

*Musings of an
Unpopular Philosopher*



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On Lucifer, the London periodical, launched by Madame Blavatsky in 1887.

A radiant beam destroying the darkness of night.¹

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Ever Onward.

In our days of iconoclasm and prosaic realism he is no philosopher — not even an “unpopular” one — who dabbles in things unseen.

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.

Our historians are the sons and descendants of those patristic biographers who made of the Emperor Julian an apostate, and of Constantine a Saint.

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 Cæsar that which belongs to Cæsar; 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 Pa-

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

gan 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 made of the Emperor Julian an apostate, and of Constantine a Saint.¹ Fear not then the verdict of thy immediate posterity, Oh 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.

“Lucifer” reviews and preaches modern, not ancient ethics, and metaphysical against materialistic philosophy.

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 personæ* 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

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.*]

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.

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



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. — *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*.]

Then and Now.

The moderns believe that the muddy water of the rivers of modern life ought to receive more attention than the rivers of ancient life.

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 CANT¹ and drawing room PROPRIETY have reached a practical perfection under their mask, undreamt of by the Rebekahs and Jezebels, the Jacobs and even Solomons 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,² 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 Sitata. 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?



¹ [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.]

² [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*.]

Where are we going to?

Duels fought between two nations seem to be judged by a different code of honour from those between two individuals.

*Ahimé!*¹ 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’ 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.”² 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.



¹ [Italian for alas!]

² *Fort-nightly Review*, Lord Wolseley

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.*¹

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

*Après moi le deluge.*²

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?

Providence is always on the side of the heaviest battalions.

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 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? Oh, Problems of the Age! Who can solve them save his grace the Archbishop of Canterbury?³ 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?⁴



¹ 1 Kings xxi, 29

² [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*.]

³ [See our “Open Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury,” in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

⁴ [“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.]

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 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 Svarghas 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,

¹ תוהו ובוהו is a Biblical Hebrew term found in *Genesis* 1. 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.*, 1, 3). Precise translation of the phrase is difficult, as only the first word, *tohu*, appears to have any independent meaning. — Cf. *Wikipedia*.]

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 iræ*.¹ 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,
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

¹ [day of wrath]

“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

H.P. BLAVATSKY



¹ See *2 Kings* xxiii, 7

² [H.S. Olcott]

³ [May Adyar flourish]

On the seventh wonder of the ancient world, and the eighth of the modern.

Eiffel Tower is a child of its country, wondrous in its size, useless in its object, as shaky and vacillating as the Republican soil upon which it is built, and without a single moral feature of its seven ancestors.

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JUST BACK FROM UNDER THE FAR-REACHING SHADOW of the eighth wonder of the World — the gigantic iron carrot that goes by the name of the Eiffel Tower. Child of its country, wondrous in its size, useless in its object, as shaky and vacillating as the Republican soil upon which it is built, it has not one single moral feature of its seven ancestors, not one trait of atavism to boast of. The architectural Leviathan of 1889 is not even — in the question of usefulness — on a par with the New York Statue of Liberty, that would-be rival of the ancient Pharos. It is simply one of the latest fungi of modern commercial enterprise, grown on the soil of cunning speculation, in order to attract numberless flies — in the shape of tourists from the four points of the world — which it very conscientiously does. Even its splendid engineering does not add to its usefulness, but forces even an “unpopular philosopher” to exclaim, “*Vanitas vanitatum; omnia vanitas.*”² Shall modern civilization still lift its nose and sneer at its ancient and elder sister? [356]

The wonders of the world, the seven marvels of the Pagans, will never be replaced in our days. M. de Lesseps’ admirers may look contemptuously back on the causeway built by Dexiphanes, three centuries before our conceited era, but the astral atoms of himself, as those of his son, Sostratus the Cnidian, may rest undisturbed and need feel no jealousy. The architecture of the marble tower of Pharos erected “to the gods, the Saviours, for the benefit of sailors” has hitherto remained unrivalled, in the public good derived from it, at all events. And this we may say, despite the creation of the Long Island Statue of Liberty.



¹ [This essay, as is indicated by this parenthical notation of the Editor of *Lucifer*, was written by H.P. Blavatsky soon after her return from a trip to France and the Island of Jersey, where she stayed from four to five weeks.

While at Fontainebleau, France, she wrote the greater part of *The Voice of the Silence*. This was most likely in the second half of July, 1889. Her stay in Jersey lasted until approximately the middle of August of that year, although the exact dates are difficult to ascertain from available evidence. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

² [Quoting *Ecclesiastes* i, 2: “*Vanitas vanitatum dixit Ecclesiastes omnia vanitas,*” *i.e.*, Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, all is vanity. — ED. PHIL.]

The “wonders” of our age are the ephemera and the nightmares of the times.

For verily, all the wonders of our age are destined to become but the ephemera of the century that is slowly approaching us, while they remain but the dreams and often the nightmares of the present era. All this will surely pass away and be no more. A seismic breath in Egypt may occur tomorrow and the earth will then “open her mouth” and swallow the waters of the Canal of Suez, and it will become an impassable bog. A *terremotos*,¹ or worse still a *succussatore*, as they are called in South America, may lift the Long Island with its “Liberty” and toss them both a hundred feet high in the blue air, but to drop them down, covering their watery grave with the never-drying salt tears of the Atlantic Ocean. Who can tell? “*Non deus prævidet tantum sed et divini ingenii viri*” saith sly Cicero in his *De divinatione*,² treating of cosmic phenomena. And the same thing threatens Lutetia that was, or Paris that is, and our own British Isles. No; never has God predicted as much as has the divine intellect of man; surely not. Nor would Cicero’s feelings change, had he ever read the *War Cry* in his day or entertained a couple of Adventists. And what would be [357] Cicero, after all, in the presence of a modern Materialist? How would he feel? I asked myself. Would he confess himself non-plussed, or would he remark — as Job did to the new philosopher, his persecutor — “hast thou not poured me [modern wisdom] out as milk and curdled me [it] like cheese,”³ enough to show us what it is?

Modern statues, whether equestrian or pedestrian, can never put to blush the astral eidolon of the Olympian Jupiter by Phidias.

Where are ye, Oh relics of the departed Pagan glories! Shall we suspect in you solar myths, or hope that we see a reincarnation of the hanging gardens of Babylon in the glass and iron whale and its two gigantic glass umbrella sticks named the Crystal Palace building? Avaunt⁴ such insulting thoughts! The restless eidolon — if any be left — of haughty Semiramis can still admire her work in the astral gallery of eternal images, and call it “unparalleled.” The *Mausoleum* of Artemisia remains unrivalled by that of the proudest raised only “to the gods of the Stock-Exchange, the Destroyers of mutual capital.”

Fane of the Ephesian Diana, what temple shall ever equal thee in poetry! Modern statues, whether equestrian or pedestrian, that now fill the halls of the French Exhibition, which of you can ever put to blush the astral eidolon of the Olympian Jupiter by Phidias? To which of the sculptors or painters of our proud era shall a modern

¹ [earthquakes]

² [This passage has remained untraced in spite of thoroughgoing search through the text of this essay attributed to Cicero. Its translation would be: “Not a god alone, but men gifted with godlike ability can foresee.” — *Boris de Zirkoff*.

Note by Philaletheians: It appears that this passage is from a Dissertation by Cassius Maximus Tyrius, *i.e.*, “ου θεος οιδε μονος, αλλα και ανθρωπων.” Thomas Taylor, in his translation of *The Dissertations of Maximus Tyrius*, London: C. Whittingham, 1804, renders this sentence as:

“Indeed, not only divinity foresees droughts, abundance of rain, earthquakes, eruptions of fire, hurricanes, and mutations of the air, but among men also such as are of a demoniacal genius.”

Vol. I, Dissert. III, p. 34. — ED. PHIL.]

³ [*Job* x, 10]

⁴ [Go away!]

Philippus of Thessalonica address the words spoken to the divine Greek artist: “Oh Phidias, either the God has descended from heaven on earth to show himself to thee, or it is thou who hast ascended to contemplate the God!”

“No doubt but we are (not) the people, and Wisdom was (not) born with us,” nor shall it die with us, let us add.

In what pale insignificance dwindles down the pleasure of inhaling the smell of Russian leather, in the shoe gallery at the Paris Exhibition?

Long rows of pottery and bronzes, of cunning weapons, toys and shoes and other wares are daily inspected by admiring crowds on the Exhibition grounds. Well, the [358] “unpopular philosopher” would unhesitatingly exchange all these for a glance at the collection of Mr. Flinders Petrie now to be viewed at Oxford Mansions. Those unique treasures have been just exhumed on the site of the Kahun, of the twelfth dynasty. Between the industry of the XIXth century A.D., and that of the XXVIth B.C. (accepting, to avoid a quarrel, the chronology of the modern antiquarians and excavators) the palm must be awarded to the latter, and it is easy to show why. All these weapons, domestic and agricultural implements, foreign weights, necklaces, toys, coloured threads, textiles, and shoes, now on view, have that unique feature about them that they carry us back to the days of Enoch and Methuselah, on the authority of Biblical chronology. The exhibits, we are told, relate to the twelfth dynasty 2,600 years B.C., if we have to believe archaeological calculations, *i.e.*, they show to us what kind of shoes were worn 250 years before the deluge. The idea alone that one may be gazing at the very sandals that have, perhaps, dropped from the feet of the first Grand Master and founder of Masonry, Enoch, when “God took him,” must fill the heart of every Masonic believer in *Genesis* with reverential delight. Before such a grand possibility, into what pale insignificance dwindles down the pleasure of inhaling the smell of Russian leather, in the shoe gallery at the Paris Exhibition. No believer in “godly Enoch, the first born of Cain-Seth-Jared,” Khanoch the Initiator, no true Mason ought to run over to gay Paris, with such a treasure within his reach.

Today we see only the skeleton of the pyramid of Cheops, whereas Herodotus examined it with its outer coating of immaculate marble.

But we have still the Pyramids of Egypt left to us to admire and unravel — if we can. The pyramid of Cheops is the sphinx and wonder of our century, as it was that of the age of Herodotus. We see only its skeleton, whereas the “Father of History” examined it with its outer coating of immaculate marble. It was defiled, however, with the record of 1,600 talents¹ spent only in radishes, onions and garlic [359] for the workmen. Let us pause, before we turn our olfactory organ from the emanations of such unpoetical food. For with the ancients was wisdom, though it passeth now our understanding. Let us hesitate before we pass judgment lest we should be caught in our own craftiness. The said onions and garlic may be as symbolical as the Pythagorean beans.² Let us humbly wait till better understanding descends upon us. *Quién sa-*

¹ £444,000 in English money.

² [Consult “Pythagoras’ ban of beans,” in our Down to Earth Series. — ED. PHIL.]

be?¹ The beautiful outer casing of both the pyramids — of Cheops and Sen-Saophis — has disappeared, engulfed in the palaces of Cairo and other cities. And with them are gone inscriptions and engraved records and cunning hieratic symbols. Does not the “Father of History” confess his dislike of speaking of things divine, and does he not avoid dwelling on symbology? Let us seek light and help from the great learned Orientalists, the artificers of Greek Speech and Akkadian Lampesuk. We have hitherto learnt many a strange story. Perchance we may be yet told that these “radishes, onions and garlic” are but so many “*solar* myths” and — blush for our ignorance.

What was the fate of the Colossus of Rhodes, the last of the seven wonders of the world?

But what was the fate of the last of the Seven Wonders of the World? Where are we to look for the relics of the brazen giant, the Colossus of Rhodes, whose mighty feet trod upon the two moles which formed the gate of the harbour and between whose legs ships passed full sail, and sailors hurried with their votive offerings? History tells us that the *chef-d’œuvre* of the disciple of Lysippus, who passed twelve years in making it, was *partially* destroyed by an earthquake 224 B.C. It remained for about 894 years in ruins. Historians are not in the habit of telling people what became of the remains of the six wonders; nor that every great nation possessed its seven wonders — witness China, which had its porcelain Tower of Nankin,² now, as says a writer, only “found piecemeal in walls of peasants’ huts.” [360] Yet it is rumoured in some old chronicles that the poor Colossus was sold to a Jew.

In 683 AD³ a Saracen leader plundered his remains and sold them to a Jew. Earlier, the Rhodians themselves had received large sums of money from pious donors to repair and put up the Colossus anew. But they chose to cheat their gods and their fellowmen.

Queer volumes may be found at times in the shops of old Russian dissenters at Moscow. One of such is a thick in folio in the Slavonian language called, “The acts, clerical and lay, from the Chronicles of Baronius, collected in old monasteries; translated from the Polish and printed in the metropolis of Moscow, in the year of the Lord 1791.” In this very curious volume full of archaic facts and statements, historical and long forgotten records beginning with the year 1, one can read under the year A.D. 683, on page 706, the following:

The Saracen having destroyed and despoiled the Roman land ceaseth not his wicked depredation even on the sea.⁴ Their leader Maguvius,⁵ strong and terrible, returneth to Rhodos the island, marcheth to the brazen idol, whose name was Colossus (*sic*), the idol exalted as the seventh World-Wonder, and which stood over the Rhodos harbour. His height was twenty-an-one-hundred feet

¹ [Who knows?]

² C.A.F. Guetzlaff, *Hist. China*, Vol. I, p. 372. [This reference has not been identified. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

³ [653?]

⁴ The original of this passage being written in old Church Slavonian can hardly be translated in all its originality, which is very queer.

⁵ [Muslim Caliph Muawiyah I, 602–680 A.D.]

(*stopa*).¹ Soil-covered and moss-grown was the idol since its upper part fell to the ground, but he had remained otherwise whole to that very day. Maguvius overthrew the trunkless legs and *sold them with the rest to a Jew*. Sad was the end of that world wonder.

And elsewhere the chronographer adds that the Jew's name was Aaron of Edessa. He is not the only one to volunteer the information. Other old writers add that the Jew having broken up the Colossus, with the help of the Saracen warriors, into pieces, loaded 90 camels with them. The value of the brass material reached £36,000 English money in the Eastern markets. *Sic transit gloria mundi*.²

Thus ended the last of the wonders of the Pagan World, to make room for the wonder of the Christian era — the ever-speculating, money-making Jew.

Before the Jew and the Mussulman, moreover, the Rhodians themselves are said to have received large sums of [361] money from pious donors to repair and put up the Colossus anew. But they cheated their gods and their fellow-men. They divided the money, the honest trustees, and put an end to legal enquiry by throwing the blame on the Delphic oracle, which had forbidden them, as they averred, to restore the Colossus from its ruins. And thus ended the last of the Wonders of the old Pagan world, to make room for the wonder of the Christian era — the ever-speculating, money-making Jew. There is a legend in Slavonian Folklore — or shall we say a prophecy? — that after the lapse of untold ages, when our globe will have become decrepit and old through wear and tear, underground speculation and geological zeal, this “best of the possible worlds” — in Dr. Pangloss' estimation — shall be bought at auction by the Jews — broken up for old metal, pounded into a formless head, and rolled into balls as shares. After which the sons of Jacob and Abraham will squat around the sorry relics on their haunches, and hold counsel as to the best means of transferring it to the next Jewish bazaar and palming off the defunct globe on some innocent Christian in search of a second-hand planet. Such is the legend.

Few are those Potentates who do not find themselves head over ears in debt with one or other king of Jewry.

Se non è vero è ben trovato.³ At any rate the prophecy is suggestive even if allegorical. For indeed, if the Colossus of Rhodes could be sold for old brass to one Jew with such facility, then every crowned Colossus in Europe has reason to tremble for his fate. Why should not every Sovereign thus pass, one after the other, into the hands of the Jew in general, since they have been in that clutching grasp for some time already? If the reader shakes his head and remarks on this that the royal Colossi are not made of brass, but occupy their respective thrones “by the Grace of God” and are “God's anointed” — he will be meekly told that as “the Lord giveth, so the Lord taketh” and that he is “no respecter of persons.” Besides which there is somehow or somewhere Karma involved in that business. Few are those Potentates who do not

¹ Some classics give it only 105 feet or 70 cubits.

² [Thus passes the glory of the world]

³ [Italian proverb, *i.e.*, “Even if it is not true, it is well conceived.” Probably from the Greek, “Και αν δεν είναι αλήθεια, καλώς επινοήθηκε.” — ED. PHIL.]

find themselves head over [362] ears — golden thrones and breadless subjects — in debt with one or other king of Jewry. After all, the “Lord,” by whose grace they are all enthroned, from the late King Soulouk to the latest Prince of Bulgaria, is the same El-Shaddai, the omnipotent, the mighty Jehovah-Tsabaōth, the god whom they, or their fathers — which is all one to him “to whom a thousand years are as one day” — have unlawfully carried off from his “Holy of Holies” and confined in their own altars.¹ The sons of Israel are, in fact and justice, his legitimate children, his “chosen people.” Hence it would only be a piece of retributive justice, a kind of tardy Nemesis, should the day come when the Jew, claiming his own, shall carry off as old material the last of the kings, before he proceeds to paint afresh, as new goods, the globe itself.

H.P. BLAVATSKY



¹ [Look up “The Origin of Good and Evil” and “The Original Sin is a Jewish invention,” in our Black versus White Magic Series.” — ED. PHIL.]

Public opinion is the most dangerous of all foes.

Constructive criticism is the benefactor of thought.

First published in: *Lucifer*, Vol. XI, No 61, September 1892 (posthumously), pp. 9-11. Republished in: *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (LITERARY JOTTINGS ON CRITICISM, AUTHORITIES, AND OTHER MATTERS) XIII pp. 243-47.

THEOSOPHISTS AND EDITORS OF THEOSOPHICAL PERIODICALS are constantly warned by the prudent and the faint-hearted, to beware of giving offence to “authorities,” whether scientific or social. Public Opinion, they urge, is the most dangerous of all foes. Criticism of it is fatal, we are told. Criticism can hardly hope to make the person or subject so discussed amend or become amended. Yet it gives offence to the many, and makes Theosophists hateful. “Judge not, if thou wilt not be judged,”¹ is the habitual warning.

It is precisely because Theosophists would themselves be judged and court impartial criticism, that they begin by rendering that service to their fellow-men. Mutual criticism is a most healthy policy, and helps to establish final and definite rules in life — practical, not merely theoretical. We have had enough of theories. The Bible is full of wholesome advice, yet few are the Christians who have ever applied any of its ethical injunctions to their daily lives. If one criticism is hurtful so is another; so also is every innovation, or even the presentation of some old thing under a new aspect, as both have necessarily to clash with the views of this or another “authority.” I maintain, on the contrary, that criticism is the great benefactor of thought in general; and still more so of those men who never think for themselves but rely in everything upon acknowledged “authorities” and social routine. [244]

For what is an “authority” upon any question, after all? No more, really, than a light streaming upon a certain object through one single, more or less wide, chink, and illuminating it *from one side only*. Such light, besides being the faithful reflector of the *personal views* of but one man — very often merely that of his special hobby — can never help in the examination of a question or a subject from all its aspects and sides. Thus, the authority appealed to will often prove but of little help, yet the profane, who attempts to present the given question or object under another aspect and in a different light, is forthwith hooted for his great audacity. Does he not attempt to upset solid “authorities,” and fly in the face of respectable and time-honoured routine thought?

¹ [Matthew vii, 1-2]

Friends and foes! Criticism is the sole salvation from intellectual stagnation.¹ It is the beneficent goad which stimulates to life and action — hence to healthy changes — the heavy ruminants called Routine and Prejudice, in private as in social life. Adverse opinions are like conflicting winds which brush from the quiet surface of a lake the green scum that tends to settle upon still waters. If every clear stream of independent thought, which runs through the field of life outside the old grooves traced by Public Opinion, had to be arrested and to come to a standstill, the results would prove very sad. The streams would no longer feed the common pond called Society, and its waters would become still more stagnant than they are. Result: it is the most orthodox “authorities” of the social pond who would be the first to get sucked down still deeper into its ooze and slime.

Men, in their ferocious egoism and sex-privilege, have fought hard but have been defeated on almost every line.

Things, even as they now stand, present no very bright outlook as regards progress and social reforms. In this last quarter of the century it is women alone who have achieved any visible beneficent progress. Men, in their ferocious egoism and sex-privilege, have fought hard, but have been defeated on almost every line. Thus, the younger generations of women look hopeful enough. They will hardly swell the future ranks of stiff-necked and cruel Mrs. Grundy.² Those who today lead her no longer invincible battalions on the war-path, are the older Amazons of respectable society, and [245] her young men, the male “flowers of evil,” the nocturnal plants that blossom in the hothouses known as clubs. The Brummels of our modern day have become worse gossips than the old dowagers ever were in the dawn of our century.

But the Unpopular Philosopher has little to fear.

He examines his enemies of both sexes with the calm and placid eye of one who has nothing to lose. And he feels contempt for all the little puddles that stagnate lazily on the flat and marshy fields of social life.

To oppose or criticize such foes, or even to find the least fault with them, is to commit the one unpardonable social sin. An Unpopular Philosopher, however, has little to fear, and notes his thoughts, indifferent to the loudest “war-cry” from those quarters. He examines his enemies of both sexes with the calm and placid eye of one who has nothing to lose, and counts the ugly blotches and wrinkles on the “sacred” face

¹ [Cf. “It was a custom with Apelles, to which he most tenaciously adhered, never to let any day pass, however busy he might be, without exercising himself by tracing some outline or other — a practice which has now passed into a proverb. (*Ne supra crepidam sutor judicaret*, “Let not a shoemaker judge above his shoe.”) It was also a practice with him, when he had completed a work, to exhibit it to the view of the passers-by in his studio, while he himself, concealed behind the picture, would listen to the criticisms. . . . Under these circumstances, they say that he was censured by a shoemaker for having represented the shoes with one latchet too few. The next day, the shoemaker, quite proud at seeing the former error corrected, thanks to his advice, began to criticize the leg; upon which Apelles, full of indignation, popped his head out and reminded him that a shoemaker should give no opinion beyond the shoes — a piece of advice which has equally passed into a proverbial saying.” (Pliny the Elder: *Natural History* Bk. xxxv, § 84) — ED. PHIL.]

² [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*.]

of Mrs. Grundy, as he would count the deadly poisonous flowers on the branches of a majestic *mancenillier*¹ — through a telescope from afar. He will never approach the tree, or rest under its lethal shade.

“Thou shalt not set thyself against the Lord’s anointed,” saith David. But since the “authorities,” social and scientific, are always the first to break that law, others may occasionally follow the good example. Besides, the “anointed” ones are not always those of the Lord; many of them being more of the “self-anointed” sort.

Truth is always the result of conflicting opinions, like the spark that flies out from the shock of two flint stones struck together.

Thus, whenever taken to task for disrespect to Science and its “authorities,” which the Unpopular Philosopher is accused of rejecting, he demurs to the statement. To reject the *infallibility* of a man of Science is not quite the same as to repudiate his learning. A *specialist* is one, precisely because he has some one specialty, and is therefore less reliable in other branches of Science, and even in the general appreciation of his own subject. Official school Science is based upon temporary foundations, so far. It will advance upon straight lines so long only as it is not compelled to deviate from its old grooves, in consequence of fresh and unexpected discoveries in the fathomless mines of knowledge.

Science is like a railway train which carries its baggage van from one terminus to the other, and with which no one except the railway officials may interfere. But passengers who travel by the same train can hardly be prevented from quitting the direct line at fixed stations, to proceed, if they so like, by diverging roads. They should have this option, [246] without being taxed with libelling the chief line. To proceed *beyond* the terminus on horseback, cart or foot, or even to undertake pioneer work, by cutting entirely new paths through the great virgin forests and thickets of public ignorance, is their undoubted prerogative. Other explorers are sure to follow; nor less sure are they to criticize the newly-cut pathway. They will thus do more good than harm. For truth, according to an old Belgian proverb, is always the result of conflicting opinions, like the spark that flies out from the shock of two flints struck together.

To reject the infallibility of a man of Science is not quite the same as to repudiate his learning.

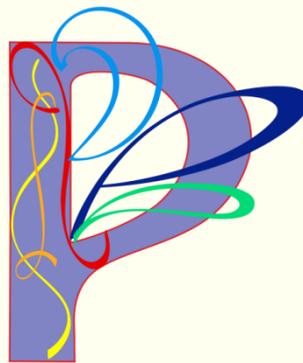
Why should men of learning be always so inclined to regard Science as their own personal property? Is knowledge a kind of indivisible family estate, entailed only on the elder sons of Science? Truth belongs to all, or ought so to belong; excepting always those few special branches of knowledge which should be preserved ever secret, like those two-edged weapons that both kill and save. Some philosopher compared knowledge to a ladder, the top of which was more easily reached by a man unencumbered by heavy luggage, than by him who has to drag along an enormous bale of old conventionalities, faded out and dried. Moreover, such a one must look back every moment, for fear of losing some of his fossils. Is it owing to such extra weight that so few of them ever reach the summit of the ladder, and that they affirm there is *nothing* beyond the highest rung *they* have reached? Or is it for the sake of preserv-

¹ [*Hippomane mancinella*]

ing the old dried-up plants of the Past that they deny the very possibility of any fresh, living blossoms, on new forms of life, in the Future?

Whatever their answer, without such optimistic hope in the ever-becoming, life would be little worth living. What between “authorities,” their fear of, and wrath at the slightest criticism — each and all of them demanding to be regarded as infallible in their respective departments — the world threatens to fossilize in its old prejudices and routine. Fogyism grins its skeleton-like sneer at every innovation or new form of thought. In the great battle of life for the survival of the fittest, each of these forms becomes in turn the master, and then the tyrant, forcing back all new growth as its own was checked. But the true Philosopher, however [247] “unpopular,” seeks to grasp the actual life, which, springing fresh from the inner source of Being, the rock of truth, is ever moving onward. He feels equal contempt for all the little puddles that stagnate lazily on the flat and marshy fields of social life.

H.P. BLAVATSKY



Aliment for the soul by Thomas Taylor, the English Platonist.¹

All men pursue good, either real or apparent; but the multitude, who only pursue the apparent, which at the same time they fancy to be real good, may be aptly compared, according to the simile of Maximus, to men searching for silver and gold in the dark.

¹ *The Dissertations of Maximus Tyrius*. London: C. Whittingham, 1804. Vol I, XIX, p. 192 *fn*.

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- WHY DO ANIMALS SUFFER
- WHY THE HOLLOW MEN PRIZE THEIR VICE

