

*Occult truth is Nature without
the illusory veil of the senses*



Contents and train of thoughts¹

On the essence of Truth beneath and beyond external appearances

1. The Beacon-Light of occult truth is Nature without the illusory veil of the senses. She is the Rainbow of Hope and our only hope.	4
2. True wisdom, being a projection of our perceptive consciousness, acts within without, and not vice versa, awakening the spiritual senses in us and the power to act. Brain power and logic, being outward looking, can only serve the interests of lower minds.	6
Why the Hindu yogi and Christian hermit are both accomplished egoists.	8
The Beacon-Light is the essence of truth hidden beneath and beyond external appearances. This Light is Inner Wisdom, not the cerebrations of earth-bound minds.	9
3. Inner Wisdom is the Wisdom of Love and code of sublime ethics. Its noble ideals alone can empower people to reject the parasitic plants of human fabrication which are choking all goodness and truth in the world.	11
4. The ancient Egyptians, the Ethiopians of the East who came from Lankā or Ceylon, were a colony of dark-skinned Aryans, the Dravidians of Southern India, who took an already existing civilization with them to Egypt.	14
Truth is our Religion and Dogma	15
He who dissipates the darkness of ignorance by the torch of truth awakens in our benumbed souls the faculty of distinguishing the true from the false, and kindles a divine flame hitherto absent.	15
Study groups ought to be of uneven numbers in order to have more power; a group, however little cohesion it may possess, is a single united body, wherein the senses and perceptions of the single units complement and mutually help each other, one member supplying to another the quality in which he is wanting.	16
5. Theosophy is the white ray from which arise the seven colours of the solar spectrum, each human being assimilating one of these rays to a greater degree than the other six.	16
Theosophy, or rather the occult sciences it studies, is something more than simple metaphysics: it is universal transcendentalism.	18
6. The numerical value of the names of old divinities was taught in the Lesser Mysteries. But Mystery Language itself was reserved for the high initiates alone.	19
Envy, jealousy, and rivalry, reign supreme in a society whose principal object is brotherhood. Instead of helping one another, many look askance at each other, always ready to make fun of each other and criticise.	21
In union is strength.	22
7. The Theosophical Society is a Republic of Conscience.	22

¹ Frontispiece by Amanda Clark.

Cosmogonies in a nutshell

Knowledge of Cosmogogenesis is the key to All-knowledge. 24

The Theosophical Society is the Tree of Brotherhood, grown from a kernel planted in the earth by the angel of Charity and Justice. It depends upon its members to make of their Society an ark destined, in a future not too distant, to transport the humanity of a new cycle beyond the vast muddy waters of the deluge of hopeless materialism. 26

In the meantime, we all should seek to bring some peace on earth to the hearts of those who suffer, by lifting for them a corner of the veil which hides from them divine truth. 27



On the essence of Truth beneath and beyond external appearances

First published in *La Revue Théosophique*, Paris, Vol. I, Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6: May 21st, 1889, pp. 1-9; June 21st, 1889; pp. 1-7; July 21st, 1889, pp. 1-6; August 21st, 1889, pp. 1-9. Translation of the foregoing original French text by Boris de Zirkoff republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN) XI pp. 248-83.

1. The Beacon-Light of occult truth is Nature without the illusory veil of the senses. She is the Rainbow of Hope and our only hope.

It is written in an old book of occult studies:

Gupta-Vidyā (Secret Science) is an attractive sea, but stormy and full of rocks. The navigator who risks himself thereon, if he be not wise and full of experience,¹ will be swallowed up, wrecked upon one of the thousand submerged reefs. Great billows, the colour of sapphires, rubies and emeralds, billows full of beauty and mystery will overtake him, ready to bear the voyager away towards other and numberless beacon-lights that burn in all directions. But these are false lights, will-o'-the-wisps,² lighted by the sons of *Kāliya*³ for the destruction of those who thirst for life. Happy are they who remain blind to these deceiving lights, more happy still those who never turn their eyes from the only true Beacon-light whose eternal flame burns in solitude in the depths of the waters of the Sacred Science. Numerous are the pilgrims who desire to enter those waters; very few are the strong swimmers who reach the Beacon. He who would get there must cease to be a number, and become *all numbers*. He must have forgotten the illusion of separateness, and accept only the truth of collective individuality.⁴ He must see with the ears, hear with the eyes,⁵ understand the language of the rainbow, and have concentrated his six senses in his seventh sense.⁶



¹ Acquired under the guidance of a *guru* or Master.

² [Or *ignis fatuus*, “foolish fire,” ghost lights seen by travellers at night, especially over bogs, swamps, or marshes. It resembles a flickering lamp and is said to recede if approached, drawing travellers from safe paths. — Metaphorically, will-o'-the-wisps are delusive or misleading hopes.]

³ The great serpent conquered by Krishna and driven from the river Yamunā into the sea, where the serpent Kāliya took for wife a kind of Siren, by whom he had a numerous family.

[Cf. “Churning the Ocean of Milk” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

⁴ The illusion of the *personality*, of a separate ego, placed by our egotism in the forefront. In one word, it is necessary to assimilate all humanity, live by it, for it; and in it; in other terms, cease to be “one,” and become “all” or the *total*.

⁵ A Vedic expression. The senses, including the two mystic senses, are seven in Occultism; but an Initiate does not separate these senses one from the other, any more than he separates his unity from Humanity. Each one of the senses contains all the others.

⁶ Symbology of colours. The language of the prism, of which “the seven mother-colours have each seven sons,” i.e., 49 shades or “sons” between the seven, are so many letters or alphabetical characters. The language of colours has, therefore, fifty-six letters for the *Initiate* (not to be confused with an *adept*; see my article “A Danger Signal”). Of these letters each septenary is absorbed by the mother-colours, as each of the seven mother-colours is finally absorbed in the white ray, Divine Unity symbolized by these colours.

The “beacon-light” of Truth is nature without the illusory veil of the senses. It can be reached only when the adept has become absolute master of his personal self, able to control all his physical and psychic senses by the aid of his “seventh sense,” through which he is gifted also with the true wisdom of the gods — *Theo-sophia*.

Needless to say, the profane — the non-initiated, *outside the temple* or *pro-fanes* — judge of the “beacons” and of the “Beacon” above mentioned in the opposite sense. For them it is the Beacon-light of Occult truth which is the *ignus fatuus*, the great will-o’-the-wisp of human illusion and folly; and they regard all the others as marking beneficent sand-banks, which stop in time those who are excitedly sailing on the sea of folly and superstition.

“Is it not enough,” say our kind critics, “that the world by dint of ‘-isms’ has arrived at *theosophism*, which is nothing but transcendental humbuggery [*fumisterie*], without the latter furthermore offering us a *réchauffé* of mediaeval magic, with its grand Sabbath and chronic hysteria?”

Stop, stop, gentlemen! Do you know, when you talk like that, what *true* magic is, or the Occult Sciences? You have allowed your schools to fill you with the “*diabolical* sorcery” of Simon the Magician,¹ and his disciple *Menander*, according to the good Father Irenaeus, the too zealous Theodoret and the unknown author of the *Philosophumena*. You have permitted yourselves to be told on the one hand that this magic comes from the devil; and on the other hand that it is the result of imposture and fraud. Very well. But what do you know of the true nature of the system followed by Apollonius of Tyana, Iamblichus and other *magi*? And what is your opinion about the identity of the theurgy of Iamblichus with the “magic” of the Simons and the Menanders? Its true character is only half revealed by the author of *De mysteriis*.² Nevertheless his explanations sufficed to convert Porphyry, Plotinus, and others, who from enemies to the *esoteric theory* became its most fervent adherents. The reason is extremely simple. True Magic, the theurgy of Iamblichus, is in its turn identical with the gnosis of Pythagoras, η γνώσις των όντων, *the science of things that are*, and with the divine ecstasy of the *Philaletheians*, “the lovers of truth.” But, one should judge of the tree only by its fruits. Who are those who have witnessed to the divine character and the reality of that ecstasy which is called *samādhi* in India?³ A long series of men, who, had they been Christians, would have been canonised — not by the decision of the Church, which has its partialities and predilections, but by that of most of the people, and by the *vox populi*, which is seldom wrong in its judgment. There is, for instance, Ammonius Saccas, called the *theodidaktos*, “god-instructed”; the great master whose life was so chaste and so pure, that Plotinus, his pupil, had not the slightest hope of ever seeing any mortal comparable to him. Then there is that same Plotinus who was to Ammonius what Plato was to Socrates — a disciple worthy of the

¹ [See “Mead’s Essay on Simon Magus” in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² By Iamblichus, who used the name of his master, the Egyptian priest Abammon, as a pseudonym. Its title is in Greek:

Αβάμμωνος, διδασκάλου προς την Πορφυρίου προς Ανεβώ
επιστολήν απόκρισις, και των εν αυτής απορημάτων λυσεις.

³ Samādhi is a state of abstract contemplation, defined in Sanskrit terms each of which requires a complete sentence to explain it. It is a mental, or, rather, spiritual state, which is not dependent upon any perceptible object, and during which the *subject*, absorbed in the region of pure spirit, lives *in the Divinity*.

virtues of his illustrious master. Then there is Porphyry, the pupil of Plotinus,¹ the author of the biography of Pythagoras. Under the shadow of this divine gnosis, whose beneficent influence has extended to our own days, all the celebrated mystics of the later centuries have been developed, such as Jacob Böhme, Emmanuel Swedenborg, and many others. Madame Guyon is the feminine counterpart of Iamblichus. The Christian Quietists, the Mussulman Sufis, the Rosicrucians of all countries, quenched their thirst at the waters of that inexhaustible fountain — the Theosophy of the Neo-Platonists of the first centuries of the Christian era. The gnosis preceded that era, for it was the direct continuation of the *Gupta-Vidyā* (“secret knowledge” or “knowledge of Brahman”) of ancient India, transmitted through Egypt; just as the theurgy of the Philaletheians was the continuation of the Egyptian mysteries. In any case, the point from which this *diabolic* magic starts, is the Supreme Divinity; its end and final goal, the union of the divine spark which animates man with the parent-flame which is the Divine All.

This consummation is the *ultima Thule*² of those Theosophists who devote themselves entirely to the service of humanity. Apart from those, others, who are not yet ready to sacrifice everything, may occupy themselves with the transcendental sciences, such as Mesmerism, and the modern phenomena under all their forms. They have the right to do so according to the clause which specifies, as one of the objects of The Theosophical Society, “the investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the *psychic powers latent in man.*”

The first are not numerous — complete altruism being a *rara avis* even among modern Theosophists. The other members are free to occupy themselves with whatever they like. Notwithstanding this, and in spite of the fact that our *behaviour* is frank and devoid of mystery, we are constantly called upon to explain ourselves, and to satisfy the public that we do not celebrate witches’ Sabbaths, or manufacture broomsticks for the use of Theosophists. This sort of thing sometimes borders on the grotesque. When it is not of having invented a new “-ism” — a *religion* extracted from the depths of a disordered brain — or else of humbuggery that we are accused, it is of having exercised the arts of Circe upon men and beasts. Jests and satires fall upon The Theosophical Society thick as hail. Nevertheless it has stood unshaken during all the fourteen years during which that kind of thing has been going on; it is a “tough customer” truly.

2. True wisdom, being a projection of our perceptive consciousness, acts within without, and not vice versa, awakening the spiritual senses in us and the power to act. Brain power and logic, being outward looking, can only serve the interests of lower minds.

After all, critics who judge only by appearance are not altogether wrong. There is Theosophy and Theosophy: the true Theosophy of the *Theosophist*, and the Theosophy of a Fellow of the Society of that name. What does the world know of true Theosophy? How can it distinguish between that of a Plotinus, and that of the false broth-

¹ Citizen of Rome for 28 years, he was so virtuous a man that it was considered an honour to have him as guardian for the orphans of the wealthiest patricians. He died without having made a single enemy during those 28 years.

² [Any distant place beyond the borders of the known world.]

ers? And of the latter the Society possesses more than its share. The egoism, vanity and self-sufficiency of the majority of mortals is incredible. There are some for whom their little *personality* constitutes the whole universe, beyond which there is no salvation. Suggest to one of these that the alpha and omega of wisdom are not limited by the circumference of his or her brain, that his judgment is not quite equal to that of Solomon, and straightaway he accuses you of *anti-Theosophy*. You have been guilty of blasphemy against the Spirit, which will not be pardoned in this century, nor in the next. These people say, "I am Theosophy," as Louis XIV said, "I am the State." They speak of fraternity and of altruism and only care in reality for that which cares for no one else — themselves, in other words their little "me." Their egoism makes them fancy that it is they alone who represent the temple of Theosophy, and that in proclaiming themselves to the world, they are proclaiming Theosophy. Alas! The doors and windows of that "temple" are no better than so many channels through which enter, but very seldom depart, the vices and illusions characteristic of egotistical mediocrities.

These people are the termites of The Theosophical Society, who eat away its foundations, and are a perpetual menace to it. It is only when they leave it that it is possible to breathe freely.

It is not such as these that can ever give a correct idea of practical Theosophy, still less of the transcendental Theosophy which occupies the minds of a small group of the elect. Everyone of us possesses the faculty, the interior sense, known as *intuition*, but how rare are those who know how to develop it! It is, however, the only faculty by means of which men and things are seen in their true colours. It is an *instinct of the soul*, which grows in us in proportion to the use we make of it, and which helps us to perceive and understand real and absolute facts with far more certainty than can the simple use of our senses and the exercise of our reason. What are called good sense and logic enable us to see the appearance of things, that which is evident to everyone. The *instinct* of which I speak, being a projection of our perceptive consciousness, a projection which acts from the subjective to the objective, and not *vice versa*, awakens the spiritual senses in us and the power to act; these senses assimilate to themselves the essence of the object or of the action under examination, and represent them to us as they really *are*, not as they appear to our physical senses and to our cold reason. "We begin with *instinct*, we end with *omniscience*," says Professor A. Wilder, our oldest colleague. Iamblichus has described this faculty, and some Theosophists have been able to appreciate the truth of his description.

There exists [he says] a faculty in the human mind which is immensely superior to all those which are grafted or engendered in us. By means of it we can attain to union with superior intelligences, finding ourselves raised above the scenes of this earthly life, and partaking of the higher existence and superhuman powers of the inhabitants of the celestial spheres. By this faculty we find ourselves finally liberated from the dominion of Destiny [Karman], and we become, so to say, arbiters of our own fate. For when the most excellent part of us finds itself filled with energy, and when our soul is lifted up towards essences higher than science, it can separate itself from the conditions which hold it in bondage to every-day life; it exchanges its ordinary existence for another one,

and renounces the conventional habits which belong to the external order of things, to give itself up to, and mix itself with, another order of things which reigns in that most elevated state of existence . . . ¹

Plato expressed the same idea in a couple of lines:

The light and spirit of the Divinity are the wings of the soul. They raise it to communion with the gods, above this earth, with which the spirit of man is too ready to soil itself . . . To become like the gods, is to become holy, just and wise. That is the end for which man was created, and that ought to be his aim in the acquisition of knowledge.²

Why the Hindu yogi and Christian hermit are both accomplished egoists.

This is true Theosophy, inner Theosophy, that of the soul. But, followed with a selfish aim, Theosophy changes its nature and becomes *demonosophy*. That is why Oriental Wisdom teaches us that the Hindu *Yogi* who isolates himself in an impenetrable forest, like the Christian hermit who, as was common in former times, retires to the desert, are both of them but accomplished egoists.³ The one acts with the sole idea of finding in the One essence of Nirvāna refuge against reincarnation; the other acts with the unique idea of saving his soul — both of them think only of themselves. Their motive is altogether personal; for, even supposing they attain their end, are they not like cowardly soldiers, who desert the regiment when it goes into action, in order to protect themselves from the bullets? In isolating themselves as they do, neither the *Yogi* nor the “saint” helps anyone but himself; on the contrary, both show themselves profoundly indifferent to the fate of mankind whom they fly from and desert. Mount Athos⁴ contains, perhaps, a few sincere fanatics; nevertheless even these have unwittingly gotten off the only track that could lead them to the truth — the path of Calvary, on which each one voluntarily bears the cross of humanity, and for humanity. In reality it is a nest of the coarsest kind of selfishness; and it is to such places that Adams’ remark on monasteries applies:

There are solitary creatures who seem to have fled from the rest of mankind for the sole pleasure of communing with the Devil *tête-à-tête*.

Gautama the Buddha only remained in solitude long enough to enable him to arrive at the truth, to the promulgation of which he devoted himself from that time on, begging his bread, and living for humanity. Jesus retired to the desert for forty days only, and died for this same humanity. Apollonius of Tyana, Plotinus and Iamblichus, while leading lives of singular abstinence, almost of asceticism, lived in the world and *for* the world. The greatest ascetics and *saints* of our own day are not those who retire into inaccessible places, but those who pass their lives in travelling from place to place, doing good and trying to raise mankind; although they may avoid Europe, and

¹ Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, VIII, 6 & 7

² *Phaedrus*, 246d-e; *Theaetetus*, 176b.

³ [See “Selfishness is the cause of all sin and suffering,” in our Black versus White Magic Series. — ED. PHIL.]

⁴ [A celebrated monastic community situated on the peninsula of the same name, which is the most eastern of the three promontories which extend, like the prongs of a trident, southwards from the coast of Macedonia into the Aegean Sea. It is also called *Hagion Oros*. The peak rises like a pyramid, with a steep summit of white marble, to a height of 6,350 feet. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

those civilized countries where no one has any eyes or ears except for himself countries divided into two camps — those of Cain and Abel.

Those who regard the human soul as an emanation of the Deity, as a particle or ray of the universal and ABSOLUTE soul, understand the parable of the *talents* better than do the Christians. He who hides in the earth the *talent* given him by his “Lord” will lose that talent, as the ascetic loses it, who takes it into his head to “save his soul” in egotistical solitude. The “good and faithful servant” who doubles his capital, by harvesting for *him who has not sown*, because he had no means of doing so, and who reaps where the poor could not scatter the grain, acts like a true altruist. He will receive his recompense, just because he has worked for another, without the idea of reward or recognition. That man is the altruistic Theosophist, while the other is an egoist and a coward.

The Beacon-Light is the essence of truth hidden beneath and beyond external appearances. This Light is Inner Wisdom, not the cerebations of earth-bound minds.

The Beacon-light upon which the eyes of all real Theosophists are fixed is the same towards which in all ages the imprisoned human soul has struggled. This Beacon, whose light shines upon no earthly seas, but which has mirrored itself in the sombre depths of the primordial waters of infinite space, is called by us, as by the earliest Theosophists, “Divine Wisdom.” This is the last word of the esoteric doctrine. Where was the country in ancient days, with the right to call itself civilized, that did not possess a double system of WISDOM, one for the masses, and the other for the few, the exoteric and the esoteric? This WISDOM, or, as we sometimes say, the “Wisdom-Religion” or *Theosophy*, is as old as the human mind. The title of *sages* — the high-priests of this worship of truth — was its first derivative. These names were transformed into *philosophy* and *philosophers* — the “lovers of science” or of wisdom. It is to Pythagoras that we owe that name, as also that of *gnosis*, the system of *ἡ γνώσις τῶν ὄντων*, “the knowledge of things that are,” or of the essence that is hidden beneath the external appearances. Under that name, so noble and so correct in its definition, all masters of antiquity designated the aggregate of human and divine knowledge. The sages and Brāhmanas of India, the magi of Chaldea and Persia, the hierophants of Egypt and Arabia, the prophets or *nebi'im* of Judaea and of Israel, as well as the philosophers of Greece and Rome, have always classified that special science in two divisions — the *esoteric*, or the true, and the *exoteric*, disguised by symbols. To this very day the Jewish Rabbis give the name of *Merkābāh* to the body or vehicle of their religious system, that which contains within itself the higher sciences accessible only to the initiates, and of which it is only the husk.

We are accused of mystery, and we are reproached with making a secret of the higher Theosophy. We confess that the doctrine which we call *gupta-vidyā* (secret science) is only for the few. But who were the masters in ancient times who did not keep their teachings secret, for fear they would be profaned? From Orpheus and Zoroaster, Pythagoras and Plato, down to the Rosicrucians, and the more modern Freemasons, it has been the invariable rule that the disciple must gain the confidence of the master before receiving from him the supreme and final word. The most ancient religions have always had their greater and lesser mysteries. The neophytes and catechumens

took an inviolable oath before they were accepted. The Essenes of Judaea and Mount Carmel required the same thing. The *Nabi* and the *Nazars* (the “separated ones” of Israel), like the lay *Chelas* and the Brahmachārins of India, differed greatly from each other. The former could, and can, be married and remain in the world, while studying the sacred writings up to a certain point; the latter, the *Nazars* and the Brahmachārins, have always been entirely *pledged* to the mysteries of initiation. The great schools of Esotericism were international, although exclusive, as is proved by the fact that Plato, Herodotus, and others, went to Egypt to be initiated; while Pythagoras, after visiting the Brāhmanas of India, stopped at an Egyptian sanctuary, and finally was received, according to Iamblichus, at Mount Carmel. Jesus followed the traditional custom, and justified the reticence by quoting the well-known precept:

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.¹

Some ancient writings known to Bibliophiles, personify WISDOM, representing it as emanating from AIN-SOPH, the Parabrahman of Jewish Kabbalists, and being an associate and companion of the manifested deity. Hence its sacred character among all nations. Wisdom is inseparable from Divinity. Thus we have the *Vedas* emanating from the mouth of the Hindu Brahmā (the *Logos*). Buddha comes from *Budha*, “Wisdom,” divine intelligence. The Babylonian *Nebo*, the *Thoth* of Memphis, the Greek *Hermes*, were all gods of esoteric wisdom.

The Greek *Athena*, *Mētis*, and *Neith* of the Egyptians, are the prototypes of *Sophia-Akhamōth*, the feminine wisdom of the Gnostics. The Samaritan *Pentateuch* calls the book of *Genesis* — *Akhamōth*, or “Wisdom,” as is also the case in two fragments of very ancient manuscripts, the *Wisdom of Solomon* and the *Wisdom of Iaseus* (Jesus). The work known as *Mashalim*, or “Discourses and Proverbs of Solomon,” personifies Wisdom by calling it “the assistant of the (Logos) creator,” in the following terms (I translate *verbatim*):

I(a)HV(e)H possessed me from the beginning.²
Yet I was the *first emanation* in the eternities.
I appeared from all antiquity, the primordial. —
From the first day of the earth;
I was born before the great abyss.
And when there were neither springs nor waters.
When the heavens were being built, I was there.
When he traced the circle on the face of the deep,
I was there with him, Amun.
I was his delight, day after day.³

¹ [Matthew vii, 6]

² JHVH, or Jahveh (Jehovah) is the *Tetragrammaton*, consequently the emanated *Logos* and the creator; the ALL, without beginning or end, or AIN-SOPH, in its quality of ABSOLUTE, being unable of creating or of desiring to create.

³ [Though the wording differs somewhat, yet the ideas expressed in this passage are identical with *Proverbs* viii, 22-30. *Mashalim* is the plural of *Mashal*, meaning “example,” “fable,” “allegory,” *i.e.*, a teaching that is illustrated. The *Proverbs of Solomon* are known in Hebrew as *Mishle Shelomah*. The *Wisdom of Iaseus* is the same work as the one known as *The Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach*, or as *Ecclesiasticus*. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

This is exoteric, like all that has reference to the personal gods of the nations. The INFINITE cannot be known to our reason, which can only distinguish and define; but we can always conceive the abstract idea thereof, thanks to that faculty higher than our reason — *intuition*, or the spiritual instinct of which I have spoken. The great initiates, who have the rare power of throwing themselves into the state of *samādhi* — which can be but imperfectly translated by the word *ecstasy*, a state in which one ceases to be the conditioned and personal “I,” and becomes one with the ALL — are the only ones who can boast of having been in contact with the *infinite*; but no more than other mortals can they describe that state in words . . .

These few characteristics of *true* Theosophy and its practice have been sketched for the small number of our readers who are gifted with the desired intuition. As to the others, either they would not understand us, or would laugh.

3. Inner Wisdom is the Wisdom of Love and code of sublime ethics. Its noble ideals alone can empower people to reject the parasitic plants of human fabrication which are choking all goodness and truth in the world.

By re-enacting the social and religious reform of Lord Buddha It can save the world from despair,; a peaceful reform, without one drop of spilt blood, permitting everyone to remain in the faith of his fathers if he so choose. To do this, one would have only

Do our kind critics always know what they are laughing at? Have they the smallest idea of the work which is being performed in the world and the mental changes that are being brought about by Theosophy at which they smile? The progress due to our literature is already evident, and, thanks to the untiring labours of a certain number of Theosophists, it is becoming recognized even by the blindest. There are not a few who are persuaded that Theosophy will be the philosophy and the moral code, if not the religion, of the future. The reactionaries captivated by the *dolce farniente*¹ of conservatism sense it, hence the hatred and persecution which call in criticism to their aid. But criticism, inaugurated by Aristotle, has fallen away from its primitive standard. The ancient philosophers, those sublime ignoramuses as regards modern civilization, when they criticised a system or a work, did so with impartiality, and with the sole object of improving and perfecting that with which they found fault. First they studied the subject, and then they analysed it. It was a service rendered, and was recognized and accepted as such by both parties. Does modern criticism always conform to that golden rule? It is very evident that it does not. Our judges of today are far beneath the level even of the philosophical criticism of Kant. Criticism, which takes unpopularity and prejudice for its canons, has replaced that of “pure reason”; and the critic ends by tearing to pieces with his teeth everything he does not comprehend, and especially whatever he does not care in the least to understand. In the last century — the golden age of the goose-quill — criticism was biting enough sometimes; but still it did justice. Caesar’s wife might be suspected, but she was never condemned without being heard in her defence. In our century Montyon prizes² and public statues are for him who invents the most murderous engine of war;

¹ [sweet idleness]

² [Prizes instituted in France in the nineteenth century by Baron Antoine de Montyon (1733–1820), a French philanthropist, for those who benefited others in various ways. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

today, when the steel pen has replaced its more humble predecessor, the fangs of the Bengal tiger or the teeth of the terrible saurian of the Nile would make wounds less deep than does the steel nib of the modern critic, who is nearly always absolutely ignorant of that which he tears to pieces so thoroughly.

It is some consolation, perhaps, to know that the majority of our literary critics, transatlantic and continental, are ex-scribblers who have made a *fiasco* in literature, and are now avenging themselves for their mediocrity upon everything they come across. The thin blue wine, insipid and processed, almost always turns into strong vinegar. Unfortunately, the reporters of the press in general (poor devils, hungry for promotion), whom we would be sorry to begrudge the little they make — even at our expense — are not our only or our most dangerous critics. Bigots and materialists — the sheep and goats of religion — having in turn placed us in their *index expurgatorius*, our books are banished from their libraries, our journals are boycotted, and ourselves subjected to the most complete ostracism. One pious soul, who accepts *literally* the miracles of the Bible following with emotion the ichthyographical investigations of Jonah in the whale's belly, or the trans-ethereal journey of Elias, flying off, salamander-like, in his chariot of fire, nevertheless regards the Theosophists as *wonder-mongers* and *cheats*. Another — *âme damnée* of Haeckel — while displaying a *credulity as blind* as that of the bigot in his belief in the evolution of man and the gorilla from a common ancestor (considering the total absence of every trace in nature of any connecting link whatever), splits his sides laughing when he finds that his neighbour believes in occult phenomena and psychic manifestations. Nevertheless, neither the bigot nor the man of science, nor even the academician, numbered among the “Immortals,” can explain to us the smallest of the problems of existence. The metaphysician who for centuries has studied the phenomenon of being in its first principles, and who would smile pityingly while listening to the ramblings of Theosophy, would be greatly embarrassed to explain to us the philosophy or even the cause of dreams. Which of them can tell us why all the mental operations, except *reasoning*, which faculty alone finds itself suspended and paralyzed — function while we dream with as much activity and energy as when we are awake? The disciple of Herbert Spencer would send one who squarely asked him that question to the biologist. The latter, for whom digestion is the *alpha* and *omega* of every dream — as well as *hysteria*, that great Proteus of a thousand forms, which is present in all psychic phenomena — could by no means satisfy us. Indigestion and hysteria are, in fact, twin sisters, two goddesses to whom the modern physiologist has raised an altar at which he has constituted himself the officiating priest. That is his own business, so long as he does not meddle with the gods of his neighbours.

From all this it follows that, since the Christian characterizes Theosophy as the “accursed science” and the forbidden fruit; since the man of science sees nothing in metaphysics but “the domain of the crazy poet”;¹ since the reporter touches it only with poisoned forceps; and since the missionaries associate it with the idolatry of the “benighted Hindu,” it follows, we say, that poor *Theosophia* is as shamefully treated as she was when the ancients called her the TRUTH — while they relegated her to the bottom of the well. Even the “Christian” Kabbalists, who love to mirror themselves in

¹ Tyndall

the dark waters of this deep well, although they see nothing there but the reflection of their own faces, which they mistake for that of Truth, even the Kabbalists make war upon us! . . . Nevertheless, all that is no reason why Theosophy should have nothing to say in its own defence, and in its own favour; or that it should cease to assert its right to be listened to; or why its loyal and faithful servants should neglect their duty by acknowledging themselves beaten.

The “accursed science,” you say, Gentlemen Ultramontanes? You should remember, nevertheless, that the tree of science is grafted on the tree of life; that the fruit which you declare “forbidden,” and which you have proclaimed for eighteen centuries to be the cause of the original sin that brought death into the world, that this fruit, whose flower blossoms on an immortal stem, was nourished by that same trunk, and that therefore it is the only fruit which can insure us immortality. And you, Gentlemen Kabbalists, are either ignorant of the fact, or wish to deny, that the allegory of the earthly paradise is as old as the world, and that the tree, the fruit, and the sin had once a far profounder and more philosophic meaning than they have today, since the secrets of initiation are lost.

Protestantism and Ultramontanism are opposed to Theosophy, just as they were opposed to everything not emanating from themselves; as Calvinism opposed the replacing of its two fetishes, the Jewish Bible and the Sabbath, by the Gospel and the Christian Sunday; as Rome opposed secular education and Freemasonry. Dead letter and Theocracy have, however, had their day. The world must move and advance, under penalty of stagnation and death. Mental evolution progresses *pari passu* with physical evolution, and both advance towards the ONE TRUTH, which is the heart, as evolution is the blood, of the system of Humanity. Let the circulation stop for one moment, and the heart stops and it is all up with the human machine! And it is the servants of Christ who wish to kill, or at least paralyze, the Truth by the blows of a club called “*the letter that kills*”! That which Coleridge said of political despotism applies even more to religious despotism. The Church, unless she withdraws her heavy hand, which weighs like a nightmare on the oppressed bosoms of millions of believers *nolens volens*, and whose reason remains paralyzed in the clutch of superstition, the ritualistic Church is sentenced *to yield its place to religion* and — to die. Soon it will have to choose. For, once the people become enlightened about the truth which it hides with so much care, one of two things will happen: the Church will either perish *by means of* the people; or else, if the masses are left in ignorance and in slavery to the dead letter, it will perish *with* the people. Will the servants of eternal Truth, which has been made by them a squirrel running around an ecclesiastical wheel, show themselves sufficiently *altruistic* to choose the first of these alternative necessities? Who knows?

I repeat: it is only Theosophy, well understood, that can save the world from despair, by re-enacting the social and religious reform once before in history accomplished by Gautama the Buddha; a peaceful reform, without one drop of spilt blood, permitting everyone to remain in the faith of his fathers if he so choose. To do this, one would have only to reject the parasitic plants of human fabrication which at the present moment are choking all religions and cults in the world. Let him accept but the essence, which is the same in all; namely, the spirit which gives life to man in whom it

resides, and renders him immortal. Let every man inclined to good find his ideal — a star before him to guide him Let him follow it without ever deviating from his path, and he is almost certain to reach the “beacon-light” of life — TRUTH; no matter whether he seeks for and finds it at the bottom of a cradle or of a well.

4. The ancient Egyptians, the Ethiopians of the East who came from Lankā or Ceylon, were a colony of dark-skinned Aryans, the Dravidians of Southern India, who took an already existing civilization with them to Egypt.

Laugh then at the science of sciences without knowing the first word of it! We will be told that such is the literary right of our critics. I am glad it is. It is true that if people always talked about what they understood, they would only say things that are true, and that would not always be so amusing. When I read the criticisms now written on Theosophy, the platitudes and the jests in bad taste at the expense of the most grandiose and sublime philosophy in the world — one of whose aspects only is found in the noble ethics of the Philaletheians — I ask myself whether the Academies of any country have ever understood the Theosophy of the philosophers of Alexandria any better than they understand us now? What is known, what can be known of Universal Theosophy, unless one has studied under the Masters of Wisdom? And understanding so little of Iamblichus, Plotinus, and even Proclus, that is to say of the Theosophy of the third and fourth centuries, people yet pride themselves upon delivering judgment on the Neo-Theosophy of the nineteenth.

Theosophy, we say, comes to us from the extreme East, as did the Theosophy of Plotinus and Iamblichus, and even the mysteries of ancient Egypt. Do not Homer and Herodotus tell us, in fact, that the ancient Egyptians were the “Ethiopians of the East,” *who came from Lankā or Ceylon*, according to their descriptions? For it is generally acknowledged that the people whom those two authors call *Ethiopians of the East* were no other than a colony of very dark-skinned Āryans, the Dravidians of Southern India, who took an already existing civilization with them to Egypt. This took place during the prehistoric ages which Baron Bunsen calls *pre-Menite* (before Menes), but which have a history of their own, to be found in the ancient *Annals* of Kullūka-Bhatta. Besides, and apart from the esoteric teachings, which are not divulged to a mocking public, the historical researches of Colonel Vans Kennedy, the great rival in India of Dr. Wilson as a Sanskritist, show us that pre-Assyrian Babylonia was the home of Brāhmanism, and of Sanskrit as a sacerdotal language.¹ We also know, if *Exodus* is to be believed, that Egypt had, long before the time of Moses, its diviners, its hierophants and its magicians; that is to say, before the XIXth dynasty. Finally Brugsch-Bey sees in many of the gods of Egypt, immigrants from beyond the Red Sea and the great waters of the Indian Ocean.

Whether that be so or not, Theosophy is a descendant in direct line of the great tree of universal GNOSIS, a tree, the luxuriant branches of which, spreading over the whole earth like a great canopy, overshadowed during the epoch — which Biblical chronology is pleased to call antediluvian — all the temples and all the nations of the

¹ [Reference is most likely to the two remarkable works of Col. Vans Kennedy: *Researches into the Origin and Affinity of the Principal Languages of Asia and Europe*, London, 1828; and *Researches into the Nature and Affinity of Ancient and Hindu Mythology*, London, 1831. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

earth. That Gnosis represents the aggregate of all the sciences, the accumulated *knowledge* [*savoir*] of all the gods and demi-gods incarnated in former times upon the earth. There are some who would like to see in these the fallen angels and the enemy of mankind; those sons of God who, seeing that the daughters of men were fair, took them for wives and imparted to them all the secrets of heaven and earth. Let them do so. We believe in Avatāras and in divine dynasties, in an epoch when there were in fact “giants upon the earth,” but we emphatically repudiate the idea of “fallen angels” and of Satan and his army.

“What then is your religion or your belief?” we are asked. “What is your favourite study?”

Truth is our Religion and Dogma¹

“TRUTH,” we reply. Truth wherever we find it; for, like Ammonius Saccas, our great ambition would be to reconcile the different religious systems, to help each one to find the truth in his own religion, while obliging him to recognize it in that of his neighbour. What matters the name if the thing itself is essentially the same? Plotinus, Iamblichus, and Apollonius of Tyana, all three, had, it is said, the wonderful gifts of prophecy, of clairvoyance, and of healing, although they belonged to three different schools. Prophecy was an art cultivated by the Essenes and the *benim nabim* among the Jews, as well as by the priests of the pagan oracles. The disciples of Plotinus attributed miraculous powers to their master. Philostratus has claimed the same for Apollonius, while Iamblichus had the reputation of surpassing all the other Eclectics in Theosophic Theurgy. Ammonius declared that all moral and practical WISDOM was contained in the Books of Thoth or Hermes Trismegistus. But “Thoth” means a “college,” school or assembly, and the works of that name, according to the *theodidaktos*, were identical with the doctrines of the sages of the extreme East. If Pythagoras acquired his knowledge in India (where he is mentioned to this day in old manuscripts under the name of *Yavanāchārya*, the “Greek Master”),² Plato gained his from the books of Thoth-Hermes. How it is that the younger Hermes — the god of the shepherds, surnamed “the good shepherd” — who presided over divination and clairvoyance, became identical with the Thoth (or Thot), the deified sage and the author of the *Book of the Dead* — only the esoteric doctrine can reveal to the Orientalists.

He who dissipates the darkness of ignorance by the torch of truth awakens in our benumbed souls the faculty of distinguishing the true from the false, and kindles a divine flame hitherto absent.

Every country has had its Saviours. He who dissipates the darkness of ignorance by the help of the torch of science, thus disclosing to us the truth, deserves that title as a mark of our gratitude, quite as much as he who saves us from death by healing our bodies. Such a one awakens in our benumbed souls the faculty of distinguishing the true from the false, by kindling therein a divine flame hitherto absent, and he has the right to our grateful reverence, for he has become our creator. What matters the name or the symbol that personifies the abstract idea, if that idea is always the

¹ [See “Heart Doctrine and Higher Ethics” in our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² A term which comes from the words *Yavana*, or “the Ionian,” and *āchārya*, professor or master.”

same and is true? Whether the concrete symbol bears one title or another, whether the Saviour in whom we believe has for an earthly name Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, or Aesculapius — also called the “Saviour-God,” *Σωτήρ* — we have but to remember one thing: symbols of divine truth were not invented for the amusement of the ignorant; they are the *alpha* and *omega* of philosophic thought.

Theosophy being the way that leads to Truth, in every religion as in every science, occultism is, so to say, the touchstone and universal solvent. It is the thread of Ariadne given by the master to the disciple who ventures into the labyrinth of the mysteries of being; the torch that lights him through the dangerous maze of life, forever the enigma of the Sphinx. But the light thrown by this torch can only be discerned by the eye of the awakened soul, by our spiritual senses; it blinds the eye of the materialist as the sun blinds the owl.

Study groups ought to be of uneven numbers in order to have more power; a group, however little cohesion it may possess, is a single united body, wherein the senses and perceptions of the single units complement and mutually help each other, one member supplying to another the quality in which he is wanting.

Having neither dogma nor ritual — these two being but fetters, a material body which suffocates the soul — we do not employ the “ceremonial magic” of the Western Kabbalists; we know its dangers too well to have anything to do with it. In the T.S. every Fellow is at liberty to study what he pleases, provided he does not venture into unknown paths which would of a certainty lead him to *black magic*, the sorcery against which Éliphas Lévi so openly warned the public. The occult sciences are dangerous for him who understands them imperfectly. Anyone who gave himself to their practice alone would run the risk of becoming insane and those who study them would do well to unite in small groups of from three to seven. These groups ought to be of uneven numbers in order to have more power; a group, however little cohesion it may possess, forming a single united body, wherein the senses and perceptions of the single units complement and mutually help each other, one member supplying to another the quality in which he is wanting — such a group will always end by becoming a perfect and invincible body. “Union is strength.” The moral fable of the old man bequeathing to his sons a bundle of sticks which were never to be separated, is a truth which will forever remain axiomatic.

5. Theosophy is the white ray from which arise the seven colours of the solar spectrum, each human being assimilating one of these rays to a greater degree than the other six.

The disciples (lanoos) of the law of the *Diamond Heart* (magic) will help each other in their lessons. The grammarian will be at the service of him who looks for the soul of the metals (chemist), *etc., etc.*¹

The ignorant would laugh if they were told that in the Occult Sciences the Alchemist can be useful to the philologist and *vice versa*. They would understand the matter better, perhaps, if told that by this substantive (grammarian or philologist) we mean to designate one who makes a study of the universal language of corresponding sym-

¹ Catechism of the *Gupta-Vidyā*

bols, although only the members of the Esoteric Section of The Theosophical Society can understand clearly what the term philologist means in that sense. All things in nature have correspondences and are mutually interdependent. In its abstract sense, Theosophy is the white ray from which arise the seven colours of the solar spectrum, each human being assimilating one of these rays to a greater degree than the other six. It follows that seven persons, each imbued with his special ray, can help each other mutually. Having at their service the septenary *beam* of rays, they have the seven forces of nature at their command. But it follows also that, to reach that end, the choosing of the seven persons who are to form a group should be left to an expert — to an initiate in the science of occult rays.

But here we are on dangerous ground, where the Sphinx of esotericism runs the risk of being accused of mystification. Still, orthodox science furnishes a proof of the truth of what we say, and we find a corroboration in physical and materialistic astronomy. The sun is one, and its light shines for everyone; it warms the ignorant as well as the expert astronomer. As to the hypotheses about our luminary, its constitution and nature — their number is *legion*. Not one of these hypotheses contains the whole truth, or even an approximation of it. Frequently they are only fiction soon to be replaced by another; and it is to scientific theories more than to anything else in this world that the lines of Malherbe are applicable:

. . . et rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses,
L'espace d'un matin.¹

Nevertheless, whether they adorn or not the altar of Science, each of these theories may contain a fragment of truth. Selected, compared, analysed, pieced together, all these hypotheses may one day supply an astronomical axiom, a fact in nature, instead of a chimera in the scientific brain.

This is far from meaning that we accept as an increment of truth every axiom accepted as true by the Academies. An instance of this is the evolution and phantasmagorical transformations of the sunspots — Nasmyth's theory at the present moment. Sir William Herschel began by seeing in them the inhabitants of the sun, beautiful and gigantic angels. Sir John Herschel, maintaining a prudent silence about these celestial salamanders, shared the opinion of the elder Herschel that the solar globe was nothing but a beautiful metaphor, a *māyā* — thus proclaiming an occult axiom. The sunspots have found a Darwin in the person of every astronomer of any eminence. They were taken successively for planetary spirits, solar mortals, columns of volcanic *smoke* (conceived, one must think, in brains academical), opaque clouds, and finally for shadows in the shape of the leaves of the willow tree (willow leaf theory). At the present day the god *Sol* is degraded. To hear the men of science talk, it would seem to be nothing but a gigantic ember, still aglow, but about to go out in the furnace of our little system.

This is so with the speculations published by Fellows of The Theosophical Society, when the authors, although they belong to the Theosophical fraternity, have never

¹ [. . . a rose, she lived as live all roses,
The span of a forenoon.

These verses occur in Malherbe's poem *Consolation à Duperier*, written about 1599. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

studied the true esoteric doctrines. These speculations can never be other than hypotheses, no more than coloured with a ray of truth, enveloped in a chaos of fancy and sometimes of unreason. By selecting them from the heap and placing them side by side, one succeeds, nevertheless, in extracting a philosophic truth from these ideas. For, let it be well understood, Theosophy has this in addition to ordinary science, that it examines the reverse side of every apparent truth. It tests and analyses every fact put forward by physical science, looking only for the essence and the ultimate and occult constitution in every cosmical or physical manifestation, whether in the domain of ethics, intellect, or matter. In a word, Theosophy begins its research where materialists finish theirs.

“It is metaphysics then that you offer us?” it may be objected. “Why not say so at once?”

No, it is not metaphysics as that term is generally understood, although it plays that role sometimes. The speculations of Kant, of Leibnitz, and of Schopenhauer belong to the domain of metaphysics, as also those of Herbert Spencer. Still, when one studies the latter, one cannot help dreaming of Dame Metaphysics figuring at a *bal masqué* of the Academical Sciences, adorned with a false nose. The metaphysics of Kant and of Leibnitz — as proved by his monads — is as far above the metaphysics of our day as a balloon in the clouds is above a pumpkin in the field below. Nevertheless the balloon, however superior it may be to the pumpkin, is too artificial to serve as a vehicle for the Truth of the Occult Sciences. The latter is perhaps a goddess too frankly décolleté to suit the taste of our modest savants. The metaphysics of Kant taught its author, without the slightest help of present-day methods or perfected instruments, the identity of the constitution and essence of the sun and the planets; and Kant *affirmed*, when the best astronomers even during the first half of this century still *denied*. But this same metaphysics did not succeed in proving to him the true nature of that essence, any more than it has helped modern physics in doing so, notwithstanding its noisy hypotheses.

Theosophy, or rather the occult sciences it studies, is something more than simple metaphysics: it is universal transcendentalism.

Theosophy, therefore, or rather the occult sciences it studies, is something more than simple metaphysics. It is, if I may be allowed to use the double term, *meta-metaphysics*, *meta-geometry*, *etc.*, *etc.*, or a universal transcendentalism. Theosophy rejects the testimony of the physical senses entirely, if the latter be not based upon that afforded by the psychic and spiritual perceptions. Even in the case of the most highly developed clairvoyance and clairaudience, the *final* testimony of both must be rejected unless by those terms is signified the *φῶς*¹ of Iamblichus, or the ecstatic illumination, the *αγωγή μαντεία* of Plotinus and Porphyry. The same holds good for the physical sciences; the evidence of reason upon the terrestrial plane, like that of our *five* senses, should receive the *imprimatur* of the sixth and seventh senses of the divine *Ego*, before a fact can be accepted by the true occultist.

Official science hears what we say and — laughs. We read its reports, we behold the apotheosis of its self-styled progress, of its great discoveries — more than one of

¹ [inner light]

which, while enriching still more a small number of those wealthy already, have plunged millions of the poor into still more terrible misery — and we leave it to its own devices. But realizing that physical science has not made a single step towards the knowledge of the real nature of primal matter since the days of Anaximenes and the Ionian School, we laugh in our turn.

In that direction, the best work has been done and the most valuable scientific discoveries of this century have, without contradiction, been made by the great chemist Sir William Crookes.¹

In his particular case, a remarkable intuition of occult truth has been of more service to him than all his great knowledge of physical science. It is certain that neither scientific methods, nor official routine, have helped him much in his discovery of radiant matter, or in his research into *protyle*, or primordial matter.²

6. The numerical value of the names of old divinities was taught in the Lesser Mysteries. But Mystery Language itself was reserved for the high initiates alone.³

That which the Theosophists who hold to orthodox and official science try to accomplish in their own domain, the occultists or the Theosophists of the “inner group” study according to the method of the esoteric school. If up to the present this method has demonstrated its superiority only to its students, that is to say, to those who have pledged themselves by oath not to reveal it, that circumstance proves nothing against it. Not only have the terms *magic* and *theurgy* never been even approximately understood, but the name *Theosophy* has been disfigured. The definitions thereof given in dictionaries and encyclopaedias are as absurd as they are grotesque. Webster, for instance, in explanation of the word *Theosophy*, assures his readers that it is “a direct connection or communication with God and superior spirits”; and, further, that it is “the attainment of *superhuman and supernatural* knowledge and powers by *physical processes* [!?!], as by the theurgic operations of Platonists, or by the chemical processes of the German Fire-Philosophers.” This is nonsensical verbiage. It is precisely as if we were to say that it is possible to transform a cracked brain into one of the calibre of Newton’s, and to develop in it a genius for mathematics, by riding five miles every day upon a wooden horse.

Theosophy is synonymous with the *Jñāna-Vidyā*, and the *Brahma-Vidyā*⁴ of the Hindus, and again with the *Dzyan* of the trans-Himālayan adepts, the science of the *true* Rāja-Yogis, who are much more accessible than one thinks. This science has many schools in the East, but its offshoots are more numerous, each one ultimately separating itself from the parent stem — the *Archaic Wisdom* — and modifying its form.

¹ Member of the Executive Council of the London Lodge of The Theosophical Society.

² The homogeneous, non-differentiated element which he calls *meta-element*.

³ [See “Keys to the Mystery Language” in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. — ED. PHIL.]

⁴ The meaning of the word *Vidyā* can only be rendered by the Greek term *gnosis* [γνώσις], the knowledge of hidden and spiritual things; or again, the knowledge of Brahma, that is to say, of the God that contains all the gods.

But while these forms varied, departing from the Light of Truth, more and more with each generation, the basis of initiatory truths remained always the same. The symbols used to express the same ideas may differ, but in their hidden sense they always express the same thoughts. Ragon, the most erudite Mason of all the “Widow’s Sons,” has said the same. There exists a sacerdotal language, the “mystery-language,” and unless one knows it well, he cannot go far in the occult sciences. According to Ragon, “to build or found a city” meant the same thing as to “found a religion”; therefore, that phrase, when it occurs in Homer, is equivalent to the expression to distribute the “soma juice,” in the *Brāhmanas*. It means “to found an esoteric school,” not a “religion,” as Ragon avers. Was he mistaken? We do not think so. But as a Theosophist belonging to the Esoteric Section dares not tell to an ordinary member of The Theosophical Society the things about which he has promised to keep silent, so Ragon found himself obliged to divulge merely relative truths to his Trinosophists. Still, it is quite certain that he had made at least an elementary study of the MYSTERY-LANGUAGE.¹

“How can one learn this language?” we may be asked. We reply: study all religions and compare them with one another. To learn thoroughly requires a teacher, a *guru*; to succeed by oneself needs more than genius; it demands inspiration like that of Ammonius Saccas. Encouraged within the Church by Clement of Alexandria and by Athenagoras, protected by the learned men of the Synagogue and the Academy, and adored by the Gentiles, “he learned the *mystery-language* by teaching the common origin of all religions, and a common faith.” To do this he only had to teach according to the ancient canons of Hermes which Plato and Pythagoras had studied so well, and from which they drew their respective philosophies. Can we be surprised if, finding in the first verses of the Gospel according to St. John² the same doctrines that are contained in the three systems of philosophy above mentioned, he concluded with every show of reason that the intention of the great Nazarene was to restore the sublime science of ancient Wisdom in all its primitive integrity? We think as did Ammonius. The Biblical narrations and the stories about the gods have only two possible explanations: either they are great and profound allegories, illustrating universal truths, or else they are fables of no use but to put the ignorant to sleep.

Therefore all the allegories — Jewish as well as Pagan — contain truths that can only be understood by him who knows the mystic language of antiquity. Let us see what is said on this subject by one of our most distinguished Theosophists, a fervent Platonist and a Hebraist, who knows his Greek and Latin like his mother tongue, Professor Alexander Wilder of New York:³

The root-idea of the Neo-Platonists was the existence of the One and Supreme Essence. This was the *Diu* or “Lord of the Heavens” of the Āryan nations, identical with the *Iáω* (Iaō) of the Chaldeans and Hebrews, the *Iabe* of the Samaritans, the *Tiu* or *Tuisto* of the Norwegians, the *Duw* of the ancient tribes of Britain, the *Zeus* of those of Thrace, and the *Jupiter* of the Romans. It was the

¹ [See “Keys to the Mystery Language” in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [See in-depth analysis by H.P. Blavatsky and G.R.S. Mead in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

³ The first Vice-President of the T.S. when it was founded.

Being — (non-Being), the *Facit*, one and supreme. It is from it that all other beings proceeded by *emanation*. Perchance someday a wiser man will combine these systems in a single one. The names of these different divinities seem often to have been invented with little or no regard to their etymological meaning, but chiefly on account of this or another mystical significance attached to the numerical value of the letters in their orthography.¹

This *numerical* value is one of the branches of the “mystery-language” or the ancient sacerdotal language. It was taught in the “Lesser Mysteries,” but the language itself was reserved for the high initiates alone. The candidate must have come out victorious from the terrible trials of the Greater Mysteries before receiving instruction in it. That is why Ammonius Saccas, like Pythagoras, made his disciples take an oath never to divulge the higher doctrines to any but those to whom the preliminary tenets had already been imparted, and who, therefore, were ready for initiation. Another sage, who preceded him by three centuries, did the same by his disciples, in saying to them that he spoke “in similes” (or parables),

. . . because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given . . . because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.²

Therefore the “similes” employed by Jesus were part of the “mystery-language,” the sacerdotal tongue of the Initiates. Rome has lost the key to it. By rejecting Theosophy and pronouncing her anathema against the occult sciences she loses it forever.

“Love one another,” said the great Teacher to those who were studying the mysteries of “the kingdom of God.” “Preach altruism, keep unity, mutual understanding and harmony in your groups, all of you who place yourselves among the neophytes and the seekers after the ONE TRUTH,” other Teachers tell us.

Without unity, and intellectual as well as psychic sympathy, you will arrive at nothing. He who sows discord, reaps the whirlwind . . .³

Envy, jealousy, and rivalry, reign supreme in a society whose principal object is brotherhood. Instead of helping one another, many look askance at each other, always ready to make fun of each other and criticise.

Learned Kabbalists, thoroughly versed in the *Zohar* and its numerous commentaries, are not lacking among our members, in Europe and especially in America. What has this led to, and what good have they done to this day for the Society which they joined in order to work for it? Most of them, instead of uniting and helping one another, look askance at each other, always ready to make fun of each other and mutually to criticise each other. Envy, jealousy and a most deplorable feeling of rivalry, reign supreme in a society whose principal object is brotherhood! “See how these Christians love each other!” said the pagans in the first centuries of the Fathers of the Church who demolished each other in the name of the Master who had be-

¹ [Quoting from *New Platonism and Alchemy*, 1869. Extract has been slightly modified. See full text in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [*Matthew* xiii, 11, 13]

³ Siamese and Buddhist proverb.

queathed to them peace and love. Critics and the indifferent begin to say as much of the Theosophists, and they are right. See what our Journals are becoming — all of them, with the exception of *The Path* of New York; even *The Theosophist*, the oldest of our monthly publications, since the departure for Japan five months ago of the President-Founder, snaps right and left at the calves of its Theosophical colleagues and collaborators. In what way are we better than the Christians of the early Councils?

In union is strength.

This is one of the causes of our weakness. We are advised not to wash our dirty linen in public. On the contrary, it is better to confess one's imperfections openly, in other words, *to wash one's own dirty linen, than to dirty the linen of one's brothers in Theosophy*, as some people love to do. Let us speak in general terms, confess our errors, denounce anything that is not Theosophical, but let personalities alone; the latter lies within the province of each individual's *Karma*, and Theosophical Journals are not concerned there.

Those who desire to succeed in abstract or practical Theosophy, must remember that disunity is the first condition of failure. Let a dozen determined and united Theosophists get together. Let them work together, each one according to his taste, along this or another line of universal science, if he so prefers, just as long as each is in sympathy with his neighbour. This will be beneficial even to ordinary members who do not care for philosophical research. If such a group, selected on the basis of esoteric rules, were formed among mystics alone; if they pursued truth, helping each other with whatever light they may have, we guarantee that each member of such a group would make more progress in the sacred science in one year, than he would make in ten years on his own. In Theosophy, what is required is emulation and not rivalry; otherwise, he who boasts of being the first, will be the last. In true Theosophy, it is the least who becomes the greatest.

And yet, The Theosophical Society has more *victorious* disciples than is generally believed. But these keep to themselves and work instead of specifying. They are our most zealous and devoted Theosophists. Writing articles, they forget their own names and use pseudonyms. Some among them know the mystery-language perfectly, and many an ancient book or manuscript, undecipherable to our scholars, or which appears to the latter as a mere collection of falsehoods, as compared to modern science, is an open book to them.

These few devoted men and women are the pillars of our temple. They alone foil the incessant work of our Theosophical "termites."

7. The Theosophical Society is a Republic of Conscience.

We believe we have now sufficiently refuted in these pages several grave errors concerning our doctrines and beliefs; among them the one which persists in representing Theosophists — at any rate those who founded the Society — as polytheists or atheists. We are neither the one nor the other; just as were certain Gnostics who, while believing in the existence of planetary, solar and lunar gods, offered to them neither prayers nor altars. Since we do not believe in a personal God, *outside of man himself who is its temple* — as taught by St. Paul and other Initiates — we believe in

an impersonal and absolute PRINCIPLE,¹ so far beyond human conception that we consider anyone a mere blasphemer and a presumptuous fool who attempts to define this grand universal mystery. All that is taught us concerning this eternal and incomparable Principle, is that it is neither spirit, nor matter, nor substance, nor thought, but *the container of all these, the absolute container*. It is in other words the “God-Nothing” of Basilides, so little understood even by the scholars and the able analysts of the Musée Guimet,² who define this term with ridicule, speaking of it as “God-nothing who has ordained and foreseen all things, though he had neither reason nor will.”

Yes, certainly, and this “God-Nothing,” being identical with the Parabrahman of the Vedāntins — a most philosophical and grandiose concept — is also identical with the AIN-SOPH of the Jewish Kabbalists. The latter is also the “god who is not,” “Ain” signifying *non-being* or the absolute, the *nothing* or *το οὐδέν* of Basilides, meaning that human intelligence, being limited on this material plane, cannot conceive of anything that *is*, but that does not exist under any form. As the idea of a *being* is limited to *something* that exists, either in substance, actual or potential, or in the nature of things, or only in minds — that which cannot be perceived by our senses, or conceived by our intellect which conditions all things, *does not exist for us*.

“Where, then, do you locate the Nirvana, oh great Arhat?” asks a king of a venerable Buddhist ascetic, whom he interrogates concerning the Good Law.

“Nowhere, oh great King!” is the answer.

“Nirvana, therefore, does not exist? . . . ”

“Nirvana *is*, but does not exist.”

The same is the case with the God “that is not,” a term which is merely an unsatisfactory *literal* translation, for esoterically, one should say the *god that does not exist, but that is*. The root of *οὐδέν* is *οὐδ-εἰς*, meaning “and not anyone,” signifying that what is being spoken of is not a *person* or a *thing*, but the negation of both (*οὐδέν*, the neuter form, is used as an adverb, “in nothing”). Thus the *το οὐδεν εν*³ of Basilides is absolutely identical with the *En* or the “*Ain-Soph*” of the Kabbalists. In the religious metaphysics of the Hebrews, the Absolute is an abstraction, “without form or existence,” “without any similitude to anything else.”⁴ God, therefore, is NOTHING, without name and without qualities; it is for this reason that it is called AIN-SOPH, for the word *Ain* means nothing.

¹ This belief concerns only those who share the opinion of the undersigned. Every Fellow has the right to believe in whatever he wishes, and in whatever way he wishes. As said elsewhere, The Theosophical Society is a “Republic of Conscience.”

² Tome XIV

[This has reference to an essay by Amélineau entitled «Essai sur le gnosticisme égyptien, ses développements et son origine égyptienne,» published in Vol. XIV of the *Annales du Musée Guimet*, Paris, 1887. The subject is treated of in Part II, ch. ii, thereof. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

³ [οὐδέν εν]

⁴ Franck, *La Kabbale*, p. 173

Cosmogonies in a nutshell

Knowledge of Cosmogogenesis is the key to All-knowledge.

It is not this immutable and absolute Principle, which is only the potentiality of being, from which the gods, or active principles of the manifested world, emanate. As the absolute has no relation to the conditioned and the limited, and could not possibly have any, that from which the emanations proceed is the “God that speaks” of Basilides, *i.e.*, the *logos* which Philo calls “the second God” and the Creator of forms. “The second God is the Wisdom of the ONE God.”¹ “But this *logos*, this ‘Wisdom’ is an emanation nevertheless?” will be the objection. “And to make anything emanate from NOTHING is an absurdity!” Not at all. First, this “nothing” is so because it is the *absolute*, consequently the ALL. Then, this “second God” is no more an emanation than the shadow our body casts on a white wall is an emanation of that body. In any case, the God is not the effect of a cause or of a premeditated act, of a deliberate and conscious will. It is merely the periodical effect² of an immutable and eternal law, beyond time and space, of which the *logos* or creative intelligence is the *shadow* or *reflection*.

“But this is an absurd idea!” we can hear those say who believe in an anthropomorphic and personal God. “Of the two, the man and his shadow, it is the latter that is a *nothing*, an optical illusion, and the man who casts it is the intelligence, however passive it may be in this case!”

Quite so, but it is so only on our plane where everything is an illusion, where everything appears transposed, similar to the reflection in a mirror. Moreover, as the realm of the only real is distorted by matter, the *non-real*, and as — from the standpoint of absolute reality — the universe with its conscious and intelligent beings is but a poor phantasmagoria, it follows that it is the shadow of the Real, on the plane of the latter, that is endowed with intelligence and attributes, while the absolute — from our viewpoint — is deprived of all conditioned qualities *by the very fact that it is absolute*. It is not necessary to be well-versed in Oriental metaphysics to understand this; and one is not required to be a distinguished palaeographer or palaeologist in order to see that the system of Basilides is also the system of the Vedanta, however distorted and disfigured it may have been by the author of *Philosophumena*. This is definitely proved to us by means of the fragmentary outline of the Gnostic systems given in that work. Only the esoteric doctrine can explain what is incomprehensible and chaotic in the misunderstood system of Basilides, as it has been transmitted to us by the Fathers of the Church — those executioners of the *Heresies*. The *Pater in-natus*, or the non-engendered God, the Great Archōn (*Αρχων*), and the two Demiurges, even the three hundred and sixty-five heavens — the number contained in the name of Abraxas, their governor — all of this was derived from the Hindu systems. But all is denied in our century of pessimism, where everything moves by steam, even life itself, where the abstract — and nothing else is eternal — interests no one

¹ *Quaestiones et Solutiones*, Book II, 62

² At least for him who believes in an uninterrupted succession of “creations,” which we call the “days and nights” of Brahmā, or the *manvantaras* and the *pralayas* (dissolutions).

but a few rare *eccentrics*, and where man dies without having lived one instant face to face with his soul, swept on, as it is, by the whirlwind of terrestrial and selfish affairs.

Apart from metaphysics, however, everyone who enters The Theosophical Society can find therein a science and an occupation according to his taste. An astronomer could make more scientific discoveries in studying allegories and symbols concerning every star,¹ in the ancient Sanskrit books, than he possibly could with the help of the Academies alone. An intuitive physician could learn more in the works of Charaka,² translated into Arabic in the VIIIth century, or in the dusty manuscripts of the Adyar Library, works misunderstood as all others, than in the books on modern physiology. Theosophists with an inclination toward medicine or the *healing art* could do worse than consult the legends and symbols revealed and explained concerning Asclēpios or Aesculapius. For, like Hippocrates of old, consulting the votive stelae of the rotunda of Epidaurus (surnamed Tholos) at Cos,³ he could find therein recipes of remedies unknown to modern pharmacopoeia.⁴ Then, instead of killing, he might be able to heal.

Let it be said for the hundredth time: Truth is One! When it is presented, not in all its aspects, but according to the thousand and one opinions which its devotees have about it, one ceases to have divine TRUTH, but only a confused echo of human voices. Where can one look for it and find it approximately as an integral whole? Is it with Christian Kabbalists or the modern European Occultists? With the Spiritists of today or the primitive Spiritualists?

In France [a friend of ours once told us], so many Kabbalists, so many systems. With us, they all pretend to be Christians. There are some among them who are for the Pope, so much so that they dream of a universal crown for him, the crown of a Pontiff-Caesar. Others are against Papacy, but for a Christ, not an historical one, but one created by their own imaginations, an *anti-Caesarean* Christ, *playing at politics, etc., etc.* Each Kabbalist believes he has discovered the lost Truth. It is his own science which is the eternal Truth, and the science of others, merely a mirage . . . And he is always ready to defend and to uphold his own by his pen . . .

But the Kabbalist-Israelites [I asked him], are they also for Christ?

Oh well, they are for *their* Messiah. It's just a matter of date!

True enough, in infinity there can be no anachronisms. However, as all these various terms and systems, all these contradictory tenets could not all of them contain actu-

¹ Everyone of the 333,000,000 gods and goddesses which make up the Hindu Pantheon is represented by a star. As the number of stars and constellations known to astronomers does not reach this total, one might suspect that ancient Hindus knew more stars than do the moderns.

² Charaka was a physician of the Vedic epoch. A legend represents him as an incarnation of the Serpent Vishnu, under his name of Sesha, ruling in Pātāla (the nether regions).

³ Strabo, *Geographica*, XIV, ii, 19. See also Pausanias, *Periegesis* (Itinerary), II, xxvii, 2-3.

⁴ It is known that all those who were healed in the *Asklēpieia* left their *ex-votos* [a votive offering to a divinity] in the temple; and that they engraved on the stelae the name of their diseases and the beneficent remedies. Of late, a great number of these *ex-votos* were excavated on the Acropolis. See Paul Girard, *L'Asclēpieion d'Athènes*, Paris, Thorin, 1882.

al Truth, I do not see how the Gentlemen Kabbalists of France can claim the knowledge of Occult Sciences. They have the Kabbalah of Moses de Leon,¹ compiled by him in the XIIIth century; but his *Zohar*, as compared with the Chaldean *Book of Numbers*, represents as much the work of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, as the *Poimandrēs* of the Greek Christians represents the real book of the Egyptian Thoth. The ease with which the Kabbalah of von Rosenroth and his Latin manuscript-texts of the Middle Ages — read according to the *system* of the *Notaricon* — transform themselves into Christian trinitarian texts, is like a fairy scene. Between the Marquis de Mirville and his friend, the Chevalier Drach, a converted Rabbi, the “Good Kabbalah” has become a catechism of the Roman Church. Let the Gentlemen Kabbalists be satisfied with that; we prefer to keep to the Chaldean Kabbalah, the *Book of Numbers*. One who is satisfied with the dead letter, parades in vain in the mantle of the *Tannaïm* (the ancient initiates of Israel); in the eyes of the experienced occultists, he would be but a wolf dressed in grandmother’s nightcap as in Red Ridinghood. But the wolf is not going to devour the occultist, as it devoured Red Ridinghood — a symbol of the profane athirst for mysticism, who falls victim to its teeth. It is rather the wolf that will perish, by falling into his own trap . . .

The Theosophical Society is the Tree of Brotherhood, grown from a kernel planted in the earth by the angel of Charity and Justice. It depends upon its members to make of their Society an ark destined, in a future not too distant, to transport the humanity of a new cycle beyond the vast muddy waters of the deluge of hopeless materialism.

Like the Bible, Kabbalistic works have their dead letter, their exoteric meaning, and their true or esoteric significance. The key to the true symbolism is at the moment beyond the gigantic peaks of the Himālayas, even the key to the Hindu systems. No other key could open the sepulchres wherein have been buried for thousands of years all the intellectual treasures which were deposited there by the original interpreters of divine Wisdom. But the great cycle, the first one within the *Kali-yuga*, is at an end; the day of resurrection for all that is dead may not be too far off. The great Swedish Seer, Emmanuel Swedenborg, said:

Seek the *lost word* among the hierophants, in great Tartary and Tibet.

Whatever may be the seeming appearances against The Theosophical Society; whatever may be its unpopularity among those who recoil in horror from anything that appears to them to be an *innovation*, one thing, however, is sure. What you, Gentlemen opponents, consider to be an invention of the XIXth century, is as old as the world. Our Society is the tree of Brotherhood, grown from a kernel planted in the earth by the angel of Charity and Justice, the day the first Cain slew the first Abel. During long centuries of the subjugation of women and of the suffering of the poor, this kernel was watered by the bitter tears shed by the weak and the oppressed.

¹ It is he who compiled the *Zohar* of Shimon ben Yohai, the originals of the early centuries having been lost; it would be wrong to accuse him of having invented what he wrote. He made a collection of all he could find, but he supplied from his own knowledge the passages which were missing, helped in this by Christian Gnostics of Chaldea and Syria.

[Consult on this subject Boris de Zirkoff’s Notes in Vol. VII, pp. 269-72, of the present Series.]

Blessed hands transplanted it from one corner of the earth to another, under different climes and at epochs distant from one another.

Do not do unto others what you would not wish others to do unto you,
said Confucius to his disciples.

Love one another, and love all living creatures,
preached Gautama the Buddha to his Arhats.

Love one another,
was repeated as a faithful echo in the streets of Jerusalem.

It is to the Christian nations that belongs the honour of having obeyed this supreme commandment of their Master in all its paradoxical force! Caligula, the *pagan*, wished that humanity had but one head, so that he might sever it with one blow. *Christian* powers have improved upon this desire which hitherto had remained theoretical, after seeking and finally finding the means to put it into practice. Let them therefore prepare to cut each other's throats and let them exterminate more people in one day in war than the Caesars killed in a whole year. Let them depopulate whole countries and provinces in the name of their paradoxical religion, and let them perish by the sword, they who kill by the sword. What concern of ours is that?

Theosophists are powerless to stop them. That is true. But it is in their power to save as many survivors as possible. Being a nucleus of a true Brotherhood, it depends upon them to make of their Society an ark destined, in a future not too distant, to transport the humanity of a new cycle beyond the vast muddy waters of the deluge of hopeless materialism. These waters are rising and at the present moment flood all the civilized countries. Are we going to let the good perish with the bad, afraid of the hue and cry and the ridicule of the latter, either against The Theosophical Society or ourselves? Are we going to see them perish one after the other, one from fatigue, the other vainly seeking the ray of sunlight which shines for all, without throwing them a plank of salvation? Never!

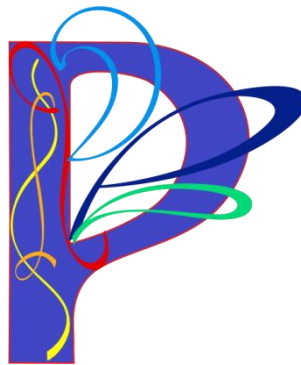
In the meantime, we all should seek to bring some peace on earth to the hearts of those who suffer, by lifting for them a corner of the veil which hides from them divine truth.

It may well be that the beautiful utopia, the philanthropic dream, that sees as if in a vision the triple wish of The Theosophical Society come true, is still far off: entire and complete freedom of human conscience granted to all, brotherhood established between the rich and the poor, and equality between the aristocrat and the plebeian recognized in theory as well as in practice — these are so many castles in Spain, and for a good reason. All this must take place naturally and voluntarily, on both sides; however, the time has not yet come for the lion and the lamb to lie down together. The great reform must come about without social upheaval, without spilling a drop of blood; solely in the name of that axiomatic truth of Oriental philosophy which shows us that the great disparity of fortunes, of social rank and intellect, is due but to the effects of the personal Karma of every human being. We harvest but what we have sown. If the physical *personality* of man differs from every other man, the immaterial being in him or the immortal *individuality* emanates from the same divine essence as

that of his neighbour. He who is thoroughly impressed by the philosophic truth that every *Ego* begins and ends by being the indivisible ALL, cannot love his neighbour less than himself. But, until the time this becomes a religious truth, no such reform can possibly take place. The egotistical saying that “charity begins at home,” or the other which says that “each for himself, and God for all,” will always move the “superior” and *Christian* races to oppose the practical introduction of the beautiful pagan saying: “Every pauper is a son of a rich man,” and even more to the one that says: “Feed first the hungry, and then eat what is left yourself.”

But the time will come when that “barbarous” wisdom of the inferior races will be better appreciated. In the meantime what we should seek is to bring some peace on earth to the hearts of those who suffer, by lifting for them a corner of the veil which hides from them divine truth. Let the strong point the way to the weak and help them to climb the steep slope of existence. Let them turn their gaze upon the Beacon-light which shines upon the horizon, beyond the mysterious and uncharted sea of Theosophical sciences, like a new star of Bethlehem, and let the disinherited of life take hope . . .

H.P. BLAVATSKY



“Keys to the Mystery Language,” in the same series. — ED. PHIL.