellows. Whether an F.T.S. quarrels with his mother-in-law, lets his hair grow, forgets to pay his debts, or falls off from grace and theosophical association, owing to personal or family reasons, wounded vanity, or what not: *presto* comes the cry—whether in Europe, Asia, America or elsewhere — *It’s the cat!* Look at this F.T.S.; he is writhing in the pangs of balked ambition. His desire to reign supreme over his fellow members is frustrated; and finding himself disappointed—it is on the “cat” that he is now venting his wrath. “The grapes are sour,” he declares, because “the cat” would not cut them for him, nor would she mew in tune to his fiddle. Hence, the Vine has “worn itself *too thin*.” Behold that other “star” of Theosophy, smarting under another kind of

grievance—unnamed, because unnamable. Hatred—“till one be lost for ever” —rages in this *brotherly* heart. Pouncing like a bird of prey upon its chosen victim—which it would carry far, far up into the clouds to kill it with the more certainty when it lets it drop—the would-be avenger of his own imaginary wrongs remains utterly blind to the fact, that by raising his chosen victim so high he only elevates it the more above all men. You cannot kill that which you hate, O blind hater, whatever the height you dash it down from; the “cat” has nine lives, good friend, and will ever fall on to its feet.

There are a few articles of belief among the best theosophists, the bare mention of which produces upon certain persons and classes of society the effect of a red rag on an infuriated bull. One of these is our belief—very harmless and innocent *per se*—in the existence of very wise and holy personages, whom some call

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their Masters, while others refer to them as “Mahatmas.”

Now, these may or may not actually exist—(we say they do); they may or may not be as wise, or possess altogether the wonderful powers ascribed to, and claimed for them. All this is a question of *personal knowledge*—or, in some cases, faith. Yet, there are the 350,000,000 of India alone who believe since time immemorial in their great Yogis and Mahatmas, and who feel as certain of their existence in every age, from countless centuries back down to the present day, as they feel sure of their own lives. Are they to be treated for this as superstitious, self-deceived fools? Are they more entitled to this epithet than the Christians of every church who believe respectively in past and present Apostles, in Saints, Sages, Patriarchs and Prophets?

Let that be as it will; the reader must realize that the present writer entertains no desire to force such a belief on any one unwilling to accept it, let him be a layman or a theosophist. The attempt was foolishly made a few years back in all truth and sincerity, and—it has failed. More than this, the revered names were, from the first, so desecrated by friend and foe, that the once almost irresistible desire to bring the actual truth home to some who needed *living ideals* the most, has gradually weakened since then. It is now replaced by a

passionate regret for having ever exhumed them from the twilight of legendary lore, into that of broad daylight.

The wise warning:

Give not that which is holy to the dogs,

Neither cast ye your pearls before swine—

is now impressed in letters of fire on the heart of those guilty of having made of the “Masters” public property. Thus the wisdom of the Hindo-Buddhist allegorical teaching which says, “There can be no Mahatmas, no Arhats, during the *Kali yuga*,” is vindicated. That *which is not believed in, does not exist*. Arhats and Mahatmas having been declared by the majority of Western people as non-existent, as a *fabrication*—do not exist for the unbelievers.

“The Great Pan is dead!” wailed the mysterious voice over the Ionian Sea, and forthwith plunged Tiberius and the pagan world into despair. The nascent Nazarenes rejoiced and attributed that death to the new “God.” Fools, both, who little suspected that

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*Pan*—the “All Nature”—could not die. That that which *had* died was only their fiction, the horned monster with the legs of a goat, the “god” of shepherds and of priests who lived upon the popular superstition, and made profit of the Pan of *their own making*. Truth can never die.

We greatly rejoice in thinking that the “Mahatmas” of those who sought to build their own ephemeral reputation upon them and tried to stick them as a peacock’s feather in their hats—are also dead. The “adepts” of wild hallucinations, and too wideawake, ambitious purposes; the Hindu sages 1,000 years old; the “mysterious strangers,” and the *tutti quanti* transformed into convenient pegs whereon to hang—one, “orders” inspired by his own nauseous vices; another, his own selfish purposes; a third, a mocking image from the astral light—are now as dead as the “god Pan,” or the proverbial door-nail. They have vanished into thin air as all unclean “hoaxes” must. Those who invented the “Mahatmas” 1,000 years old, seeing the *hoax* will not pay, may

well say they “have recovered from the fascination and taken their proper stand.” And these are *welcome* and *sure*“ to come out and turn upon all *their dupes* the vials of *their* sarcasm,” though *it will never be the last act of their* “life’s drama.” For the *true*, the *genuine* “Masters,” whose real names have, fortunately, never been given out, cannot be created and killed at the beck and call of the sweet will of any “opportunist,” whether inside or outside of the T.S. It is only the *Pans* of the modern nymphs and the *Luperci*, the greedy priests of the Arcadian god, who are, let us hope—dead and buried.

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This cry, “it is the cat!” will end by making the Theosophical Society’s “scape-goat” quite proud. It has already ceased to worry the victim, and now it is even becoming welcome and is certainly a very hopeful sign for the cause. Censure is hard when deserved; whenever unmerited it only shows that there is in the persecuted party something more than in the persecutors. It is the number of enemies and the degree of their fierceness, that generally decide on the merits and value of those they would brush off the face of the earth if they could. And, therefore, we close with this quotation from old Addison:

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*Censure, says an ingenious author, is the tax a man pays to the public for being eminent. It is a folly for an eminent man to think of escaping it, and a weakness to be affected by it. All the illustrious persons of antiquity, and, indeed, of every age in the world, have passed through this fiery persecution. There is no defense against reproach but obscurity; it is a kind of concomitant to greatness, as satires and invectives were an essential part of a Roman triumph.*

Dear, kind enemies of the “Tartarian termagant” how hard you do work to add to her eminence and greatness, to be sure!

*Lucifer*, June, 1889

THE YEAR IS DEAD,  
LONG LIVE THE YEAR!

December, 1888, and January, 1889

LUCIFER sends the best compliments of the season to his friends and subscribers, and wishes them a happy New Year and many returns of the same. In the January issue of 1888, Lucifer said: "Let no one imagine that it is a mere fancy, the attaching of importance to the birth of the year. The astral life of the earth is young and strong between Christmas and Easter. Those who form their wishes now, will have added strength to fulfill them consistently." He now repeats what was said and adds: Let no one mistake the importance and potency of numbers—as *symbols*. Everything in the Universe was framed according to the eternal proportions and combinations of numbers. "God geometrizes," and numbers and numerals are the fundamental basis of all systems of mysticism, philosophy, and religion. The respective festivals of the year and their dates were all fixed according to the Sun—the "father of all calendars" and of the Zodiac, or the Sun-god and the twelve great, but still minor gods; and they became subsequently sacred in the cycle of national and tribal religions.

A year ago, it was stated by the editors that 1888 was a dark combination of numbers: it has proved so since. Earthquakes and terrible volcanic irruptions, tidal waves and landslips, cyclones and fires, railway and maritime disasters followed each other in quick succession. Even in point of weather the whole of the past year was an insane year, an unhealthy and uncanny year, which shifted its seasons, played ducks and drakes with the calendar and laughed at the wiseacres who preside over the meteorological stations of the globe. Almost every nation was visited by some dire calamity. Prominent among other countries was Germany. It was in 1888 that the Empire reached, virtually, the 18th year of its unification. It was during the fatal combination of the four numbers 8 that it lost two of its Emperors, and planted the seeds of many dire Karmic results.

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What has the year 1889 in store for nations, men and theosophy, and what for Lucifer? But it may be wiser to forbear looking into Futurity; still better to pray to the now ruling Hosts of *Numbers* on high, asking them to be lenient to

us, poor terrene ciphers. Which shall we choose? With the Jews and the Christian Kabalists, the number of their deity—the God of Abraham and Jacob—is 10, the number of perfection, the One in space, or the Sun, astronomically, and the ten Sephiroth, Kabalistically. But the Gods are many; and every December, according to the Japanese, is the month of the *arrival*, or *descent of the Gods*; therefore there must be a considerable number of deities lurking around us mortals in astral space. The 3rd of January, a day which was, before the time of Clovis, consecrated to the worship of *Isis*—the goddess-patroness of Paris who has now changed her name and become *St. Geneviève*, “she who generates life” — was also set apart as the day on which the deities of Olympus visited their worshippers. The third day of every month was sacred to *Pallas Athene*, the goddess of Wisdom; and January the 4th is the day of Mercury (*Hermes*, *Budha*), who is credited with adding brains to the heads of those who are civil to him. December and January are the two months most connected with gods and numbers. Which shall we choose?—we ask again. “This is the question.”

We are in the Winter Solstice, the period at which the Sun entering the sign of Capricornus has already, since December 21st, ceased to advance in the Southern Hemisphere, and, cancer or crab-like, begins to move back. It is at this particular time that, every year, he is born, and December 25th was the *day of the birth of the Sun* for those who inhabited the Northern Hemisphere. It is also on December the 25th, Christmas, the day with the Christians on which the “Saviour of the World” was born, that were born, ages before him, the Persian *Mithra*, the Egyptian *Osiris*, the Greek *Bacchus*, the Phœnician *Adonis*, the Phrygian *Athis*. And, while at Memphis the people were shown the image of the god *Day*, taken out of his cradle, the Romans marked December 25th in their calendar as the day *natalis solis invicti*.

Sad derision of human destiny. So many Saviours of the world born unto it, so much and so often propitiated, and yet the world is as miserable—nay, far more wretched now than ever before—as though none of these had ever been born!

January—the *Januarius* dedicated to Janus the God of Time,

The ever revolving cycle, the double-faced God—has one face turned to the East, the other to the West; the *Past* and the *Future!* Shall we propitiate and pray to him? Why not? His statue had 12 altars at its feet, symbolizing the twelve signs of the Zodiac, the twelve great gods, the twelve months of the solar year and—the twelve Apostles of the Sun-Christ. *Dominus* was the title given to the Sun by the ancients; whence *dies domini, dies solis*, the “Sun-days.” *Puer nobis nascitur dominus dominorum*, sing the Roman Catholics on Christmas day. The statue of Janus-January carried engraved on his right hand the number 300, and on his left, 65, the number of the days in the Solar year; in one hand a sceptre, in the other a key, whence his name *Janitor*, the door-keeper of the Heavens, who opened the gates of the year at its beginning. Old Roman coins represent Janus *bifrons* on one side, and *a ship* on the other.

Have we not the right to see in him the prototype of Peter, the fisherman of the celestial ship, the Janitor of Paradise, to the gates of which he alone holds the keys? Janus presided over the four seasons. Peter presides over the four Evangelists. In Occultism the potency and significance of Numbers and Numerals lie in their right application and permutation. If we have to propitiate any mysterious number at all, we have most decidedly to address Janus-Peter, in his relation to the One—the Sun. Now what would be the best thing for Lucifer and his staff to ask from the latter for 1889? Our joint wishes are many, for our course as that of true love, does not run altogether smooth.

Thus addressing the bright luminary in perpetual *abscondito* beyond the eternal fogs of the great city, we might ask him for a little more light and warmth in the coming year than he gave us in the year 1888. We might entreat him at the same time to pour a little light into the no less befogged heads of those who insist on boycotting Lucifer under the extraordinary notion that he and Satan are one. Shine more on us, O, Helios Son of Hyperion! Those on whom thou beamest thy greatest radiance must be, as in the legend of Apollo, good and kind men. Alas, for us. The British isle will never be transformed, in this our cycle, into the isle of *Æa*, the habitat of Helios, as of the children of that god and the Oceanide Perseis. Is this the occult reason why our hearts become, with every year, colder and more indifferent to the woes of mankind, and that the very souls of the multitudes



seem turning into icicles? We ask thee to shed thy radiance on these poor shivering souls.

Such is Lucifer's, our Light-bearer's fervently expressed desire. What may be that of the Theosophical Society in general, and its working members in particular? We would suggest a supplication. Let us ask, Brethren, the Lord on High, the *One* and the Sole (or *Sol*), that he should save us from the impudent distortion of our theosophical teachings. That he should deliver us in 1889 from his pretended priests, the "Solar Adepts" as they dub themselves, and their sun-struck followers, as he delivered us once before; for verily "man is born unto trouble," and our patience is well-nigh exhausted!

But, "wrath killeth the foolish man"; and as we know that "envy slayeth the silly one," for years no attention was paid to our ever increasing parodists. They plagiarized from our books, set up sham schools of magic, waylaid seekers after truth by deceiving them with holy names, misused and desecrated the sacred science by using it to get money by various means, such as selling as "magic mirrors" for £15, articles made by common cabinet makers for £1 at most. With them, as with all charlatans, fortune-tellers, and *self-styled* "Adepts," the sacred science of *Theo-sophia* had become when kabalistically read—Dollar-Sophia. To crown all, they ended by offering, in a most generous manner, to furnish all those "awakened" who were "disappointed in Theosophical Mahatmas," with the *genuine* article in the matter of adeptship. Unfortunately the said article was traced in its turn to a poor, irresponsible medium, and something worse; and so that branch of the brood finally disappeared. It vanished one fine morning into thin air leaving its disconsolate disciples thoroughly "awakened" this time, and fully alive to the sad fact, that if they had acquired less than no occult wisdom, their pockets, on the other hand, had been considerably relieved of their weight in pounds and shillings. After their Exodus came a short lull. But now the same is repeated elsewhere.

The long metaphysical articles *borrowed* from "Isis Unveiled," and the *Theosophist* ceased suddenly to appear in certain Scotch papers. But if they disappeared from Europe, they reappeared in America. In August 1887 the

New York Path laid its hand heavily on “The Hidden Way Across the Threshold” printed in Boston, and proceeded to speedily squelch it, as “stolen goods.” As

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that Journal expresses itself about this pretentious volume, *copied* not written by its authors—“whatever in it is new is not true, and whatever true, is not new; scattered through its 600 pages, are wholesale thefts from ‘Paracelsus,’ ‘Isis Unveiled,’ the *Path* etc. etc.” This unceremonious appropriation of long paragraphs and entire pages “either verbatim or with unimportant changes,” — from various, mostly theosophical authors—a list of which is given in the *Path* (*Vide* August 1887, p. 159-160), might be left to its fate, but for the usual trick of our wretched imitators. In the words of the same editor, of the *Path*: “the claim is made that it (the book) is inspired by great adepts both living and dead, who have condescended to relent and give out these 600 pages, with certain restrictions *which prevent their going into any detail or explanation beyond those given by the unfortunate or unprogressed (theosophical) authors from whose writings they (the adepts) have either allowed or directed their humble disciple . . . to steal.*”

Before the appearance of modern Theosophical literature it was “Spirits” and “Controls” that were ever in the mouths of these folk; now the living “adepts” are served up with every sauce. It is ever and always Adepts here, Hierophants there. And this only since the revival of Theosophy and its spread in America in 1884, note well; after the great soap-bubble conspiracy between Madras and Cambridge against the Theosophical Society, had given a new impetus to the movement. Up to that year, Spiritualists, and professional mediums especially, with their “controls” and “guides,” could hardly find words of vituperation strong enough to brand the “adepts” and deride their “supposed powers.” But since the Herodic “slaughter of the Innocents,” when the S.P.R. turned from the Theosophical to the Spiritualistic phenomena, most of the “dear departed” ones took to their heels. The angels from the “Summer Land” are going out of fashion just now, for Spiritualists begin to know better and to discriminate. But because the “adept” idea, or rather their philosophy, begins to gain ground, this is no reason why pretenders of every description should travesty in their

ungrammatical productions the teachings, phraseology, and Sanskrit terms out of theosophical books; or why, again, they should turn round and make people believe that these were given them by other "Hierophants," in their opinion, far higher, nobler and grander than our teachers.

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The great evil of the whole thing is, not that the truths of Theosophy are adopted by these blind teachers, for we should gladly welcome any spread, by whatever means, of ideals so powerful to wean the world from its dire materialism—but that they are so interwoven with mis-statements and absurdities that the wheat cannot be winnowed from the chaff, and ridicule, if not worse, is brought to bear upon a movement which is beginning to exercise an influence, incalculable in its promise of good, upon the tendency of modern thought. How shall men discern good from evil, when they find it in its close embrace? The very words, "Arhat," "Karma," "Maya," "Nirvana," must turn enquirers from our threshold when they have been taught to associate them with such a teeming mass of ignorance and presumption. But a few years ago, all these Sanskrit terms were unknown to them, and even now they repeat them phonetically, parrot-like, and without any understanding. And yet they will cram them into their silly books and pamphlets, and fill these with denunciations against great men, the soles of whose feet they are unworthy to gaze upon!

Though false coin is the best proof of the existence of genuine gold, yet, the false deceives the unwary. Were the "pretensions" of the T.S. in this direction founded on mere hypothesis and sentimental gush, like the identification of many a materialized spirit, the theosophical "Mahatmas" and their society would have dissolved long ago like smoke in space under the desperate attacks of the holy alliance of Missionaries and *pseudo*-Scientists, helped by the half-hearted and misinformed public. That the Society has not only survived but become thrice stronger in numbers and power, is a good proof again of its own intrinsic merit. Moreover, it has gained also in wisdom; that practical, matter-of-fact wisdom which teaches, through the mouth of the great Christian "Mahatma," not to scatter pearls before swine, nor to attempt to put new wine into old bottles.

Therefore, let us, in our turn, recite a heartfelt conjuration (the ancient name for prayer), and invoke the help of the powers that be, to deliver us from the painful necessity of exposing these sorry “make-believes” in Lucifer once again. Let us ring the theosophical *Angelus* thrice for the convocation of our theosophical friends and readers. If we would draw on us the attention of *Sol* on High, we must repeat that which the ancients did and which was the

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origin of the R. C. *Angelus*. The first stroke of the bell announced the *coming of Day*; the appearance of *Gabriel*, the morning messenger with the early Christians, of *Lucifer*, the morning star, with their predecessors. The second bell, at noon, saluted the glory and exalted position of the *Sun*, King of Heavens; and the third bell announced the approach of *Night*, the Mother of Day the Virgin, Isis-Mary, or the Moon. Having accomplished the prescribed duty, we pour our complaint and say:

Turn thy flaming eye, O Sol, thou, golden-haired God, on certain transatlantic mediums, who play at being thine Hierophants! Behold, they whose brain is not fit to drink of the cup of wisdom, but who, mounting the quack’s platform, and offering for sale bottled-up wisdom, and the *homunculi* of Paracelsus, assure those of the gaping mouths that it is the true Elixir of *Amrita*, the water of immortal life! Oh, bright Lord, is not thine eye upon those barefaced robbers and iconoclasts of the systems of the land whence thou risest? Hear their proud boasting: “We teach men the science to *make man*”(!). The lucrative trade of vendors of Japanese amulets and *Taro* cards, with indecent double bottoms, having been cut off in its full blossom in Europe, the Eastern Wisdom of the Ages is now abandoned. According to their declarations, China, Japan, old India and even the Swedenborgian “land of the Lost Word” have suddenly become barren; they yield no more their crop of true adepts; it is America, they say, the land of the Almighty Dollar, which has suddenly opened her bowels and given birth to full-blown Hierophants, who now beckon to the “Awakened.” *Mirabile dictu!* But if so, why should thy self-styled priests, O great Sun, still offer as a bait a mysterious *Dwija*, a “twice born,” who can only be the product of the land of Manu? And why should those pretended and bumptious servants of thine, oh Sûrya-Vikarthana, whose rich

crop of national adepts, if “home-made,” must rejoice as a natural rule in purely Anglo-Saxon and Celto-German names, still change their Irish patronymics for those of a country which, they say, is effete and sterile, and whose nations are “dying out”? Has another Hindu name and names been discovered in the Great Hub, as a peg and pegs whereon to hang the modest pretensions of the Solar Magi? Yea, they belie truth, O Lord, and they bend their tongues like quill pens for lies. But—“the false prophets shall become wind for the word *is not* in them.”

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TO DARE, TO WILL, TO ACHIEVE AND KEEP SILENT is the motto of the true Occultist, from the first adept of our fifth Race down to the last Rosecroix. True Occultism, *i.e.*, genuine *Raj-Yoga* powers, are not pompously boasted of, and advertised in “Dailies” and monthlies, like Beecham’s pills or Pears’ soap. “Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes; for the wise man feareth *and keeps silent*, but the fool layeth open his folly.”

Let us close by expressing a hope that our Theosophist brothers and sisters in America will pause and think before they risk going into a “Solar” fire. Above all, let them bear in mind that true occult knowledge can never be bought. He who has anything to teach, unless like Peter to Simon he says to him who offers him money for his knowledge—“Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of (*our inner*) God may be purchased with money” — is either a black magician or an Impostor. Such is the first lesson taught by Lucifer to his readers in 1889.

*Lucifer*, January, 1889

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End of Volume I

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