

*Humanity seems to progress  
by inventing one discovery  
after the other.*



## ***Abstract and train of thoughts***<sup>1</sup>

**The dark cycle of Kali Yuga has brought back a Babel of modern thought, compared with which the “confusion of tongues” itself appears a harmony.**

**Let us summon disciples and fill them with sacred fire.**

**Let us establish mysteries and teach the Doctrine.**

**Let us build a temple tower whose top may reach unto heaven.**

Part 1. A scientist is wiser in his own conceit than seven Theosophists that can render a reason. 3

No new philosophy is set up in *The Secret Doctrine*, only the hidden meaning of some of the religious allegories of antiquity is given, light being thrown on these by the esoteric sciences, and the common source is pointed out, whence all the world-religions and philosophies have sprung. 3

Part 2. Truth must represent an unbroken continuity. It must have no gaps and contradictions, no broken or missing links. 10

And which of our modern religions, sciences or philosophies, is free from such defects? One who affirms that the Universe and Man are objects of the senses only, and who fatally chains thought within the region of senseless matter (as do the Darwinian evolutionists), is at best a sophiaphobe when not a philosophaster — never a philosopher. The period when nascent Humanity, following the law of the natural and dual evolution, was descending along with spirit into matter is closed. We are now helping matter to ascend toward spirit; and to do that we have to help substance to disentrall itself from the viscous grip of sense. 10



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<sup>1</sup> Frontispiece by Costis Magarakis. And a tribute to modern science, on page 9, by Voracious Panda.

## Part 1.

# A scientist is wiser in his own conceit than seven Theosophists that can render a reason.

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. VII, No. 41, January 1891, pp. 353-60; republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BABEL OF MODERN THOUGHT) XIII pp. 83-92.

**No new philosophy is set up in *The Secret Doctrine*, only the hidden meaning of some of the religious allegories of antiquity is given, light being thrown on these by the esoteric sciences, and the common source is pointed out, whence all the world-religions and philosophies have sprung.**

O ye Lords of Truth who are cycling in eternity . . . save me from the annihilation in this Region of the *Two Truths*.

— *The Book of the Dead*

That the world moves in cycles, and events repeat themselves therein, is an old, yet ever new truism. It is new to most,

Firstly, because it belongs to a distinct group of occult aphorisms *in partibus infidelium*,<sup>1</sup> and our present-day Rabbis and Pharisees will accept nothing coming from *that* Nazareth;

Secondly, because those who will swallow a camel of whatever size, provided it hails from orthodox or accepted authorities, will strain and kick at the smallest gnat, if only its buzz comes from theosophical regions.

Yet this proposition about the world cycles and ever-recurring events, is a very correct one. It is one, moreover, that people could easily verify for themselves. Of course, the people meant here are men who do their own thinking; not those others who are satisfied to remain, from birth till death, pinned, like a thistle fastened to the coat-tail of a country parson, to the beliefs and thoughts of the goody-goody majority.

We cannot agree with a writer (was it Gilpin?) who said that the grandest truths are often rejected, “not so much for want of direct evidence, as for want of inclination to search for it.” This applies but to a few. Nine-tenths of the people will reject the most overwhelming evidence, even if it be brought to them without any trouble to themselves, only because it happens to clash with their personal interests or prejudices; especially if it comes from unpopular quarters. We are living in a highly moral atmosphere, high sounding — in words. Put to the test of practice, however, the morality of this age in point of genuineness and reality is of the nature of the black skin of the “negro” minstrel: assumed for show and pay, and washed off at the close of every performance. In sober truth, our opponents — advocates of official science, defenders of orthodox religion, and the *tutti quanti*<sup>2</sup> of the detractors of Theosophy — who claim to oppose our works on grounds of *scientific* “evidence,” “public good and truth,” strongly resemble advocates in our courts of law — miscalled of justice. These in

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<sup>1</sup> [i.e., in the regions of the infidels, a phrase used of a titular bishop of no diocesan jurisdiction, usually in non-Christian countries.]

<sup>2</sup> [all and sundry]

their defence of robbers and murderers, forgers and adulterers, deem it to be their duty to browbeat, confuse and bespatter all who bear witness against their clients, and will ignore, or if possible, suppress, all evidence which goes to incriminate them. Let ancient Wisdom step into the witness-box herself, and prove that the goods found in the possession of the prisoner at the bar, were taken from her own strong-box; and she will find herself accused of all manner of crimes, fortunate if she escape being branded as a common fraud, and told that she is no better than she should be.

What member of our Society can wonder then, that in this our age, pre-eminently one of shams and shows, the “theosophists” *teachings* so (mis-)called, seem to be the most unpopular of all the systems now to the fore; or that materialism and theology, science and modern philosophy, have arrayed themselves in holy alliance against theosophical studies — perhaps because all the former are based on chips and broken-up fragments of that primordial system. Cotton complains somewhere, that the “metaphysicians have been learning their lesson for the last four (?) thousand years,” and that “it is now high time that they should begin to teach something.” But, no sooner is the possibility of such studies offered, with the complete evidence into the bargain that they belong to the oldest doctrine of the meta-physical philosophy of mankind, than, instead of giving them a fair hearing at least, the majority of the complainers turn away with a sneer and the cool remark: “Oh, you must have invented all you say yourself!”

Dear ladies and gentlemen, has it ever occurred to you, how truly grand and almost *divine* would be that man or woman, who, at this time of the life of mankind, could invent anything, or discover that which had not been invented and known ages before? The charge of being such an inventor would only entitle the accused to the choicest honours. For show us, if you can, that mortal who in the historical cycle of our human race has taught the world something entirely new. To the proud pretensions of this age, Occultism — the real Eastern Occultism, or the so-called Esoteric Doctrine — answers through its ablest students: Indeed all your boasted knowledge is but the reflex action of the by-gone Past. At best, you are but the modern popularisers of very ancient ideas. Consciously and unconsciously you have pilfered from old classics and philosophers, who were themselves but the superficial recorders — cautious and incomplete, owing to the terrible penalties for divulging the secrets of initiation taught during the mysteries — of the primæval Wisdom. Avant! your modern sciences and speculations are but the *réchauffé* dishes of antiquity; the dead bones (served with a *sauce piquante* of crass materialism, to disguise them) of the intellectual repasts of the gods. Ragon was right in saying in his *Maçonnerie Occulte*, that:

Humanity only *seems* to progress in achieving one discovery after the other, whereas in truth it only finds that which it had lost. Most of our modern inventions for which we claim such glory, are, after all, things people were acquainted with three and four thousand years back.<sup>1</sup> Lost to us through wars, floods and fire, their very existence became obliterated from the memory of man. And now modern thinkers begin to *rediscover* them once more.

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<sup>1</sup> The learned Belgian Mason would be nearer the mark by adding a few more ciphers to his four thousand years.

Allow us to recapitulate a few such things and thus refresh your memory.

Deny, if you can, that the most important of our present sciences were known to the ancients. It is not Eastern literature only, and the whole cycle of those esoteric teachings which an over-zealous Christian Kabbalist, in France, has just dubbed “the *accursed sciences*” — that will give you a flat denial, but profane classical literature, as well. The proof is easy.

Are not physics and natural sciences but an amplified reproduction of the works of Anaxagoras, of Empedocles, Democritus and others? All that is taught *now*, was taught by these philosophers *then*. For they maintained — even in the fragments of their works still extant — that the Universe is composed of eternal atoms which, moved by a subtle internal Fire, combine in millions of various ways. With them, this “Fire” was the divine Breath of the Universal Mind, but now, it has become with the modern philosophers no better than a blind and senseless Force.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore they taught that there was neither Life nor Death, but only a constant *destruction of form*, produced by perpetual *physical* transformations. This has now become by *intellectual* transformation, that which is known as the physical correlation of forces, conservation of energy, law of continuity, and what not, in the vocabulary of modern Science. But “what’s in a name,” or in new-fangled words and compound terms, once that the identity of the essential ideas is established?

Was not Descartes indebted for his *original* theories to the old Masters, to Leucippus and Democritus, Lucretius Anaxagoras and Epicurus? These taught that the celestial bodies were formed of a multitude of atoms, whose vortical motion existed from eternity; which met, and, rotating together, the heaviest were drawn to the centres, the lightest to the circumferences; each of these concretions was carried away in a fluidic matter, which, receiving from this rotation an impulse, the stronger communicated it to the weaker concretions. This seems a tolerably close description of the Cartesian theory of Elemental Vortices taken from Anaxagoras and some others; and it does look most suspiciously like the “vortical atoms” of Sir W. Thomson!

Even Sir Isaac Newton, the greatest among the great, is found constantly mirroring a dozen or so of old philosophers. In reading his works one sees floating in the air the pale images of the same Anaxagoras and Democritus, of Pythagoras, Aristotle, Timæus of Locri, Lucretius, Macrobius, and even our old friend Plutarch. All these have maintained one or the other of these propositions,

- 1 That the smallest of the particles of matter would be sufficient — owing to its infinite divisibility — to fill infinite space;
- 2 That there exist two Forces emanated from the Universal Soul, combined in numerical proportions (the centripetal and centrifugal “forces,” of the latter day scientific saints);
- 3 That there was a mutual attraction of bodies, which *attraction* causes the latter to, what we now call, *gravitate* and keeps them within their respective spheres;

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<sup>1</sup> [See “What is Matter and what is Force?” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

- 4 They hinted most unmistakably at the relation existing between the weight and the density, or the quantity of matter contained in a unit of mass;
- 5 And taught that the attraction (gravitation) of the planets toward the Sun is in reciprocal proportion to their distance from that luminary.

Finally, is it not a historical fact that the rotation of the Earth and the heliocentric system were taught by Pythagoras — not to speak of Hiketas, Heraclitus, Ekphantos, etc. — over 2,000 years before the despairing and now famous cry of Galileo, “*Eppur si muove*”?<sup>1</sup> Did not the priests of Etruria and the Indian *Rishis* still earlier, know how to attract lightning, ages upon ages before even the *astral* Sir B. Franklin was formed in space? Euclid is honoured to this day — perhaps, because one cannot juggle as easily with mathematics and figures, as with symbols and words bearing on unprovable hypotheses. Archimedes has probably forgotten more in his day, than our modern mathematicians, astronomers, geometricians, mechanicians, hydrostaticians and opticians ever knew. Without Archytas, the disciple of Pythagoras, the application of the theory of mathematics to practical purposes would, perchance, remain still unknown to our grand era of inventions and machinery. Needless to remind the reader of that which the Āryans knew, as it is already recorded in *The Theosophist* and other works obtainable in India.

Wise was Solomon in saying that “there is *no new* thing under the Sun”; and that everything that *is* “hath been already of old time, which was before us”<sup>2</sup> — save, perhaps, the theosophical doctrines which the humble writer of the present is charged by some with having “invented.” The prime origin of this (very complimentary) accusation is due to the kind efforts of the S.P.R. It is the more considerate and kind of this “world famous, and learned Society” of “Researches,” as its scribes seem utterly incapable of inventing anything original themselves — even in the way of manufacturing a commonplace illustration. If the inquisitive reader turns to the article which follows, he will have the satisfaction of finding a curious proof of this fact, in a reprint from old Izaak Walton’s *Lives*, which our contributor has entitled “Mrs. Donne’s Astral Body.” Thus even the scientifically *accurate* Cambridge Dons are not, it seems, above *borrowing* from an ancient book; and not only fail to acknowledge the debt, but even go to the trouble of presenting it to the public *as new original matter*, without even the compliment of inverted commas. And thus — all along.

In short, it may be said of the scientific theories, that those which are true are not new; and those which are new — are not true, or are at least, very dubious. It is easy to hide behind “merely *working* hypotheses,” but less easy to maintain their plausibility in the face of logic and philosophy. To make short work of a very big subject, we have but to institute a brief comparison between the old and the new teachings. That which modern science would make us believe, is this: the atoms possess *innate* and immutable properties. That which Esoteric, and also exoteric, Eastern philosophy calls *divine* Spirit-Substance (*Purusha-Prakriti*) or eternal Spirit-Matter, one inseparable from the other, modern Science calls Force and Matter, adding as we do (for it is a Vedāntic conception), that, the two being inseparable, matter is but an ab-

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<sup>1</sup> [And yet it moves!]

<sup>2</sup> [Ecclesiastes i, 9-10]

straction (an illusion rather). The properties of matter are, by the Eastern Occultists, summed up in, or brought down to, attraction and repulsion; by the Scientists, to gravitation and affinities. According to this teaching, the properties of complex combinations are but the necessary results of the composition of elementary properties; the most complex existences being the physico-chemical automata, called men. Matter from being primarily scattered and inanimate, begets life, sensation, emotions and will, after a whole series of consecutive “gropings.” The latter non-felicitous expression (belonging to Mr. Tyndall), forced the philosophical writer, Delboeuf<sup>1</sup> to criticize the English Scientist in very disrespectful terms, and forces us in our turn, to agree with the former. Matter, or anything equally conditioned, once that it is declared to be subject to immutable laws, *cannot* “grope.” But this is a trifle when compared with dead or *inanimate* matter, producing *life*, and even psychic phenomena of the highest mentality!

Finally, a rigid determinism reigns over all nature. All that which has once happened to our *automatic* Universe, had to happen, as the future of that Universe is traced in the smallest of its particles or “atoms.” Return these atoms, they say, to the same position and order they were in at the first moment of the evolution of the physical Kosmos, and the same universal phenomena will be repeated in precisely the same order, and the Universe will once more return to its present conditions. To this, logic and philosophy answer that it cannot be so, as the properties of the particles vary and are changeable. If the atoms are eternal and matter indestructible, these atoms can never have been born; hence, they can have nothing *innate* in them. Theirs is the one homogeneous (and we add *divine*) substance, while compound molecules receive their properties, at the beginning of the life cycles or *manvantaras*, from *within without*. Organisms cannot have been developed from dead or *inanimate* matter, as, firstly, such matter does not exist, and secondly, philosophy proving it conclusively, the Universe is not “subjected to fatality.” As Occult Science teaches that the universal process of differentiation begins anew after every period of *Mahā-pralaya*, there is no reason to think that it would slavishly and blindly repeat itself. *Immutable* laws last only from the incipient to the last stage of the universal life, being simply the effects of primordial, intelligent and entirely free action. For Theosophists, as also for Dr. Pirogoff, Delboeuf and many a great independent modern thinker, it is the Universal (and to us *impersonal* because *infinite*) Mind, which is the true and primordial Demiurge.

What better illustrates the theory of cycles, than the following fact? Nearly 700 years B.C., in the schools of Thales and Pythagoras, was taught the doctrine of the true motion of the earth, its form and the whole heliocentric system. And in 317 B.C. Lactantius, the preceptor of Crispus Cæsar, the son of the Emperor Constantine, is found teaching his pupil that the earth was a plane surrounded by the sky, itself composed of fire and water! Moreover, the venerable Church Father warned his pupil against the *heretical doctrine of the earth’s globular form*, as the Cambridge and Oxford “Father Dons” warn their students now, against the pernicious and superstitious doctrines of Theosophy — such as Universal Mind, Re-incarnation and so on. There is a resolution tacitly accepted by the members of the T.S. for the adoption of a

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Revue Philosophique* of 1883, where he translates such “gropings” by *atonnements successifs*.

proverb of King Solomon, paraphrased for our daily use: “A scientist is wiser in his own conceit than seven Theosophists that can render a reason.” No time, therefore, should be lost in arguing with them; but no endeavour, on the other hand, should be neglected to show up their mistakes and blunders. The scientific conceit of the Orientalists — especially of the youngest branch of these — the Assyriologists and the Egyptologists — is indeed phenomenal. Hitherto, some credit was given to the ancients — to their philosophers and *Initiates*, at any rate — of knowing a few things that the moderns could not rediscover. But now even the greatest Initiates are represented to the public as fools. Here is an instance. On pages 15, 16 and 17<sup>1</sup> in the Hibbert Lectures of 1887 by Prof. Sayce, on *The Ancient Babylonians*,<sup>2</sup> the reader is brought face to face with a conundrum that may well stagger the unsophisticated admirer of modern learning. Complaining of the difficulties and obstacles that meet the Assyriologist at every step of his studies; after giving “the dreary catalogue” of the formidable struggles of the interpreter to make sense of the inscriptions from broken fragments of clay tiles; the Professor goes on to confess that the scholar who has to read these cuneiform characters, is often likely “to put a false construction upon isolated passages, the context of which must be supplied from conjecture.”<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding all this, the learned lecturer *places the modern Assyriologist higher than the ancient Babylonian Initiate*, in the knowledge of symbols and his own religion!

The passage deserves to be quoted *in toto*:

It is true that many of the sacred texts were so written as to be intelligible only to the initiated; but the initiated were provided with keys and glosses, *many of which are in our hands* (?) . . . We can penetrate into the real meaning of documents which to him (the ordinary Babylonian) were a sealed book. Nay, more than this, the researches that have been made during the last half-century into the creed and beliefs of the nations of the world both past and present, *have given us a clue* to the interpretation of these documents *which even the initiated priests did not possess*.

The above (the italics being our own) may be better appreciated when thrown into a syllogistic form.

*Major premise:* The ancient Initiates had keys and glosses to their esoteric texts, *of which they were the INVENTORS*.

*Minor premise:* Our Orientalists have *many* of these keys.

*Conclusion:* Ergo, the Orientalists have a clue which the *Initiates themselves did not possess!!*

Into what were the Initiates, in such a case, initiated? — and who invented the blinds, we ask.

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<sup>1</sup> Introduction

<sup>2</sup> [Archibald Henry Sayce, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by the religion of the Ancient Babylonians*. London: Williams & Norgate, 1888]

<sup>3</sup> p. 14



Few Orientalists could answer this query. We are more generous, however; and may show in our next, that into which our modest Orientalists have never yet been initiated — all their alleged “clues” to the contrary.



## Part 2.

# Truth must represent an unbroken continuity. It must have no gaps and contradictions, no broken or missing links.

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**And which of our modern religions, sciences or philosophies, is free from such defects? One who affirms that the Universe and Man are objects of the senses only, and who fatally chains thought within the region of senseless matter (as do the Darwinian evolutionists), is at best a sophiaphobe when not a philosophaster<sup>1</sup> — never a philosopher. The period when nascent Humanity, following the law of the natural and dual evolution, was descending along with spirit into matter is closed. We are now helping matter to ascend toward spirit; and to do that we have to help substance to disenthral itself from the viscous grip of sense.**

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech . . .

— *Genesis xi, vii*

Having done with modern physical Sciences we next turn to Western philosophies and religions. Every one of these is equally based upon, and derives its theories and doctrines from heathen, and moreover, *exoteric thought*. This can easily be traced from Schopenhauer and Mr. Herbert Spencer, down to Hypnotism and so-called “Mental Science.” The German philosophers modernize Buddhism; the English are inspired by Vedāntism; while the French, borrowing from both, add to them Plato, in a Phrygian cap, and occasionally, as with Auguste Comte, the weird sex-worship of Mariolatry of the old Roman Catholic ecstasies and visionaries. New systems, yclept philosophical, new sects and societies, spring up now-a-days in every corner of our civilized lands. But even the highest among them agree on no one point, though each claims supremacy. This, because no science, no philosophy — being at best, but a fragment broken from the WISDOM RELIGION — can stand alone, or be complete in itself. Truth, to be complete, must represent an unbroken continuity. It must have no gaps, no missing links. And which of our modern religions, sciences or philosophies, is free from such defects? Truth is One. Even as the palest reflection of the Absolute, it can be no more dual than is absoluteness itself, nor can it have *two* aspects. But such truth is not for the majorities, in our world of illusion — especially for those minds which are devoid of the *noëtic* element. These have to substitute for the high spiritual and *quasi* absolute truth the relative one, which having two sides or aspects, both conditioned by appearances, lead our “brain-minds” — one to intellectual scientific materialism, the other to materialistic or anthropomorphic religiosity. But even that kind of truth, in order to offer a coherent and complete system of something, has, while naturally clashing with its opposite, to offer no gaps and contradictions, no broken or missing links, in the special system or doctrine it undertakes to represent.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. “Philosophers and philosophicules,” in our Living the Life Series.

And here a slight digression must come in. We are sure to be told by some, that this is precisely the objection taken to theosophical expositions, from *Isis Unveiled* down to *The Secret Doctrine*. Agreed. We are quite prepared to confess that the latter work, especially, surpasses in these defects all the other theosophical works. We are quite ready to admit the faults charged against it by its critics — that it is badly arranged, discursive, over-burdened with digressions into by-ways of mythology, *etc.*, *etc.* But then it is neither a philosophical system nor *the Doctrine*, called secret or esoteric, but only a record of a few of its facts and a *witness* to it. It has never claimed to be the *full* exposition of the system (it advocates) in its totality;

Because as the writer does not boast of being a great Initiate, she could, therefore, never have undertaken such a gigantic task; and

Because had she been one, she would have divulged still less.

It has never been contemplated to make of the sacred truths an integral system for the ribaldry and sneers of a profane and iconoclastic public. The work does not pretend to set up a series of explanations, complete in all their details, of the mysteries of Being; nor does it seek to win for itself the name of a distinct system of thought — like the works of Messrs. Herbert Spencer, Schopenhauer or Comte. On the contrary, *The Secret Doctrine* merely asserts that a system, known as the WISDOM-RELIGION, the work of generations of adepts and seers, the sacred heirloom of pre-historic times — actually exists, though hitherto preserved in the greatest secrecy by the present Initiates; and it points to various corroborations of its existence to this very day, to be found in ancient and modern works. Giving a few fragments only, it there shows how these explain the religious dogmas of the present day, and how they might serve Western religions, philosophies and science, as sign-posts along the untrodden paths of discovery. The work is essentially fragmentary, giving statements of sundry facts taught in the esoteric schools — kept, so far, secret — by which the ancient symbolism of various nations is interpreted. It does not even give the *keys* to it, but merely opens a few of the hitherto secret drawers. No *new* philosophy is set up in *The Secret Doctrine*, only the hidden meaning of some of the religious allegories of antiquity is given, light being thrown on these by the esoteric sciences, and the common source is pointed out, whence all the world-religions and philosophies have sprung. Its chief attempt is to show, that however divergent the respective doctrines and systems of old may *seem* on their external or objective side, the agreement between all becomes perfect, so soon as the esoteric or *inner* side of these beliefs and their symbology are examined and a careful comparison made. It is also maintained that its doctrines and sciences, which form an integral cycle of universal cosmic facts and metaphysical axioms and truths, represent a complete and unbroken system; and that he who is brave and persevering enough, ready to crush the *animal* in himself, and forgetting the human *self*, sacrifices it to his Higher Ego, can always find his way to become initiated into these mysteries. This is all *The Secret Doctrine* claims. Are not a few facts and self-evident truths, found in these volumes — all the literary defects of the exposition notwithstanding — truths *already proved practically to some*, better than the most ingenious “working” hypotheses, liable to be upset any day, than the *unexplainable* mysteries of religious dogmas, or the most seemingly profound philosophical speculations? Can the grandest among these speculations be really profound,

when from their *Alpha* to their *Omega* they are limited and conditioned by their author's *brain-mind*, hence dwarfed and crippled on that Procrustean bed, cut down to fit limited sensuous perceptions which will not allow the intellect to go beyond their enchanted circle? No "philosopher" who views the spiritual realm as a mere figment of superstition, and regards man's mental perceptions as simply the result of the organization of the brain, can ever be worthy of that name.

Nor has a materialist any right to the appellation, since it means a "lover of Wisdom," and Pythagoras, who was the first to coin the compound term, never limited Wisdom to this earth. One who affirms that the Universe and Man are objects of the senses only, and who fatally chains thought within the region of senseless matter, as do the Darwinian evolutionists, is at best a *sophiaphobe* when not a philosophaster — never a philosopher.

Therefore is it that in this age of Materialism, Agnosticism, Evolutionism, and false Idealism, there is not a system, however intellectually expounded, that can stand on its own legs, or fail to be criticized by an exponent from another school of thought as materialistic as itself; even Mr. Herbert Spencer, the greatest of all, is unable to answer some criticisms. Many are those who remember the fierce polemics that raged a few years ago in the English and American journals between the Evolutionists on the one hand and the Positivists on the other. The subject of the dispute was with regard to the attitude and relation that the theory of evolution would bear to religion. Mr. F. Harrison, the Apostle of Positivism, charged Mr. Herbert Spencer with restricting religion to the realm of reason, forgetting that feeling and not the cognizing faculty, played the most important part in it. The "erroneousness and insufficiency" of the ideas on the "Unknowable" — as developed in Mr. Spencer's works — were also taken to task by Mr. Harrison. The idea was *erroneous*, he held, because it was based on the acceptance of the metaphysical absolute. It was insufficient, he argued, because it brought deity down to an empty abstraction, void of any meaning.<sup>1</sup> To this the great English writer replied, that he had never thought of offering his "Unknowable" and Incognisable, as a subject for religious worship. Then stepped into the arena, the respective admirers and defenders of Messrs. Spencer and Harrison, some defending the *material metaphysics* of the former thinker (if we may be permitted to use this paradoxical yet correct definition of Mr. Herbert Spencer's philosophy), others, the arguments of the Godless and Christless Roman Catholicism of Auguste Comte,<sup>2</sup> both sides giving and receiving very hard blows. Thus, Count Goblet d'Alviella of Brussels<sup>3</sup> suddenly discovered in Mr. H. Spencer a kind of hidden, yet *reverential* Theist, and compared Mr. Harrison to a casuist of mediaeval Scholasticism.

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<sup>1</sup> As the above is repeated from memory, it does not claim to be quoted with verbal exactitude, but only to give the gist of the argument.

<sup>2</sup> The epithet is Mr. Huxley's. In his lecture in Edinburgh in 1868, *On the Physical Basis of Life*, this great opponent remarked that Auguste "Comte's philosophy in practice might be compendiously described as *Catholicism minus Christianity* . . . and, antagonistic to the very essence of Science." . . . [See *Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews*, London: Macmillan, 1880; p. 140.]

<sup>3</sup> Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Brussels, in a philosophical *Essay on the religious meaning of the "Unknowable."* [See pp. 35-56 of *The Contemporary Evolution of Religious Thought in England, America and India*, tr. by J. Moden, London: Wms. & Norgate, 1885.]

It is not to discuss the relative merits of materialistic Evolutionism, or of Positivism either, that the two English thinkers are brought forward; but simply to point, as an illustration, to the Babel<sup>1</sup>-like confusion of modern thought. While the Evolutionists (of Herbert Spencer's school) maintain that the historical evolution of the religious feeling consists in the constant abstraction of the attributes of Deity, and their final separation from the primitive concrete conceptions — this process rejoicing in the easy-going triple compound of *deanthropomorphization*, or the disappearance of human attributes — the Comtists on their side hold to another version. They affirm that fetishism, or the direct worship of nature, was the primitive religion of man, a too protracted evolution alone having landed it in anthropomorphism. Their Deity is Humanity and the God they worship, Mankind, as far as we understand them. The only way, therefore, of settling the dispute, is to ascertain which of the two "philosophical" and "scientific" theories, is the less pernicious and the more probable. Is it true to say, as d'Alviella<sup>2</sup> assures us, that Mr. Spencer's "Unknowable" contains all the elements necessary to religion; and, as that remarkable writer is alleged to imply, that "religious feeling tends to free itself from every moral element"; or, shall we accept the other extremity and agree with the Comtists, that gradually, religion will blend itself with, merge into, and disappear in *altruism* and its service to Humanity?

Useless to say that Theosophy, while rejecting the one-sidedness and therefore the *limitation* in both ideas, is alone able to reconcile the two, *i.e.*, the Evolutionists and the Positivists — on both metaphysical and practical lines. How to do this it is not here the place to say, as every Theosophist acquainted with the main tenets of the Esoteric Philosophy can do it for himself. We believe in an impersonal "Unknowable" and know well that the ABSOLUTE, or Absoluteness, can have nought to do with worship on anthropomorphic lines; Theosophy rejects the Spencerian "He" and substitutes the impersonal IT for the personal pronoun, whenever speaking of the Absolute and the "Unknowable." And it teaches, as foremost of all virtues, *altruism* and self-sacrifice, brotherhood and compassion for every living creature, without, for all that, worshipping Man or Humanity. In the Positivist, moreover, who admits of no immortal soul in men, believes in no future life or reincarnation, such a "worship" becomes worse than fetishism: it is *Zoolatry*, the worship of the animals. For that alone which constitutes the *real* Man is, in the words of Carlyle,

. . . the essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself "I" . . . a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals himself in man.

This denied, man is but an animal — "the shame and scandal of the Universe," as Pascal puts it.

It is the old, old story, the struggle of matter and spirit, the "survival of the *unfittest*," because of the strongest and the most material. But the period when nascent Humanity, following the law of the natural and *dual* evolution, was descending along with spirit into matter — is closed. We (Humanity) are now helping matter to ascend toward spirit; and to do that we have to help substance to disenthral itself from the viscous grip of sense. We, of the fifth Root Race, are the direct descendants of the

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<sup>1</sup> [Babel? Babble?]

<sup>2</sup> [*ibid.*, pp. 129-52]

primeval Humanity of that Race; those, who on this side of the Flood tried, by commemorating it, to save the antediluvian Truth and Wisdom, and were worsted in our efforts by the dark genius of the Earth — the spirit of matter, whom the Gnostics called Ialdabaōth and the Jews Jehovah. Think ye, that even the Bible of Moses, the book you know so well and understand so badly, has left this claim of the Ancient Doctrine without witness? It has not. Allow us to close with a (to you) familiar passage, only interpreted in its true light.

In the beginning of time, or rather, in the childhood of the fifth Race,

. . . the whole earth was of one *lip* and of one speech,

saith chapter xi of *Genesis*. Read esoterically, this means that mankind had one universal doctrine, a philosophy, common to all; and that men were *bound* by one religion, whether this term be derived from the Latin word *relegere*, “to gather, or be united” in speech or in thought, from *religens*, “revering the gods,” or, from *religare*, “to be bound fast together.” Take it one way or the other, it means most undeniably and plainly that our forefathers from beyond the “flood” accepted in common one *truth* — *i.e.*, they believed in that aggregate of subjective and objective *facts* which form the consistent, logical and harmonious whole called by us the *Wisdom-Religion*.

Now, reading the first nine verses of chapter xi between the lines, we get the following information. Wise in their generation, our early fathers were evidently acquainted with the imperishable truism which teaches that *in union alone lies strength* — in union of thought as well as in that of nations, of course. Therefore, lest in disunion they should be “scattered upon the face of the earth,” and their Wisdom-Religion should, in consequence, be broken up into a thousand fragments; and lest they, themselves, instead of towering as hitherto, *through knowledge*, heavenward, should, through *blind faith* begin gravitating earthward — the wise men, who “journeyed from the East,” devised a plan. In those days temples were sites of learning, not of superstition; priests taught divine Wisdom, not man-invented dogmas, and the *ultima thule* of their religious activity did not centre in the contribution box, as at present. Thus they said:

Go to, let us *build us a city and a tower*, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name [lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.]<sup>1</sup> And they made *burnt brick* and used it for *stone*, and built therewith a *city* and a *tower*.<sup>2</sup>

So far, this is a very old story, known as well to a Sunday school ragamuffin as to Mr. Gladstone. Both believe very sincerely that these descendants of the “accursed Ham” were proud sinners whose object was like that of the Titans, to insult and dethrone Zeus-Jehovah, by reaching “heaven,” the supposed abode of both. But since we find the story told in the *revealed*<sup>3</sup> Scripts, it must, like all the rest in them, have

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<sup>1</sup> [*Genesis* xi, 4]

<sup>2</sup> [*Cf. ibid.*, xi, 3]

<sup>3</sup> A curious and rather unfortunate word to use, since, as a translation from the Latin *revelare*, it signifies diametrically the opposite of the now accepted meaning in English. For the word “to reveal” or “revealed” is derived from the Latin *revelare*, “to reveil” and not to *reveal* *i.e.*, from *re* “again” or “back” and *velare* “to veil” or to hide something, from the word *velum* or “a vail” (or veil), a cover. Thus, instead of *unveiling*, or *revealing*, Moses has truly only “reveiled” once more the Egypto-Chaldean theological legends and allegories, into which, as one

its esoteric interpretation. In this, Occult symbolism will help us. All the expressions that we have italicized, when read in the original Hebrew and according to the canons of esoteric symbolism, will yield quite a different construction. Thus:

1. “And the whole earth [mankind], was of *one lip* [*i.e.*, proclaimed the same teachings] and of the same *words*” — not of “speech” as in the authorized version.

Now the Kabbalistic meaning of the term “words” and “word” may be found in the *Zohar* and also in the *Talmud*. “Words” (*Dabarim*) mean “powers,” and *word*, in the singular, is a synonym of Wisdom; *e.g.*,

By the uttering of *ten words* was the world created.<sup>1</sup>

Here the “words” refer to the ten Sephīrōth, Builders of the Universe. Again:

By the *Word* (Wisdom, Logos) of YHVH were the Heavens made.<sup>2</sup>

3-4. And the man<sup>3</sup> [the chief leader] said to his neighbour,

“Go to, let us make *bricks* [disciples] *and burn them to a burning* [initiate, fill them with sacred fire], let us build us a *city* [establish mysteries and teach *the Doctrine*]<sup>4</sup> and a *tower* [*Ziggurat*, a sacred temple tower] whose top may reach unto heaven” [the highest limit reachable in space].

The great tower of Nebo, of *Nabi* on the temple of Bel, was called “the house of the seven spheres of *heaven and earth*,” and “the house of the stronghold (or strength, *tagimut*) and the foundation stone of heaven and earth.”

Occult symbology teaches, that to *burn bricks for a city* means to train disciples for magic, a “hewn stone” signifying a *full* Initiate, *Petra* the Greek and *Kēphas* the Aramaic word for stone, having the same meaning, *viz.*, “interpreter of the Mysteries,” a *Hierophant*. The supreme initiation was referred to as “the burning with great burning.” Thus, “the *bricks* are fallen down, but we will *build* [anew] with hewn stones” of *Isaiah* [ix, 10] becomes clear. For the true interpretation of the four last verses of the genetic allegory about the supposed “confusion of *tongues*” we may turn to the legendary version of the *Yezidis* and read verses 5, 6, 7, and 8 in *Genesis*, ch. xi, esoterically:

And *Adonai* [the Lord] came down and said: “Behold, the people *is* one [the people are united in thought and deed] and they have *one lip* [doctrine].” And now they begin to spread it and “nothing will be restrained from them [they will

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“learned in all the Wisdom of Egypt” he had been initiated. Yet Moses was not the first revealer or *reveiler*, as Ragon well observes. Thousands of years before him Hermes was credited with veiling over the Indian mysteries to adapt them for the land of the Pharaohs. Of course, at present there is no longer classical authority to satisfy the orthodox philologist, but the occult authority which maintains that originally the word *revelare* meant to “veil once more,” and hence that revelation means the throwing a veil over a subject, a *blind* — is positively overwhelming.

<sup>1</sup> *Talmud*, tract Pirkey Aboth, c. 5, *Mish.* 1

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> This is translated from the Hebrew original. Chief-leader” (*Rab-Mag*) meaning literally Teacher-Magician, Master or *Guru*, as Daniel is shown to have been in Babylon.

<sup>4</sup> Some Homeric heroes also when they are said, like Laomedon Priam’s father, to have built cities, were in reality establishing the *Mysteries* and introducing the Wisdom-Religion in foreign lands.

have full magic powers and get all they want by such power, Kriyāsakti], *that they have imagined.*”

And now what are the Yezidis and their version and what is Ad-onai? Ad is “the Lord,” their ancestral god; and the Yezidis are a heretical Mussulman sect, scattered over Armenia, Syria, and especially Mosul, the very site of Babel (see *Chaldean Account of Genesis*), who are known under the strange name of “Devil-worshippers.” Their confession of faith is very original. They recognize two powers or gods — Allah and Ad (or Ad-onai), but identify the latter with Sheitan or Satan. This is but natural since Satan is also “a son of god.”<sup>1, 2</sup> As stated in the *Hibbert Lectures*,<sup>3</sup> Satan the “Adversary,” was the minister and *angel of God*. Hence, when questioned on the cause of their curious worship of one who has become the embodiment of Evil and the dark spirit of the Earth, they explain the reason in a most logical, if irreverent, manner. They tell you that Allah, being *All-good*, would not harm the smallest of his creatures. *Ergo*, has he no need of prayers, or burnt-offerings of the “firstlings of the flock and the fat thereof.” But that their Ad, or the Devil, being *All-bad*, cruel, jealous, revengeful and proud, they have, in self-preservation, to propitiate him with sacrifices and burnt offerings smelling sweet in his nostrils, and to coax and flatter him. Ask any Sheik of the Yezidis of Mosul what they have to say, as to the confusion of tongues, or speech when *Allah* “came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men had builded”; and they will tell you it is not Allah but *Ad*, the god Sheitan, who did it. The jealous genius of the earth became envious of the powers and sanctity of men (as the god Vishnu becomes jealous of the great powers of the *Yogis*, even when they were Daityas); and therefore this deity of matter and concupiscence confused their brains, tempted and made the “Builders” fall into his nets; and thus, having lost their purity, they lost therewith their knowledge and magic powers, intermarried and became “scattered upon the face of the earth.”

This is more logical than to attribute to one’s “God,” the *All-good*, such ungodly tricks as are fathered upon him in the Bible. Moreover, the legend about the tower of Babel and the confusion of *speech*, is like much else, not original, *but* comes from the Chaldeans and Babylonians. George Smith found the version on a mutilated fragment of the Assyrian tablets, though there is nothing said in it about the confu-

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<sup>1</sup> See *Job* i, 6.

<sup>2</sup> It is commanded in *Ecclesiasticus* xxi, 30, not to curse Satan, “lest one should forfeit his own life.” Why? Because in their permutations “the Lord God,” Moses, and Satan *are one*. The name the Jews gave while in Babylon to their *exoteric God*, the substitute for the *true Deity* of which they never spoke or wrote, was the Assyrian *Mosheh* or *Adar*, the god of the scorching sun (the “Lord thy God is a consuming *flame*” verily!) and therefore, *Mosheh* or *Moses*, *shone* also. In Egypt, Typhon (Satan) the *red*, was identified both with the red Ass or Typhon called Set or Seth (and worshipped by the Hittites) and the same as *El* (the Sun god of the Assyrians and the Semites, or Jehovah), and with *Moses*, the *red*, also. (See *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, pp. 523-24.) For *Moses* was red-skinned. According to the *Zohar* (Vol. I, p. 28): *B’sar d’Mosheh soomaq*, i.e., “the flesh of *Moses* was *deep red*,” and the words refer to the saying “the face of *Moses* was like the face of the Sun.” (See *Qabbalah* by Isaac Myer, p. 93) These three were the *three aspects* of the manifested God (the substitute for *Ain Soph*, the infinite Deity) or Nature, in its three chief Kingdoms — the Fiery or Solar, the Human or Watery, the Animal or Earthy. There never was a *Mosheh* or *Moses* before the Captivity and Ezra, the deep Kabbalist; and what is now *Moses* had another name 2,000 years before. Where are the Hebrew scrolls before that time? Moreover, we find a corroboration of this in Dr. Sayce’s *Hibbert Lectures* (1887). *Adar* is the Assyrian “War God” or the *Lord of Hosts* and the same as *Moloch*. The Assyrian equivalent of *Mosheh* (*Moses*) is *Māsu*, the “double” or the “twin,” and *Māsu* is the title of *Adar*, meaning also a “hero.” No one who reads carefully the said Lectures from page 40 to 58 can fail to see that *Jehovah*, *Māsu* and *Adar*, with several others — are *permutations*.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 346 and 347



sion of *speech*. “I have translated the word ‘speech’ with a prejudice,” he says,<sup>1</sup> “I have never seen the Assyrian word with this meaning.” Anyone who reads for himself the fragmentary translation by G. Smith, on pages 160-63 in the volume cited, will find the version much nearer to that of the *Yezidis* than to the version of *Genesis*. It is he, whose “heart was evil” and who was “wicked,” who confused “their counsel,” not their “speech,” and who broke “the Sanctuary . . . which carried Wisdom,” and “bitterly they wept at Babel.”

And so ought to “weep” all the philosophers and lovers of ancient Wisdom; for it is since then that the thousand and one exoteric substitutes for the one true Doctrine or *lip* had their beginning, obscuring more and more the intellects of men, and shedding innocent blood in fierce fanaticism. Had our modern philosophers studied, instead of sneering at, the old Books of Wisdom — say the *Kabala* — they would have found that which would have unveiled to them many a secret of ancient Church and State. As they have not, however, the result is evident. The dark cycle of *Kali Yuga* has brought back a *Babel of modern thought*, compared with which the “confusion of tongues” itself appears a harmony. All is dark and uncertain; no argument in any department, neither in sciences, philosophy, law, nor even in religion. But, “woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness,” saith *Isaiah*.<sup>2</sup> The very elements seem confused and climates shift, as if the celestial “upper ten”<sup>3</sup> themselves had lost their heads. All one can do is to sit still and look on, sad and resigned, while

The slack sail shifts from side to side;  
The Boat untrimm’d admits the tide.  
Borne down, adrift, at random toss’d,  
His oar breaks short, the rudder’s lost.<sup>4</sup>



“Blavatsky on Nebo of Birs-Nimrud,” in our Blavatsky Speaks Series.

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<sup>1</sup> *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 163

<sup>2</sup> [v, 20]

<sup>3</sup> [An allusion to the “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. — Cf. Wikipedia]

<sup>4</sup> [*Fables by John Gay*, “The Bear in a Boat,” To a Coxcomb.]