

The Morning Star
By an unpopular philosopher

**Musings on the Bright Morning Star and title of the
London periodical launched by H.P. Blavatsky in 1887.**



The radiant beam destroys the lethal darkness of night¹

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Ever Onward

IN ITS CEASELESS AND, ALSO, TOO RAPID FLIGHT along the path of Eternity, Time has taken one mighty stride more: a step of twelve months' duration toward the last day of our present age; also of the lives of many of us within, and of all of us beyond — the ultimate frontier of our senile century. In twelve years more the curtain will have dropped, shutting out the footlights from the actors and all the latter from the public view . . .

It is only then that many a scene enacted in the sad drama of life, and many an hitherto misunderstood attitude of some of the chief actors in that Mystery of the Age called Theosophy and its Societies, will appear in its true light.

The Verdict of Posterity

In those days of the forthcoming age Solomon shall sit in judgment over David. The century that shall be born shall pass its sentence over the century which is now fast dying. And, the grandchildren of the modern theosophists will have to find a verdict for, or against their sires. What shall it be? Perhaps, there are those who know, but who of them shall tell! Those who can see into the womb of futurity and could prophesy, keep aloof from the sneers of the Philistines. In our days of Iconoclasm and prosaic realism he is no philosopher — not even an “unpopular” one — who dabbles in things unseen. Let us abstain, since Theosophists are denied the privileges granted to certain astrologers — let us rather render to Caesar that which belongs to Caesar; the full homage due to the eminent virtues which characterize our age. How glaringly its bright image falls on the dark screen of the Past! What a contrast between its Christian purity, fortitude, charity, chastity and unselfishness, and the vices and dissipation of — say — its long departed predecessor, the age of the Imperial and Pagan Rome! This is affirmed in scores of works, preached from thousands of pulpits. What will be the *impartial* opinion of Century XX about its predecessor is easy to see. Our historians are the sons and descendants of those patristic biographers who

¹ Parallel reading: “Lucifer is Christos, Inner Light,” in our Secret Doctrine’s Third Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.

made of the Emperor Julian an apostate, and of Constantine a Saint.¹ Fear not then the verdict of thy immediate posterity, O Century XIX. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy womb, in any case. For, whether that fruit be green or over-ripe, godly or diabolical, so long as thy rotten civilisation goes on producing historians, so long shall thy policy of plunder and bloodshed be called civic and military virtues, and sham, lie and hypocrisy stand proclaimed as Sparto-Christian ethics.

Our “Morning Star”

Lucifer is one year old this month. The child is growing and waxing strong in Spirit — if not altogether as much in wisdom, as one might like it. Its temper is often complained of, and it has made enemies. But its friends are many, and in certain parts of the world it is petted and even spoiled — temper notwithstanding. Our baby is teething, in truth, and therefore subject at times to fits of pessimism and biting. But its humour will soften down with age; and as material for its food is gradually collecting for the second year, it may yet be proved, even to its enemies, a precocious and well-informed, if even an unwelcome child.

A Wicked Charge

Meanwhile some subscribers have thought fit to throw a shadow on his second birthday. *Lucifer*, they say, does not live up to its promises; *i.e.*, it does not sufficiently “bring to light the hidden things of darkness” concerning the Book of God and the “friends of God,” the Jewish Patriarchs. Payne Knight and Inman have done so far more fully and efficiently, etc., etc.

Respected Subscribers! *Lucifer* is Venus only in astronomy; nor have its editors ever bargained to equal, far less surpass, in the exposition of phallic mysteries, Inman and Payne Knight, or even their miniature “*bijou*” edition, Hargrave Jennings. The methods used by these gentlemen are, no doubt, very scientific; but, they are too realistic and too crude and too one-sided for us to follow. If people will have truth, then, of course, the “hidden things of darkness” in the Sinaitic Symbology have to be unveiled. Let us then *re-reveal* Revelation by all means.

But why should we go out of our way to use the Bible as a colonial store of spices with which to flavour our Western viands, or turn *Lucifer* into a Scotland Yard detective staff for patriarchal delinquents? The amorous debates of the *dramatis personae* in Pentateuchal esotericism, are very well in archaeological works of research, but entirely out of place in a theosophical magazine. *Lucifer* is intended to review and preach modern, not ancient ethics, and metaphysical as against materialistic philosophy. The *faux pas* of Lot and David, “the friends of God,” belong, together with the poetical glyphs of “fish,” “heel” and “thigh,” to scriptural symbology. It was an archaic attempt at feline cleanliness, and speaks rather in favour than to the detriment of the authors of the revealed book. Those who prefer naked sincerity of language, are asked to turn to the Prophets.

¹ [It should have been the other way around: Constantine was “probably beatified because he killed his son with his own hands, boiled monks in pitch, disembowelled his wife, and made himself as miserably famous as Nero.” See *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (REPLY TO THE MISTAKEN CONCEPTIONS OF THE ABBÉ ROCA CONCERNING MY OBSERVATIONS ON CHRISTIAN ESOTERICISM) IX pp. 230 & *fn.*]

The Age of Ovid or Hosea?

The word of the “Lord” unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, was surely addressed to our age of civilization. The latter is truly the reincarnation of the docile prophet, who, acting upon the advice of his God, loves “a woman beloved of her friends, yet an adulteress,” looks to many gods and loves “flagons of wine.”

What have we to envy in the “stiff-necked” people of Israel? From its Sodom and Gomorrah, its worship of the Golden Calf, the innocent pastimes of King Solomon, down to the practice and policy of those whom the Christian Saviour addressed as “the generation of vipers,” we are the worthy followers of the “chosen people.” We have made of the “upper ten”¹ our high places wherein we worship, and the symbology of modern society is of as concealing a nature as that of the Biblical writers. Their symbology pales before ours. The magic wand of our century transforms in its astuteness everything under the sun into something else, in social, political and daily life. The hideous marks of moral leprosy are made to appear as glorious scars from wounds received on the battlefield of honour; black tresses are changed into yellow hair, and the adipose tissue of carrion metamorphosed into the poor man’s butter. We live in days of a moral (alias immoral) *féerie*,² in which every Mr. Hyde puts on the mask of Dr. Jekyll. It is the latter who is the symbolism of our age, and the former its ever more and more irrepressible tendency. Thus the cloak of esotericism, which modern society, the representative and keynote of the average population in every nation, throws over its sins of commission and omission, is as thick as Biblical symbolism. Only the two have changed and inverted their *rôles*; it is the external cloak of ancient symbolism which has become the inner life and true aspirations of modern Mrs. Grundy.³

Then and Now

To the adept versed in the modern society-symbolism the allegories of old become like unto a transparent artifice of an innocent infant when confronted with and brought face to face with the Machiavellistic craft and cunning of what we know as Society-ways. The two symbols of modern culture respectively referred to as RELIGIOUS CANT⁴ and drawing room PROPRIETY have reached a practical perfection under their mask, undreamt of by the Rebekahs and Jezebels, the Jacobs and even Solo-

¹ [Or “Upper ten thousand,” a phrase coined in 1852 by American poet Nathaniel Parker Willis to describe the upper circles of New York, and hence of other major cities. In 1875, both Adam Bissett Thom and Kelly’s Directory published books entitled *The Upper Ten Thousand*, which listed members of the aristocracy, the gentry, officers in the British Army and Navy, members of Parliament, Colonial administrators, and members of the Church of England. The usage of this term was a response to the broadening of the British ruling class which had been caused by the Industrial Revolution. — Wikipedia]

² [A major genre of 19th century France, alongside melodrama and vaudeville. Influenced by romanticism’s interest in folklore and mythology, *féerie* was marked by supernatural subjects, often inspired by fairy tales, using supernatural creatures such as fairies and many machines and stage effects to create a grand spectacle representing magic and metamorphosis. — Cf. Wikipedia]

³ [A figurative name for an extremely conventional or priggish person, a personification of the tyranny of conventional propriety. A tendency to be overly fearful of what the respectable might think is also referred to as Grundyism. Although she began life as a minor character in Thomas Morton’s play *Speed the Plough* (1798), Mrs. Grundy was eventually so well established in the public imagination that Samuel Butler, in his novel *Erewhon*, could refer to her in the form of an anagram (as the goddess Ydgrun). As a figure of speech she can be found throughout European literature. — Wikipedia]

⁴ [Singing in a whining way, from the Latin *cantare*, to sing. Cant was at first a beggar’s whine, hence hypocrisy. Cf. W.W. Skeat’s *Etymological Dictionary of English*, 1835-1912. — ED. PHIL.]

mons of old. They have become the two exotic, gigantic plants of modern culture. Therefore is it that *Lucifer* refuses to follow in the footsteps of our modern Symbologists. He believes that the muddy water of the “Rivers of (modern) Life,” ought to receive more attention than the “Rivers of (ancient) Life.” The modern revealer of the archaic “things of darkness” is too much coloured with the general tendency of the age to be more than one-sided, and therefore he can hardly be correct in the interpretation of its symbolism. He sees in the smooth dark waters of these “Rivers” the reflection of his own century, when he does not actually mirror himself personally, in them. Hence, he perceives everywhere phallic worship; and primitive symbolism can represent to his distorted fancy nought but what he would find in it. Why give preference to imagined, over real events? The Ahabs and Jezebels who kill the prophets are as plentiful in our day as in the days of old. The modern Mrs. Potiphar,¹ finding no Joseph to offend her, expends her slanderous energies to the detriment of her best “lady friends.” Sweet are her whispers into the greedy ear of Janus-faced Grundy, who, nodding her venerable head, listens to them drinking slander like heavenly dew. The modern Lot requires not to be made drunk with wine to give a mother to Moab; the XIXth century Epopees repeat on a grander scale the adventures of Helen and Sita. Only Homer and Valmiki have now made room for Zola, and the modern literature of the realistic school in France, puts to blush by the sincerity of its language all the private dialogues of the “Lord” with his prophet Hosea. What have we to envy in the ancients?

Where are we going to?

*Ahimé!*² We live in strange and weird times. Ours are the days of Sheffield plating on the moral plane. True silver has almost gone out of use and has fallen, like the Indian rupees, far below par. This is not a time for golden rules, for people prefer moral pinchbeck. Nature, as well as man, seems to crack on all her seven seams, and the universal screws have assuredly got loose somewhere, if not everywhere, on their hinges, after the fashion of this earth. Paradox flourishes and axioms are running to seed. Nature and man vie with each other in shams. The Lord God of our state religions is proclaimed a god of mercy, of peace and love, and at the same time he is a “man of war”; “the Lord our God” who “fights for Israel.” “Thou shalt not kill,” says the commandment; and on this principle improvements in murderous, man-killing engines are being invented by the “humble” servants of the said Power — for a consideration. Rev F. Bosworth, a *man of God and peace*, has just been rewarded by the paternal Government with a premium of £2,000, for “the advancement of gunnery science.”

Esoterically explained, this “advancement” means, I suppose, in political symbology a cannon possessing a ten-fold greater power and rapidity for killing the bodies of one’s enemies, than the fulmination of Church canons for killing their enemies’

¹ [A person in the Book of Genesis’ account of Joseph. Potiphar is said to be the captain of the palace guard and is referred to without name in the Quran. Joseph, sold into slavery by his brothers, is taken to Egypt where he is sold to Potiphar as a household slave. Potiphar makes Joseph the head of his household, but Potiphar’s wife, furious at Joseph for resisting her attempts to seduce him, accuses him falsely of attempted rape. Potiphar casts Joseph into prison, to the notice of Pharaoh through his ability to interpret the dreams of other prisoners. — Wikipedia]

² [Italian for alas!]

souls. Hence, the reward to ingenious parsons. Every Christian nation is busy now with preparing guns and rifles superior to those possessed by its neighbours. Duels fought between two nations seem to be judged by a different code of honour from those between two individuals. Battles won by *trickery*, are laid down to “military genius” and regarded as “the poetical and imaginative side of the war.”¹ Trickery in commercial or private business is punished with hard labour. In the former case, the cunning and unexpected employment of weapons of superior murderousness and devilish cruelty are lauded and their successful use made to bring the highest military honours; whereas the private antagonist who uses an unequal weapon or takes an unfair advantage in any way is counted a murderer and a felon. So, statesmen who “lie for their country’s good” and derive benefits for it by foul deception have promotion and honours; while their less culpable imitator who plays with marked cards and loaded dice, or “pulls” a race, is scourged out of decent company. So chronic and congenital is our obtuseness, that we have never yet been able to distinguish the one moral baseness from the other. But to a reflective philosopher, the difference between such a modern statesman or general and a modern blackleg and a coward is imperceptible.

Still more puzzling!

And what of the inventive and Reverend “Bosworths”? Have they become so familiarized with the Salvation Army motto of “blood and fire” as to be led to pass by an easy transition to their actual shedding and use on the physical plane? They pray and repent and glorify their Lord and therefore fear nought for themselves. They are the modern Ahab’s of whom the word of the Lord came to Elijah, the Tishbite, saying:

Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? *because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring, the evil in his days: but in his [innocent] son’s days will I bring the evil upon his house.*²

Therefore do the Reverend “Bosworths” snap their fingers at *Karma* and say:

*Après moi le déluge.*³

Why, then, should any one object to help toward the glory of one’s country through human butchery and rivers of blood? What harm can befall any one through it, provided he only *humble* himself before the “Lord” like Ahab? And do not both the belligerent armies pray? Does any such human slaughter on a battle field begin without that Lord being almost simultaneously addressed and implored for help by both parties?

Query: Does the kind and merciful Father in Heaven — one with Him, we are taught, who said that “all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” — listen to both sides, or to one? And can even He, to whom all is possible, perform the miracle

¹ *Fort-nightly Review*, Lord Wolseley

² *1 Kings* xxi, 29

³ [Popular legend holds that Louis XV said, “Après moi, le déluge,” After me, the flood. This quotation is attributed to Madame de Pompadour, although it is not certain that even she ever said it. Historians point out that at the time the fable of the four cats became current: the thin cat was the people, the fat cat the financiers, the one-eyed cat the ministry, and the blind cat the King who saw nothing and refused to see anything. — Cf. Wikipedia]

of sending victory to both his humble petitioners? To which of the two does the good God listen? Is it to the weakest of the two, or to the strongest? O, Problems of the Age! Who can solve them save his grace the Archbishop of Canterbury?¹ But he will hardly pay any attention to an “unpopular philosopher” who is not even a conservative member of Parliament. What great general was it who said that Providence was always on the side of the heaviest battalions?²

By their fruits shall ye know them

What is the difference between a devout Christian and an Atheist? The problem was philosophically solved by a little girl in the United States. The anecdote is told by one who heard it himself — “our mutual friend” — the very popular American, Edmund Russell.

On the day before the funeral of Peter Cooper — the late millionaire and philanthropist — at New York, Mr. Russell went to a “bakeshop.” Three little girls were serving behind the counter. It was a holiday in the city, as everyone was preparing to honour the memory of one of the people’s benefactors by following the procession.

“Only to think!” reflectively said one of the girls. “He” (meaning Peter Cooper) “owned a whole pew in church and never went inside one.”

“Well,” replied another, “he was perhaps a Unitarian?”

“No, he was not,” put in the third girl. “He was a philanthropist.”

“Oh dear no,” groaned the first who had spoken. “He was an Atheist.”

To which the youngest of all the three begged to be informed of the meaning of that term. “Well, and what is an Atheist anyhow?” she asked.

“An Atheist,” gravely explained the eldest — “means a man *who believes in doing all the good he can in this world and taking his chance in the next.*”

Uncanny Signs

The outlook for the British Isles is hopelessly depressing. *La boule à cancan* (“Gossip ball”), as Anatole France calls our mother earth, is losing her spin, and the Cosmic dynamo is emptying itself. The worst of all is, that we do not know whom to hold responsible. What ails the divine COSMOCRATORES? India is exporting her superfluous “monsoon clouds” to Europe *via* Port Said, and the rain-God seems to have permanently established his sprinkling machine over Great Britain. Siberia sends her hyperborean frosts to the southwards, and herself flirts with the tropics. Kangaroos have appeared in Surrey; and parrots may soon be heard warbling their saw-filing *staccato*, and birds of paradise sun their jewelled plumes on palm trees in Archangel. Everything evidently is upside down, the times are out of joint, and the screws of the Cosmic “Carpenter” are working loose. In vain our men of Science waste their Greek and Latin over the problem. What is it, what can the matter be? What makes all this

¹ [See our “Open Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury,” in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [“Providence is always on the side of the big battalions” has been attributed to Roger de Rabutin, Comte de Bussy. In a letter to François Louis Henri Leriche (1770), Voltaire wrote “on dit que Dieu est toujours pour les gros bataillons,” it said that that God is always on the side of the heaviest battalions. But in his Notebooks, he also wrote: God is not on the side of the big battalions, but on the side of those who shoot best. Variations such as “providence is always on the aide of the last reserve” has been attributed to Napoleon. — ED. PHIL.]

sidereal and terrestrial “tohu-bohu”¹ *à la mode*, of Chaos? The Globe is shrinking, we hear; and the firmament thickening with foreign matter of all sorts. The ceaseless soot and smoke from millions of chimneys, furnaces, railway engines and other fires may perchance have angered the Powers above. Naturally enough, for they must object to being smoked out of their Svargas and Valhallas and other pleasant detached Elysiums, by the products of incomplete fuel-combustion. As for our poor mother Earth, what with the ever extending mines, canals, and tunnels, aqueducts, drains, sewers and subways, her venerable hide is becoming so honey-combed as to resemble the skin of a morphiomaniac addicted to subcutaneous injections.

How long she will suffer her robust flanks to be thus scarified, who can tell? The astrologer on the staff of the *Pall Mall Gazette* has just prophesied that October will bring us terrible disasters, floods, houses falling and earthquakes.

Woe to London if the latter should happen, for at the first strong shock every tall mansion within the seismic area will crumble into its own basement and cellar; at the second all the streets sink into the subways; and at the third, the four and a half millions of houseless people will find themselves hoisted into cerulean space, *en route* for the starry land of Silence, by the explosion of all the gas, steam, dynamite and other expansive products of modern ingenuity. We doubt if there will be a sufficient number of ready-made wings and golden harps in stock against the *dies irae*.² But it is at least consoling to feel that there will be ample fire and brimstone for all who are “predestined” by God to migrate to tropical regions.

A lawn party in aid of the Episcopal Church

For myself I confess my utter incapacity to know where this exact line will be drawn. Perhaps some Daniel among our subscribers may be able to “come to judgment.” Is it only Presbyterians who can be saved? The conundrum is sufficient to puzzle any philosopher when he reads something like the following, which we copy, *verbatim*, from the original handbill sent us by an American friend. The scene is at Baraboo, Wisconsin:

LAWN PARTY

At the Residence of

Mrs. R.H. Strong,

For the benefit of the

EPISCOPAL BUILDING FUND,

Under the Auspices of

4 — FOUR YOUNG GENTLEMEN — 4

Of the Congregation.

On Wednesday Eve, July 18th.

HAMMOCKS, ICE-CREAM,

¹ תֹּהוּ וְבוֹהוּ is a Biblical Hebrew term found in *Genesis* i, 2. Numerous interpretations were made by various theological sources, though it is usually translated as waste and void, formless and empty, or chaos and desolation. It describes the condition of the earth before God said, “let there be light” (*ibid.*, i, 3). Precise translation of the phrase is difficult, as only the first word, tohu, appears to have any independent meaning. — Cf. Wikipedia]

² [day of wrath]

ATTRACTIVE YOUNG LADIES,
AND A VERY WARM WELCOME!

Gates open at 8 o'clock.

The Episcopal Church is the American section of the Church of England; its bishops are just now preaching over here, in our cathedrals, and sitting in conclave at Lambeth Palace. What will his grace of Canterbury say to the new of raising funds for Church building? Is it immoral for publicans to hire “pretty barmaids” to dispense “something hot” across the counter, but moral for Episcopalians to employ “attractive young ladies” and “hammocks” to give a “very warm welcome” to visitors “under the auspices of four young gentlemen of the congregation”? *Lucifer* shrouds his face in his mantle to hide the blush which his ignorance excites. He recalls the memories of previous incarnations when, as Venus, he saw the sacred mysteries debased into the lascivious rites of Venus-Astarte, wherein the highest ladies gave themselves to increase the revenues of the Temple, and the *Kadeshuth* of the Jews¹ performed the ignoble duties of the depraved Vallabacharyas of India!

Meanwhile, join us in wishing many happy returns of his birthday, to *Lucifer*, “Son of the Morning.” May he grow to equal in profundity his elder brother, *The Theosophist* of Madras; in suavity and graciousness his elder sister *The Path*, of New York; and in combative zeal and daring *Le Lotus* which flourishes on the banks of the Seine. *Lucifer* is just in time to salute the fledgling of the Theosophical literature the *Hestia*, which our brother, Mr. Sturdy, has just founded in New Zealand as a local organ of Theosophy.

That nothing should be wanting to make the birthday pleasant, our tireless old President-Founder,² patriarchal beard and the rest, turns up on a special mission of peace and organization confided to him by the Executive Council at Adyar. A less cool and patient man might well despair of pouring oil upon the troubled waters of European theosophy through which our ship has been labouring during the past twelve months.

*Floreat Adyar.*³



“Lucifer is Christos, Inner Light,” in our Secret Doctrine’s Third Proposition Series.

¹ Vide 2 Kings xxiii, 7

² [H.S. Olcott]

³ [May Adyar flourish]