

Pages from Isis Unveiled



Defying the hand of time, the vain inquiry of profane science, the insults of the “revealed” religions, they will disclose their riddles to none but the legatees of those by whom they were entrusted with the Mystery. The key was in the keeping of those who knew how to commune with the invisible Presence, and who had received from the lips of mother Nature herself, her grand truths. And so stand these imperial monuments of long-crumbled dynasties, like mute, forgotten sentinels on the threshold of that unseen world, whose gates are thrown open but to a few elect.

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¹ Frontispiece by Bob Greyvenstein.

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A presumptuous scepticism that rejects facts and statements, without diligent examination of the underlying truth, is more injurious than unquestioning credulity. 65

The perpetual lamps of alchemy stand for the incorruptible and immortal spirit.

The Egyptians, more than any other people, hoped that their ever-burning lamp would help the material soul to part with its earthly dwelling, and unite forever with its divine counterpart. 69

A Cypriote knight had both flax and linen made out of asbestos, which were cleaned by simply throwing them in the fire. 72

A similarly made gown, such as the Buddhist monks wear, thrown into a large pit full of glowing coals and taken out two hours afterward, was as clear as if it had been washed with soap and water. 73

The wick of certain perpetual lamps was made out of Carystian stone. 73

A little philosophy inclineth a man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth man's mind about to religion. 74

That which science today calls gravitation, the ancients and the mediæval Hermetists called magnetism, attraction, and affinity.

The occult properties of electricity and magnetism were known to the theurgists of the earliest Mysteries recorded in history, those of Samothrace, thousands of years prior to the historical period. 76

Magic in prehistoric periods had a part in the mysteries. The greatest phenomena, the so-called miracles, rested on the arcane knowledge of the ancient priests of physics and all the branches of chemistry, or rather alchemy. 76

The twins brothers, Castor and Pollux, are personifications of the twin polarity of electricity and magnetism.

The Dioscourai constantly die and return to life together for it is absolutely necessary that one should die that the other may live. 78

In their unbounded glorification of matter, our physicists proclaim matter the sole and autocratic sovereign of a Boundless Universe. 78

If they could, they would forcibly divorce matter from her consort, and place the widowed queen on the great throne of nature made vacant by the exiled spirit. 78

The Platonic philosophy was one of order, system, and proportion.

It embraced the evolution of worlds and species, the correlation and conservation of energy, the transmutation of material form, and the indestructibility of matter and of spirit. 79

Plato's method, like that of geometry, was to descend from universals to particulars.

In the same manner as lovers gradually advance from that beauty, which is apparent, to that which is divine; so the ancient priests attributed the alliance and sympathy between natural things to the underlying interconnectedness of all things.

The Divine Proclus pointed out certain mysterious peculiarities of plants, minerals, and animals, all of which are well known to our naturalists, but none of which are explained. 85

Proclus, who combined Theosophy and Theurgy, also advocated a divine science that is firmly and solely based on the mysterious affinities between organic and inorganic bodies, the visible productions of the four kingdoms, and the invisible powers of the universe. 86

Persons have been known to fall sick simultaneously with the uprooting of a tree planted upon their natal day, and dying when the tree died. 88

There is a lamentable departure of divinity from man, when nothing worthy of celestial concerns is heard or believed.

Alas! The divine intellect is veiled in man; his animal brain alone philosophises. 89

In spiritually fertile periods the occult powers of plants, animals, and minerals magically sympathize with their “superior” nature, and the divine soul of man is in perfect harmony with his “inferior” young brethren. 89

Formerly, magic was a universal science, entirely in the hands of the sacerdotal savant. Though the focus was jealously guarded in the sanctuaries, its rays illuminated the whole of mankind. 89

Every sentence of Pythagoras, like most of the ancient maxims, had a deeper meaning.

For example, “do not stir the fire with a sword,” meant that, by governing the tongue and being quiet, friendship is produced from strife, and the fire of anger is extinguished. 90

There is nothing new under the Sun.

Yet, modern scientists have reaped more palms and laurels for their great “discoveries” than Lucretius, Cicero, Plutarch, and Seneca had hairs on their heads. 91

Plutarch said that an idea has no subsistence by itself, but gives figure and form to shapeless matter and becomes the cause of its manifestation. 93

The great body of ancient materialists, sceptical as they now seem to us, believed still in a God. 94

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Part 1.
**The “Fiery Waters” of Aether is Divine
Substance expanding from within without
the “Garment of God,”¹ woven
from its own Essence.**

Ich bin der Geist der stets verneint.
(I am the spirit which still denies.)

— GOETHE, Mephisto in *Faust*

The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive
because it seeth Him not; neither knoweth Him.

— JOHN xiv, 17

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep.

— MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, Book IV, 677

Mere intellectual enlightenment cannot recognize the spiritual.
As the sun puts out a fire, so spirit puts out the eyes of mere
intellect.

— W. HOWITT

From *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I, ch. V (THE ÆTHER, OR “ASTRAL LIGHT”), pp. 125-62.

There has been an infinite confusion of names to express one and the same thing;

- The chaos of the ancients;
- The Zoroastrian sacred fire, or the *Ānta-Behrām* of the Parsīs;
- The Hermes-fire;
- The Elmo’s fire of the ancient Germans;
- The lightning of Cybelē;
- The burning torch of Apollo;
- The flame on the altar of Pan;
- The inextinguishable fire in the temple on the Acropolis, and in that of Vesta;
- The fire-flame of Pluto’s helm;
- The brilliant sparks on the hats of the Dioscouri, on the Gorgon head, the helm of Pallas, and the staff of Mercury;

¹ [The veil and cloak of Truth]

- The *πυρ ασβεστον*;
- The Egyptian Ptah, or Rā;
- The Grecian *Zeus-Kataibates* (the descending);¹
- The Pentecostal fire-tongues;
- The burning bush of Moses;
- The pillar of fire of the *Exodus*, and the “burning lamp” of Abram;
- The eternal fire of the “bottomless pit”;
- The Delphic oracular vapours;
- The Sidereal light of the Rosicrucians;
- The AKĀŚA of the Hindu adepts;
- The Astral light of Éliphas Lévi;
- The nerve-aura and the fluid of the magnetists;
- The *Od* of Reichenbach;
- The fire-globe, or meteor-*cat* of Babinet;
- The *Psychode* and ectenic force of Thury;
- The psychic force of Sergeant Cox and E.W. Crookes;
- The atmospheric magnetism of some naturalists;
- Galvanism;
- And finally, Electricity,

— are but various names for many different manifestations, or effects of the same mysterious, all-pervading cause — the Greek *Archæus*, or Ἀρχαῖος.

Sir E. Bulwer-Lytton, in his *Coming Race*,² describes it as the VRIL,³ used by the subterranean populations, and allowed his readers to take [126] it for a fiction. “These people,” he says, “consider that in the vril they had arrived at the unity in natural energetic agencies”; and proceeds to show that Faraday intimated them “under the more cautious term of correlation,” thus:

I have long held an opinion, almost amounting to a conviction, in common, I believe, with many other lovers of natural knowledge, that the various forms under which the forces of matter are made manifest, HAVE ONE COMMON ORIGIN; or, in other words, are so directly related and naturally dependent, that they are convertible, as it were, into one another, and possess equivalents of power in their action.

¹ Pausanias, *Itinerary*, “Elis,” lib. i, cap. xiv, 10

² [ch. vii]

³ We apprehend that the noble author coined his curious names by contracting words in classical languages. *Gy* would come from *gune*; *vril* from *virile*. [Consult “Vril and Bovril,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Absurd and unscientific as may appear our comparison of a fictitious *vril* invented by the great novelist, and the primal force of the equally great experimentalist, with the Kabbalistic astral light, it is nevertheless the true definition of this force. Discoveries are constantly being made to corroborate the statement thus boldly put forth. Since we began to write this part of our book, an announcement has been made in a number of papers of the supposed discovery of a new force by Mr. Edison, the electrician, of Newark, New Jersey, which force seems to have little in common with electricity, or galvanism, except the principle of conductivity. If demonstrated, it may remain for a long time under some pseudonymous scientific name; but, nevertheless, it will be but one of the numerous family of children brought forth from the commencement of time by our Kabbalistic mother, the *Astral Virgin*. In fact, the discoverer says that, “it is as distinct, and has as regular laws as heat, magnetism, or electricity.” The journal which contains the first account of the discovery adds that, “Mr. Edison thinks that it exists in connection with heat, and that it can also be generated by independent and *as yet undiscovered means*.”

There is nothing new except what is forgotten.¹

Another of the most startling of recent discoveries, is the possibility of annihilating distance between human voices — by means of the *telephone* (distance-sounder), an instrument invented by Professor A. Graham Bell. This possibility, first suggested by the little “lovers’ telegraph,” consisting of small tin cups with vellum and drug-twine apparatus, by which a conversation can be carried on at a distance of two hundred feet, has developed into the telephone, which will become the wonder of this age. A long conversation has taken place between Boston and Cambridgeport by telephone; “every word being distinctly heard and perfectly understood, and the modulations of voices being quite distinguishable,” according to the official report. *The voice is seized upon, so to say, and held in form by a magnet, and the sound-wave transmitted by electricity acting in unison and co-operating with the magnet.* The whole success depends upon a perfect control of the electric currents and the power of the magnets used, with which the former must co-operate. [127] “The invention,” reports the paper, “may be rudely described as a sort of trumpet, over the bell-mouth of which is drawn a delicate membrane, which, when the voice is thrown into the tube, swells outward in proportion to the force of the sound-wave. To the outer side of the membrane is attached a piece of metal, which, as the membrane swells outward, connects with a magnet, and this, with the electric circuit, is controlled by the operator. By some principle, not yet fully understood, the electric current transmits the sound-wave just as delivered by the voice in the trumpet, and the listener at the other end of the line, with a twin or facsimile trumpet at his ear, hears every word distinctly, and readily detects the modulations of the speaker’s voice.”

Thus, in the presence of such wonderful discoveries of our age, and the further magical possibilities lying latent and yet undiscovered in the boundless realm of nature, and further, in view of the great probability that Edison’s Force and Professor Graham Bell’s Telephone may unsettle, if not utterly upset, all our ideas of the imponderable fluids, would it not be well for such persons as may be tempted to traverse

¹ Attributed to Mlle Bertin, Milliner to Marie-Antoinette; (Il n’y a de nouveau que ce qui est oublié.) *King’s Quotations*.

our statements, to wait and see whether they will be corroborated or refuted by further discoveries?

Only in connection with these *discoveries*, we may, perhaps, well remind our readers of the many hints to be found in the ancient histories as to a certain secret in the possession of the Egyptian priesthood, who could instantly communicate, during the celebration of the Mysteries, from one temple to another, even though the former were at Thebes and the latter at the other end of the country; the legends attributing it, as a matter of course, to the “invisible tribes” of the air, which carry messages for mortals. The author of *Pre-Adamite Man* quotes an instance, which being given merely on his own authority, and he seeming uncertain whether the story comes from Macrinus or some other writer, may be taken for what it is worth. He found good evidence, he says, during his stay in Egypt, that “one of the Cleopatras [?] sent news by a wire to all the cities, from Heliopolis to Elephantine, on the Upper Nile.”¹

It is not so long since Professor Tyndall ushered us into a new world, peopled with airy shapes of the most ravishing beauty.

“The discovery consists,” he says, “in subjecting the vapours of volatile liquids to the action of concentrated sunlight, or to the concentrated beam of the electric light.” The vapours of certain nitrites, iodides, and acids are subjected to the action of the light in an *experimental tube*, lying horizontally, and so arranged that the axis of [128] the tube and that of the parallel beams issuing from the lamp are coincident. The vapours form clouds of gorgeous tints, and arrange themselves into the shapes of vases, of bottles and cones, in nests of six or more; of shells, of tulips, roses, sunflowers, leaves, and of involved scrolls. “In one case,” he tells us, “the cloud-bud grew rapidly into a serpent’s head; a mouth was formed, and from the cloud, a cord of cloud resembling a tongue was discharged.” Finally, to cap the climax of marvels, “once it positively assumed the form of a fish, with eyes, gills, and feelers. The twoness² of the animal form was displayed throughout, and no *disk, coil, or speck existed on one side that did not exist on the other.*”

These phenomena may possibly be explained in part by the mechanical action of a beam of light, which Mr. Crookes has recently demonstrated. For instance, it is a supposable case, that the beams of light may have constituted a horizontal axis, about which the disturbed molecules of the vapours gathered into the forms of globes and spindles. But how account for the fish, the serpent’s head, the vases, the flowers of different varieties, the shells? This seems to offer a dilemma to science as baffling as the meteor-cat of Babinet. We do not learn that Tyndall ventured as absurd an explanation of his extraordinary phenomena as that of the Frenchman about his.

Those who have not given attention to the subject may be surprised to find how much was known in former days of that all-pervading, subtile principle which has recently been baptized THE UNIVERSAL ÆTHER.

¹ P.B. Randolph, *Pre-Adamite Man*, p. 48

² [duality]

Miracles are perfectly natural acts, always in accordance with natural law.

Before proceeding, we desire once more to enunciate in two categorical propositions, what was hinted at before. These propositions were demonstrated laws with the ancient theurgists.

- 1 The so-called miracles, to begin with Moses and end with Cagliostro, when genuine, were as de Gasparin very justly insinuates in his work on the phenomena, “perfectly in accordance with natural law”; hence — no miracles. Electricity and magnetism were unquestionably used in the production of some of the prodigies; but now, the same as then, they are put in requisition by every sensitive, who is made to use *unconsciously* these powers by the peculiar nature of his or her organization, which serves as a conductor for some of these imponderable fluids, as yet so imperfectly known to science. This force is the prolific parent of numberless attributes and properties, many, or rather, most of which, are as yet unknown to modern physics.
- 2 The phenomena of natural magic to be witnessed in Siam, India, Egypt, and other Oriental countries, bear no relationship whatever to sleight of hand; the one being an absolute physical effect, due to the action of occult natural forces, the other, a mere deceptive result [129] obtained by dexterous manipulations supplemented with confederacy.¹

Which is the most important branch of magic?

The thaumaturgists of all periods, schools, and countries, produced their wonders, because they were perfectly familiar with the imponderable — in their effects — but otherwise perfectly tangible waves of the astral light. They controlled the currents by guiding them with their will-power. The wonders were both of physical and psychological character; the former embracing effects produced upon material objects, the latter the mental phenomena of Mesmer and his successors. This class has been represented in our time by two illustrious men, Du Potet and Regazzoni, whose wonderful powers were well attested in France and other countries. Mesmerism is the most important branch of magic; and its phenomena are the effects of the universal agent which underlies all magic and has produced at all ages the so-called miracles.

The ancients called it *Chaos*; Plato and the Pythagoreans named it *the Soul of the World*. According to the Hindus, the Deity in the shape of Æther pervades all things. It is the invisible, but, as we have said before, too tangible Fluid. Among other names this universal Proteus — or “the nebulous Almighty,” as de Mirville calls it in derision — was termed by the theurgists “the living fire,”² the “Spirit of Light,” and *Magnes*. This last appellation indicates its magnetic properties and shows its magical nature.

¹ On this point at least we are on firm ground. Mr. Crookes’s testimony corroborates our assertions. On pp. 84-88 of his *Researches on the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, he says: “The many hundreds of facts I am prepared to attest — facts which to imitate by known mechanical or physical means would baffle the skill of a Houdin, a Bosco, or an Anderson, backed with all the resources of elaborate machinery and the practice of years — have all taken place in my own house — at times appointed by myself and under circumstances which absolutely precluded the employment of the very simplest instrumental aids.”

² In this appellation, we may discover the meaning of the puzzling sentence to be found in the *Zend-Avesta* that “fire gives knowledge of the future, science, and amiable speech,” as it develops an extraordinary eloquence in some sensitives.

For, as truly expressed by one of its enemies — *μαγος* and *μαγνης* are two branches growing from the same trunk, and shooting forth the same resultants.

It was the country and the stone that were called after the Magi, not the other way around.

Magnetism is a word for the derivation of which we have to look to an incredibly early epoch. The stone called *magnet* is believed by many to owe its name to Magnesia, a city or district in Thessaly, where these stones were found in quantity. We believe, however, the opinion of the Hermetists to be the correct one. The word *Mogh*, *magus*, is derived from the Sanskrit *Mahat*, the *great* or *wise* (the anointed by the divine wisdom). “Eumolpus is the *mythic* founder of the Eumolpidæ [130] (priests); the priests traced their own wisdom to the Divine Intelligence.”¹ The various cosmogonies show that the Archæal Universal Soul was held by every nation as the “mind” of the Demiurgic Creator, the *Sophia* of the Gnostics, or *the Holy Ghost as a female principle*. As the Magi derived their name from it, so the Magnesian stone or Magnet was called in their honour, for they were the first to discover its wonderful properties. Their temples dotted the country in all directions, and among these were some temples of Hercules² — hence the stone, when it once became known that the priests used it for their curative and magical purposes, received the name of the Magnesian or Heracleian stone. Socrates, speaking of it, remarks:

Euripides calls it the Magnesian stone, but the common people, the Heracleian.³

It was the country and stone which were called after the Magi, not the Magi after one or the other. Pliny informs us that the wedding-ring among the Romans was magnetized by the priests before the ceremony. The old Pagan historians are careful to keep silent on certain Mysteries of the “wise” (Magi) and Pausanias was warned in a dream, he says, not to unveil the holy rites of the temple of Demeter and Persephone at Athens.⁴

Modern science, after having ineffectually denied *animal magnetism*, has found herself forced to accept it as a fact. It is now a recognized property of human and animal organization; as to its psychological, occult influence, the Academies battle with it, in our century, more ferociously than ever. It is the more to be regretted and even wondered at, as the representatives of “exact science” are unable to either explain or even offer us anything like a reasonable hypothesis for the undeniable mysterious potency contained in a simple magnet. We begin to have daily proofs that these potencies underlie the theurgic mysteries, and therefore might perhaps explain the occult faculties possessed by ancient and modern thaumaturgists as well as a good many of

¹ Dunlap, *Sôd*, *The Mysteries of Adoni*, p. 111. [This sentence, as well as the following one, in the text above, bears to relation to the subject under discussion, and may belong to some other part of the work.]

² “Hercules was known as the king of the Musians,” says Schwab, II, 44; and Musion was the feast of “Spirit and Matter,” Adonis and Venus, Bacchus and Ceres.” (See Dunlap, *op. cit.*, p. 95) Dunlap shows, on the authority of Julian [*Oratio* iv] and Anthon [*Classical Dictionary*, p. 67], Æsculapius, “the Saviour of all,” identical with Ptah (the creative Intellect, the Divine Wisdom), and with Apollo, Baal, Adonis, and Hercules (Dunlap, p. 93), and Ptah is the “Anima mundi,” the Universal Soul of Plato, the Holy Ghost of the Egyptians, and the Astral Light of the Kabbalists. Michelet, however, regards the Grecian Herakles as a different character, the adversary of the Bacchic revellings and their attendant human sacrifices.

³ Plato, *Ion*, 553D

⁴ *Itinerary*, “Attica,” ch. xiv, 3

their most astounding achievements. Such were the gifts transmitted by Jesus to some of [131] his disciples. At the moment of his miraculous cures, the Nazarene felt a *power* issuing from him. Socrates, in his dialogue with Theages,¹ telling him of his familiar god (*daimōnion*), and his power of either imparting his (Socrates') wisdom to his disciples or preventing it from benefiting those he associates with, brings the following instance in corroboration of his words: "I will tell you, Socrates," says Aristides, "a thing incredible, indeed, by the gods, but true. I made a proficiency when I associated with you, even if I was only in the same house, though not in the same room; but more so, when I *was in the same room* . . . and much more when I *looked at you* . . . But I made by far the greatest proficiency when I sat near you and *touched you*."

Kurios is Mercury, Divine Wisdom, and Mercury is the Sun, from whom Thoth-Hermes received his divine wisdom. Hercules is also the Sun, the celestial storehouse of Universal Magnetism.

This is the modern magnetism and mesmerism of Du Potet and other masters, who, when they have subjected a person to their *fluidic* influence, can impart to them all their thoughts even at a distance, and with an irresistible power force their subject to obey their *mental* orders. But how far better was this psychic force known to the ancient philosophers! We can glean some information on that subject from the earliest sources. Pythagoras taught his disciples that God is the universal *mind* diffused through all things, and that this mind by the sole virtue of its universal sameness could be communicated from one object to another and be made to create all things by the sole will-power of man. With the ancient Greeks, *Kurios* was the god-Mind (*Nous*). "Now Koros [Kurios] signifies the pure and unmixed nature of intellect — wisdom," says Plato.² *Kurios* is Mercury, the Divine Wisdom, and "Mercury is the Sol" (Sun),³ from whom Thoth-Hermes received this divine wisdom, which, in his turn, he imparted to the world in his books. Hercules is also the Sun — the celestial storehouse of the universal magnetism;⁴ or rather Hercules is the magnetic light which, when having made its way through the "opened eye of heaven," enters into the regions of our planet and thus becomes the Creator. Hercules passes through the twelve labours, the valiant Titan! He is called "Father of All" and "self-born" [132] (*autophuēs*).⁵ Hercules, the Sun, is killed by the Devil, Typhon,⁶ and so is Osiris, who is the father and brother of Horus, and at the same time is identical with him; and we must not forget that the magnet was called the "bone of Horus," and iron the

¹ Plato, *Theages*, 130D-E. Cicero renders this word δαιμονιον, *quiddam divinum*, a divine something, not anything personal.

² *Cratylus*, 396

³ Arnobius, *Adversus Natione* vi, 12; [referred to by Jerome as *Adversus Gentes*.]

⁴ As we will show in subsequent chapters, the sun was not considered by the ancients as the direct cause of the light and heat, but only as an agent of the former, through which the light passes on its way to our sphere. Thus it was always called by the Egyptians "the eye of Osiris," who was himself the *Logos*, the First-begotten, or light made manifest to the world, "which is the mind and divine intellect of the Concealed." It is only that light of which we are cognizant that is the Demiurge, the *creator* of our planet and everything pertaining to it; with the invisible and unknown universes disseminated through space, none of the sun-gods had anything to do. The idea is expressed very clearly in the "Books of Hermes."

⁵ *Orphic Hymn* xii; Hermann; Dunlap, *Söd, The Mysteries of Adoni*, p. 91

⁶ Movers, *Die Phönizier* i, p. 525; Dunlap, *op. cit.*, p. 92

“bone of Typhon.” He is called “Hercules *Invictus*,” only when he descends to Hades (the subterranean garden), and plucking the “golden apples” from the “tree of life,” slays the dragon.¹ The rough Titanic power, the “lining” of every sun-god, opposes its force of blind matter to the divine magnetic spirit, which tries to harmonize everything in nature.

All the sun-gods, with their symbol, the visible sun, are the creators of *physical* nature only. The *spiritual* is the work of the Highest God — the Concealed, the Central, Spiritual SUN — and of his Demiurge, the Divine Mind of Plato, and the Divine Wisdom of Hermes Trismegistus² — the wisdom effused from Olam or Chronos.

“After the distribution of pure Fire, in the Samothracian Mysteries, a new life began.”³ This was the “new birth,” that is alluded to by Jesus, in his nocturnal conversation with Nicodemus. “Initiated into the most blessed of all Mysteries, being ourselves pure . . . we become just and holy with wisdom.”⁴ “He *breathed* on them and saith unto them, “Take the Holy Pneuma.”⁵ And this simple act of will-power was sufficient to impart vaticination in its nobler and most perfect form if both the initiator and the initiated were worthy of it. To deride this gift, even in its present aspect, “as the corrupt offspring and lingering remains of a superstitious age, and hastily to condemn it as unworthy of sober investigation, would be as unphilosophical as it is wrong,” remarks the Rev. J.B. Gross:

To remove the veil which hides our vision from the future, has been attempted . . . in all ages of the world; and therefore the propensity to pry into the lap of time, contemplated as one of the faculties of human mind, comes recommended to us under the sanction of God . . . Zwinglius, the Swiss reformer, attested the comprehensiveness of his faith in the providence of the Supreme Being, in the cosmopolitan doctrine that the Holy Ghost was not excluded from the more worthy portion of the heathen world. Admitting its truth, we cannot [133] easily conceive a valid reason why a heathen, thus favoured, should not be capable of true prophecy.⁶

Now, what is this mystic, primordial substance? In the book of *Genesis*, at the beginning of the first chapter, it is termed the “face of the waters,” said to have been incubated by the “Spirit of God.” Job mentions, in ch. xxvi, 5, that “dead things are formed from under the waters, and inhabitants thereof.” In the original text, instead of “dead things,” it is written dead *Rephaim* (giants, or mighty primitive men), from whom “Evolution” may one day trace our present race. In the Egyptian mythology, Kneph, the Eternal *unrevealed* God is represented by a snake, emblem of eternity, encircling a water-urn, with his head hovering over the waters, which it incubates

¹ Preller, *Grichische Mythologie* ii, p. 153. This is evidently the origin of the Christian dogma of Christ descending into hell and overcoming Satan.

² This important fact accounts admirably for the gross polytheism of the masses, and the refined, highly-philosophical conception of *one* God, which was taught only in sanctuaries of the “pagan” temples.

³ Wm. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, sv. “Cabeiria”

⁴ Plato, *Phædrus* 250C

⁵ *John* xx, 22

⁶ Rev. J.B. Gross, *The Heathen Religion* p. 104

with his breath. In this case the serpent is the *Agathodaimōn*, the good spirit; in its opposite aspect it is the *Kakodaimōn* — the bad one. In the Scandinavian *Eddas*, the honey-dew — the food of the gods and of the creative, busy Yggdrasill-bees — falls during the hours of night, when the atmosphere is impregnated with humidity; and in the Northern mythologies, as the passive principle of creation, it typifies the creation of the universe *out of water*; this dew is the astral light in one of its combinations and possesses creative as well as destructive properties. In the Chaldean legend of Berossus, Ōannēs or Dagon, the man-fish, instructing the people, shows the infant world created out of *water* and all beings originating from this *prima materia*. Moses teaches that only earth and *water* can bring a living soul; and we read in the Scriptures that herbs could not grow until the Eternal caused it to *rain* upon earth. In the Quiché *Popol-Vuh*,¹ man is created out of *mud* or clay (*terre glaise*), taken from under the water. Brahmā creates Lomaśa, the great Muni (or first man), seated on his lotus, only after having called into being, *spirits*, who thus enjoyed among mortals a priority of existence, and he creates him out of water, air, and earth. Alchemists claim that primordial or pre-Adamic earth, when reduced to its first substance, is in its *second* stage of transformation like clear water, the first being the *alkahest*² proper. This primordial substance is said to contain within itself the essence of all that goes to make up man; it has not only all the elements of his physical being, but even the “breath of life” itself in a latent state, ready to be awakened. This it derives from the “incubation” of the Spirit of God upon the face of the waters — Chaos; in fact, this substance is chaos itself. From this it was that Paracelsus claimed to be able to make his *homunculi*; and [134] this is why Thales, the great natural philosopher, maintained that *water* was the principle of all things in nature.

Æther is the Celestial Virgin, the spiritual mother of every existing form and being, from whose bosom, when vivified and fructified by the Divine Spirit, are called into existence Matter and Life, Force and Action.

What is the primordial Chaos but Æther? The *modern* Ether; not such as is recognized by our scientists, but such as it *was* known to the ancient philosophers, long before the time of Moses; Æther, with all its mysterious and occult properties, containing in itself the germs of universal creation; Æther, the celestial virgin, the spiritual mother of every existing form and being, from whose bosom as soon as “incubated” by the Divine Spirit, are called into existence Matter and Life, Force and Action. Electricity, magnetism, heat, light, and chemical action are so little understood even now that fresh facts are constantly widening the range of our knowledge. Who knows where ends the power of this protean giant — Æther; or whence its mysterious origin? — Who, we mean, that denies the spirit that works in it and evolves out of it all visible forms?

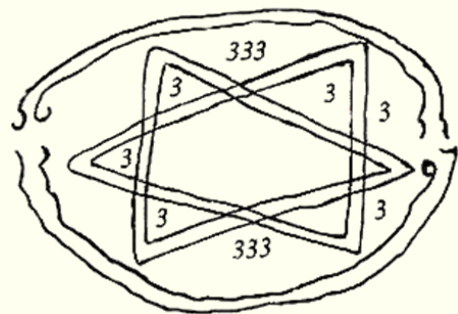
¹ [I, ii, p. 19]

² *Alkahest*, a word first used by Paracelsus, to denote the menstruum or universal solvent, that is capable of reducing all things.

All ancient legends begin with that period when nascent vapours and Cimmerian darkness lay brooding over a fluid mass, ready to start on its journey of activity at the first flutter of the breath of Him, who is the Unrevealed One. Him they felt, yet they saw Him not.

It is an easy task to show that the cosmogonical legends all over the world are based on a knowledge by the ancients of those sciences which have allied themselves in our days to support the doctrine of evolution; and that further research may demonstrate that they were far better acquainted with the fact of evolution itself, embracing both its physical and spiritual aspects, than we are now. With the old philosophers, evolution was a universal theorem, a doctrine embracing the *whole*, and an established principle; while our modern evolutionists are enabled to present us merely with speculative theoretics; with *particular*, if not wholly *negative* theorems. It is idle for the representatives of our modern wisdom to close the debate and pretend that the question is settled, merely because the obscure phraseology of the Mosaic account clashes with the definite exegesis of “exact science.”

One fact at least is proved: there is not a cosmogonical fragment, to whatever nation it may belong, but proves by this universal allegory of water and the spirit brooding over it, that no more than our modern physicists did any of them hold the universe to have sprung into existence out of nothing; for all their legends begin with that period when nascent vapours and Cimmerian darkness lay brooding over a fluid mass ready to start on its journey of activity at the first flutter of the breath of Him, who is the Unrevealed One. Him they felt, if they saw Him not. Their spiritual intuitions were not so darkened by the subtile sophistry of the forecoming ages as ours are now. If they talked less of the Silurian age slowly developing into the Mammalian, and if the Cainozoic time was only recorded by various allegories of the primitive man — the Adam of *our* race — it is but a negative proof after all that their “wise men” and leaders did not know of these successive periods as well as we do now. In the days of Democritus and Aristotle, the cycle had already begun to [135] enter on its downward path of progress. And if these two philosophers could discuss so well the atomic theory and trace the atom to its material or physical *point*, their ancestors may have gone further still and followed its genesis far beyond that limit where Mr. Tyndall and others seem rooted to the spot, not daring to cross the line of the “Incomprehensible.” The *lost arts* are a sufficient proof that if even their achievements in physiography are now doubted, because of the unsatisfactory writings of their physicists and naturalists — on the other hand, their practical knowledge in phytochemistry and mineralogy far exceeded our own. Furthermore, they might have been perfectly acquainted with the physical history of our globe without publishing their knowledge to the ignorant masses in those ages of religious Mysteries.



Therefore, it is not only from the Mosaic books that we mean to adduce proof for our further arguments. The ancient Jews got all their knowledge — religious as well as profane — from the nations with which we see them mixed up from the earliest periods. Even the oldest of all sciences, their Kabba-

listic “secret doctrine,” may be traced in each detail to its primeval source, Upper India, or Turkestan, far before the time of a distinct separation between the Āryan and Semitic nations. King Solomon so celebrated by posterity, as Josephus the historian says,¹ for his magical skill, got his secret learning from India through Hiram, the king of Ophir, and perhaps Sheba. His ring, commonly known as “Solomon’s seal,” so celebrated for the potency of its sway over the various kinds of genii and daimōns, in all the popular legends, is equally of Hindu origin. Writing on the pretentious and abominable skill of the “devil-worshippers” of Travancore, the Rev. Samuel Mateer, of the London Missionary Society, claims at the same time to be in possession of a very old manuscript volume of magical incantations and spells in the Malayālam language, giving directions for effecting a great variety of purposes. Of course he adds, that “many of these are *fearful* in their malignity and obscenity,” and gives in his work the *facsimile* of some amulets bearing the magical figures and designs on them. We find among them one with the following legend:

To remove trembling arising from demoniacal possession — write this figure on a plant that has [136] milky juice, and drive a nail through it; the trembling will cease.²

The figure is the identical Solomon’s *seal*, or double triangle of the Kabbalists. Did the Hindu get it from the Jewish Kabbalist, or the latter from India, by inheritance from their great king-Kabbalist, the wise Solomon?³ But we will leave this trifling dispute to continue the more interesting question of the astral light, and its unknown properties.

From the boundless expansion of cosmic matter, which had formed itself under God’s Breath or Will, this creative, evolving principle, by setting in motion the potencies latent in it, formed suns, stars, and satellites.

Admitting, then, that this mythical agent is Æther, we will proceed to see what and how much of it is known to science.

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, VIII, ii, 5

² *The Land of Charity*, p. 210

³ The claims of certain “adepts,” which do not agree with those of the students of the purely Jewish *Kabbalah*, and show that the “secret doctrine” has originated in India, from whence it was brought to Chaldea, passing subsequently into the hands of the Hebrew “Tannaïm,” are singularly corroborated by the researches of the Christian missionaries. These pious and learned travellers have inadvertently come to our help. Dr. Caldwell, in his *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* (pp. 77, 491-95), and Dr. Mateer, in *The Land of Charity*, pp. 83-84, fully support our assertions that the “wise” King Solomon got all his Kabbalistic lore from India, as the above-given magical figure well shows. The former missionary is desirous to prove that very old and huge specimens of the baobab tree, which is not, as it appears, indigenous to India, but belongs to the African soil, and “found only at several ancient sites of foreign commerce [at Travancore], may, for aught we can tell,” he adds, “have been introduced into India, and planted by the servants of King Solomon.” The other proof is still more conclusive. Says Dr. Mateer, in his chapter on the Natural History of Travancore:

There is a curious fact connected with the name of this bird (the peacock) which throws some light upon Scripture history. King Solomon sent his navy to Tharshish (*1 Kings* x, 22), which returned once in three years, bringing “gold and silver, ivory and apes, and peacocks.” Now the word used in the Hebrew Bible for peacock is “*tukki*,” and as the Jews had, of course, no word for these fine birds till they were first imported into Judea by King Solomon, there is no doubt that “*tukki*” is simply the old Tamil word “*tokei*,” the name of the peacock . . . The ape or monkey also is, in Hebrew, called “*koph*,” the Indian word for which is “*kapi*.” Ivory, we have seen, is abundant in South India, and gold is widely distributed in the rivers of the Western coast. Hence the “Tharshish” referred to was doubtless the Western coast of India, and Solomon’s ships were the first “East Indiamen.”

And hence also we may add, besides “the gold and silver, and apes and peacocks,” King Solomon and his friend Hiram, of Masonic renown, got their “magic” and “wisdom” from India.

With respect to the various effects of the different solar rays, Robert Hunt, F.R.S., remarks, in his *Researches on Light*, that:

Those rays which give the *most* light — the yellow and the orange rays — will not produce change of colour in the chloride of silver; . . . [while] those rays which have the *least* illuminating power — the blue and violet — produce the greatest change, and in exceedingly short time . . . The yellow glasses obstruct scarcely any light; the blue glasses may be so dark as to admit of the permeation of a very small quantity. [137]

And still we see that under the *blue* ray both vegetable and animal life manifest an inordinate development, while under the yellow ray it is proportionately arrested. How is it possible to account for this satisfactorily upon any other hypothesis than that both animal and vegetable life are differently modified electromagnetic phenomena, as yet unknown in their fundamental principles?

Mr. R. Hunt finds that the undulatory theory does not account for the results of his experiments. Sir David Brewster, in his *Treatise on Optics*, showing that “the colours of vegetable life . . . arise . . . from a specific attraction which the particles of these bodies exercise over the differently-coloured rays of light,” and that “it is by the light of the sun that the coloured juices of plants are elaborated, that the colours of bodies are changed, etc. . . .” remarks that it is not easy to allow “that such effects can be produced by the mere vibration of an ethereal medium.” And he is *forced*, he says, “by this class of facts, to reason as if light was *material*.” (?)¹ Professor Josiah P. Cooke, of Harvard University, says that he “cannot agree with those who regard the wave-theory of light as an established principle of science.”² Herschel’s doctrine, that the intensity of light, in effect of each undulation, “is inversely as the square of the distance from the luminous body,” if correct, damages a good deal, if it does not kill, the undulatory theory. That he is right, was proved repeatedly by experiments with photometers; and, though it begins to be much doubted, the undulatory theory is still alive.

As General Pleasonton, of Philadelphia, has undertaken to combat this anti-Pythagorean hypothesis, and has devoted to it a whole volume, we cannot do any better than refer the reader to his recent work on the *Blue Ray*, etc.³ We leave the theory of Thomas Young, who, according to Tyndall, “placed on an immovable basis the undulatory theory of light,” to hold its own if it can, with the Philadelphia experimenter.



There now follow two Tables:

Æther and Ether compared and contrasted, from our Confusing Words Series. Full text under the title “Aether and Ether.”

Akasha and Astral Light compared and contrasted, also from our Confusing Words Series. Full text under the title “Astral Light is a term very little understood.” — ED. PHIL.

¹ [Part III, ch. xxxiv, p. 284; ed. 1831]

² J.P. Cooke, *The New Chemistry*, p. 22

³ [*The Influence of the Blue Ray*, etc., Philadelphia, 1877]

Æther and Ether compared and contrasted.

Æther Ether

Æther is, formless and supernal.

Symbolised by the “fiery waters” of Space, only rudimentally differentiated.

Father of the Universe and the all-vivifying Spirit of Cosmic Matter.

Equivalent to the Father-Creator, Zeus or Pater-Æther.

Æther-Fire is the Spirit of Fire, the active male generative principle.

Æther-Ākāśa are the fifth and sixth principles of the Body of Kosmos, thus corresponding to Buddhi-Manas in Man.

Æther has the same relation to Cosmos and our little Earth, as Manas to the Monad and the Body.

Ākāśa is the noumenon of the Cosmic Septenary and synthesis of Æther.

Æther–Chaos–Ākāśa is the Soul of the Universe and noumenon of the Astral Light.

Æther is Ākāśa, in its higher aspect.

Æther is unevolved Spirit becoming objective matter.

Ether is physical and infernal.

Symbolised by liquid water, i.e., fully differentiated matter.

Mother of differentiated matter vivified by the Fire of Æther.

Equivalent to the infernal Serpent-Tempter, the Astral Light of the Kabbalists.

Ether is the Soul of Matter and Light of Fire, the passive female principle, from which everything in this Universe emanates.

The Ether of Space is the lowest of the septenate division of Ākāśa-Pradhāna, i.e., primordial Fire-Substance.

Ether has nought to do with Spirit, but a good deal with subjective matter and our Earth.

Ether is one of seven Cosmic Principles, and the lining of Ākāśa.

The Astral Light is no “light,” it is the dark side of Ether, teeming with conscious, semi-conscious, and unconscious entities.

Ether is Ākāśa in its lowest aspect, cosmic sediment mingling with the highest layer of Astral Light. Beginning with the Fifth Root-Race, it will develop fully only at the beginning of the Fifth Round.

Ether is objective matter rebecoming subjective Spirit, when it eludes our physical senses.

Akasha and Astral Light compared and contrasted.

Akasha (Alaya)	Astral Light
Undifferentiated, Abstract Space, (noumenal) about to be occupied by Primordial Consciousness.	
Field 1 — Latent Consciousness (1 st and 2 nd Logos)	
Field 2 — Differentiated Consciousness (3 rd Logos, Mahat) ¹	
Dhyani-Chohans, collectively,	or Humanity at large.
Plato's The Good (Το Αγαθόν) The Good cannot measure anything.	Man is the measure of all things.
Represented by the Manasaputras, subjectively,	and by Fohat, objectively.
Eternal Unconsciousness i.e., Perfect, Divine Consciousness,	periodically displaying aspects of Itself. to the perception of self-conscious minds.
Ideal Divine Mind	reflected and reversed in human thoughts and aspirations.
Germ within Acorn	Acorn
"So himself was indeed	(his own) son."
Soul of the World, of Thought and Compassion.	Body of the World, of Perception and Action.
Primordial Cosmic Substance.	Aggregate of all possible perceptions (matter).
Vehicle of Divine Thought.	Storehouse of human (psychic) iniquities.
Not Thought-Substance but recorder of every thought and deed of the spiritual man,	and of the animal man.
Spiritual plane	Psychic plane
Reality	Illusion

¹ The noetic word of Mahat consists of four elements, To Agathon, Nous, Psychē, and Hylē. This quaternary, also known as the Pythagorean Tetractys, is reflected in the sensible world of Matter. The elements or *rhizomata* of the lower Tetractys are Fire, Air, Water, and Earth. Cf. *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 599

The serpent of the gospel myth is a magnetic current formed by a chain of pernicious wills and demoralising doctrines.¹

That is how base natures can be driven headlong by the blind forces set in motion by greed, lust, and sin.

Éliphas Lévi, the modern magician, describes the astral light in the following sentence:

We have said that to acquire magical power, two things are necessary: to disengage the will from all servitude, and to exercise it in control.

Man, master thyself before attempting to exercise magical power!

The sovereign will is represented in our symbols by the woman who crushes the serpent's head, and by the resplendent angel who represses the dragon, and holds him under his foot and spear; the great magical agent, the dual current of light, the living and astral *fire* of the earth, has been represented in the ancient theogonies by the serpent with the head [138] of a bull, a ram, or a dog. It is the double serpent of the *caduceus*, it is the Old Serpent of the *Genesis*, but it is also the *brazen serpent* of Moses entwined around the *tau*, that is to say, the generative *lingham*. It is also the goat of the witch-Sabbath, and the Baphomet of the Templars; it is the *Hylē* of the Gnostics; it is the double-tail of serpent which forms the legs of the solar cock of the Abraxas; finally, it is the Devil of Eudes de Mirville. But in very fact it is the blind force which souls have to conquer to liberate themselves from the bonds of the earth; for if their will does not free them from this *fatal attraction*, they will be absorbed in the current by the force which has produced them, and *will return to the central and eternal fire*.

This last Kabbalistic figure of speech, notwithstanding its strange phraseology, is precisely the one used by Jesus; and in his mind it could have had no other significance than the one attributed to it by the Gnostics and the Kabbalists. Later the Christian theologians interpreted it differently, and with them it became the doctrine of Hell. Literally, though, it simply means what it says — the astral light, or the generator and destroyer of all forms. Continues Lévi:

All the magical operations consist in freeing one's self from the coils of the Ancient Serpent; then to place the foot on its head, and lead it according to the operator's will.

I will give unto thee,

says the Serpent, in the Gospel myth,

All the kingdoms of the earth, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

¹ [Consult "Serpents bringing out Compassion," in our Secret Doctrine's Second Proposition Series, "When the serpent sloughs off his skin," in our Constitution of Man Series, and "Who can read the riddle of the Serpent?" in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. — ED. PHIL.]

The initiate should reply to him,

I will not fall down, but thou shalt crouch at my feet; thou wilt give me nothing, but I will make use of thee and take whatever I wish. For *I am thy Lord and Master!*

This is the real meaning of the ambiguous response made by Jesus to the tempter . . . Thus, the Devil is not an Entity. It is an errant force, as the name signifies. An *odic or magnetic current* formed by a chain [a circle] of pernicious wills must create this evil spirit which the Gospel calls *legion*, and which forces into the sea a herd of swine — another evangelical allegory showing how base natures can be driven headlong by the blind forces set in motion by error and sin.¹

In his extensive work on the mystical manifestations of human nature, the German naturalist and philosopher, Maximilian Perty, has devoted a whole chapter to the *Modern Forms of Magic*. He says in his preface:

The manifestations of magical life partially repose on quite another order of things than the nature in which we are acquainted with time, space, and causality; these manifestations can be experimented with but little; they cannot be called out at our bidding, [139] but may be observed and carefully followed whenever they occur in our presence; we can only group them by analogy under certain divisions, and deduce from them general principles and laws.

Thus, for Professor Perty, who evidently belongs to the school of Schopenhauer, the possibility and *naturalness* of the phenomena which took place in the presence of Govinda Svāmin, the fakir, and are described by Louis Jaccoliot, the Orientalist,² are fully demonstrated on that principle. The fakir was a man who, through the entire subjugation of the matter of his corporeal system, has attained to that state of purification at which the spirit becomes nearly freed from its prison,³ and can produce wonders. His *will*, nay, a simple desire of his has become creative force, and he can command the elements and powers of nature. His body is no more an impediment to him; hence he can converse “spirit to spirit, breath to breath.” Under his extended palms, a seed, unknown to him (for Jaccoliot has chosen it at random among a variety of seeds, from a bag, and planted it himself, after *marking* it, in a flower pot), will germinate instantly, and push its way through the soil.⁴ Developing in less than two hours’ time to a size and height which, perhaps, under ordinary circumstances, would require several days or weeks, it grows miraculously under the very eyes of the perplexed experimenter, and mockingly upsets every accepted formula in botany. Is this a miracle? By no means; it may be one, perhaps, if we take Webster’s definition, that a miracle is “an event contrary to the *established* constitution and course of

¹ Éliphas Lévi, *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie*, Vol. II, ch. vi

² [*Le Spiritisme dans le monde*, p. 279 et seq.]

³ Plato hints at a ceremony used in the Mysteries during the performance of which the neophyte was taught that men are *in this life* in a kind of prison, and taught *how to escape from it temporarily*. As usual, the too-learned translators disfigured this passage, partially because they *could not* understand it, and partially because they *would not*. See *Phædo*, 62B and commentaries on it by Henry More, the well-known Mystic philosopher and Platonist.

⁴ [Jaccoliot, *op. cit.*, p. 311]

things, or a deviation from the *known* laws of nature.” But are our naturalists prepared to support the claim that what they have once *established* on observation is infallible? Or that *every* law of nature is known to them? In this instance, the “miracle” is but a little *more* prominent than the now well-known experiments of General Pleasonton of Philadelphia. While the vegetation and fruitage of his vines were stimulated to an incredible activity by the artificial violet light, the magnetic fluid emanating from the hands of the fakir effected still more intense and rapid changes in the vital function of the Indian plants. It attracted and concentrated the *Ākāśa*, or life-principle, on the germ.¹ His magnetism, obeying his will, drew up the *Ākāśa* [140] in a concentrated current through the plant towards his hands, and by keeping up an unintermitted flow for the requisite space of time, the life-principle of the plant built up cell after cell, layer after layer, with preternatural activity, until the work was done. The life-principle is but a blind force obeying a controlling influence. In the ordinary course of nature the plant-protoplasm would have concentrated and directed it at a certain established rate. This rate would have been controlled by the prevalent atmospheric conditions; its growth being rapid or slow, and, in stalk or head, in proportion to the amount of light, heat, and moisture of the season. But the fakir, coming to the help of nature with his powerful will and spirit purified from the contact with matter,² condenses, so to speak, the essence of plant-life into its germ, and forces it to maturity ahead of its time. This blind force being totally submissive to his will, obeys it with servility. If he chose to *imagine* the plant as a monster, it would as surely become such, as ordinarily it would grow in its natural shape; for the concrete image — slave to the subjective model outlined in the imagination of the fakir — is forced to follow the original in its least detail, as the hand and brush of the painter follow the image which they copy from his mind. The will of the fakir-conjurer forms an invisible but yet, to it, perfectly objective matrix, in which the vegetable matter is caused to deposit itself and assume the fixed shape. The will creates; for the will in motion is *force*, and force produces *matter*. [141]



¹ The *Ākāśa* is a Sanskrit word which means sky, but it also designates the imponderable and intangible life-principle — the astral and celestial lights combined together, and which two form the *anima mundi*, and constitute the soul and spirit of man; the celestial light forming his *vouç*, *πνευμα*, or divine spirit, and the other his *ψυχη*, soul or *astral* spirit. The grosser particles of the latter enter into the fabrication of his outward form — the body. *Ākāśa* is the mysterious fluid termed by scholastic science, “the all-pervading æther”; it enters into all the magical operations of nature, and produces mesmeric, magnetic, and spiritual phenomena. As, in Syria, Palestine, and India, meant the sky, *life*, and the *sun* at the same time; the sun being considered by the ancient sages as the great magnetic well of our universe. The softened pronunciation of this word was *Ah* — says Dunlap [*Vestiges*, etc., p. 72], for “the *s* continually softens to *h* from Greece to Calcutta.” *Ah* is *Iah*, *Ao*, and *Iaō*. God tells Moses that his name is “I am” (*Ahiah*), a reduplication of *Ah* or *Iah*. The word “As,” *Ah*, or *Iah* means *life*, *existence*, and is evidently the root of the word *Ākāśa*, which in Hindustan is pronounced *āhāśa*, the life-principle, or Divine life-giving fluid or medium. It is the Hebrew *rūah*, and means the “wind,” the breath, *the air in motion*, or “moving spirit,” according to Parkhurst’s *Hebrew and English Lexicon*; and is identical with the spirit of God *moving* on the face of the waters.

² Bear in mind that Govinda Svāmin made Jaccoliot swear that he would neither approach nor *touch* him during the time he was entranced. The least contact with *matter* would have paralyzed the action of the freed spirit, which, if we are permitted to use such an unpoetical comparison, would re-enter its dwelling like a frightened snail, drawing in its horns at the approach of any foreign substance. In some cases such a *brusque* interruption and oozing back of the spirit (sometimes it may suddenly and altogether break the delicate thread connecting it with the body) kills the entranced *subject*. See the several works of Baron du Potet and Puysegur on this question.



Globe
Z

Duration of each Round

Round 1	154,285,714
Round 2	308,571,428
Round 3	462,857,142
Round 4	617,142,856
Round 5	771,428,570
Round 6	925,714,284
Round 7	1,079,999,998
Total	4,319,999,992

(BCW XIII 303)



Globe
A



We are here! On Globe D,
Round 4, Root-Race 5, our
Beautiful Earth, fulcrum
of the Great Kalpa, with
its Seven Root-Races.

Globe
D

Globe
G



Impulses of Spiritual Consciousness evolve wave-like in a 7-fold pattern along a chain of 7 man-bearing Globes (i.e., Planets or Spheres) plus 5 arupa-loka or unmanifested, re-visiting each one 7 times. A single passage through every Globe is termed Planetary Round or Ring, in the course of which 49 Root-Races of Humanity emerge, each one progressing through 7 Sub-Races (see Diagram 2). Every Round repeats on a higher scale the evolutionary work of the preceding Round. (Cf. SD I 187)

Integrative Theosophical Studies
**OUR PLANETARY CHAIN
OF SEVEN ROUNDS**
Diagram cum Emblem
After *The Divine Plan*, pp. 218, 342

A Day of Brahmā (Maha Brahmā) equal to 1,000 Maha Yugas, or 4,319,999,992 terrene years, followed by the Night of Brahmā, or Naimittika Maha Pralaya, of an equal duration. For an in-depth analysis of the Caduceus of the Spheres, see "Keys to the Mystery Language" in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series.

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Revision 10.13

The spirit of man is like that of his Creator — omniscient in its essence, and omnipotent throughout all the kingdoms of Nature.

Astonishing feats of Indian juggles and fakirs.

If some persons object to the explanation on the ground that the fakir could by no means create the model in his imagination, since he was kept ignorant by Jaccoliot of the kind of seed he had selected for the experiment; to these we will answer that the spirit of man is like that of his Creator — omniscient in its essence. While in his natural state the fakir did *not*, and *could not* know whether it was a melon seed, or seed of any other plant; once entranced, *i.e.*, bodily dead to all outward appearance — the spirit, for which there exist neither distance, material obstacle, nor space of time, experienced no difficulty in perceiving the melon seed, whether as it lay deeply buried in the mud of the flower-pot, or reflected in the faithful picture gallery of Jaccoliot's brain. Our visions, portents, and other psychological phenomena, all of which exist in nature, are corroborative of the above fact.

And now, perhaps, we might as well meet at once another impending objection. Indian *jugglers*, they will tell us, do the same, and as well as the fakir, if we can believe newspapers and travellers' narratives. Undoubtedly so; and moreover these strolling jugglers are neither pure in their modes of living nor considered holy by any one; neither by foreigners nor their own people. *They are generally FEARED and despised by the natives*, for they are *sorcerers*; men practising the *black art*. While such a holy man as Govinda Svāmin requires but the help of his own divine soul, closely united with the astral spirit, and the help of a few familiar *pitris* — pure, ethereal beings, who rally around their elect brother in flesh — the sorcerer can summon to his help but that class of spirits which we know as the elementals. Like attracts like; and greed for money, impure purposes, and selfish views, cannot attract any other spirits than those that the Hebrew Kabbalists know as the *klippoth*, dwellers of *Asiāh*, the fourth world, and the Eastern magicians as the *afrits*, or elementary spirits of error, or the *daēvas* [devils].

This is how an English paper describes the astounding *trick* of plant growth, as performed by Indian *jugglers*:

An empty flower-pot was now placed upon the floor by the juggler, who requested that his comrades might be allowed to bring up some garden mould from the little plot of ground below. Permission being accorded, the man went, and in two minutes returned with a small quantity of fresh earth tied up in a corner of his chuddar, which was deposited in the flower-pot and lightly pressed down. Taking from his basket a dry mango stone, and handing it round to the company that they might examine it, and satisfy themselves that it was really what it seemed to be, the juggler scooped out a little earth from the centre of the flower pot and placed the stone in the cavity. He then turned the earth lightly over it, and, having poured a little water over the surface, shut the flower pot out [142] of view by means of a sheet thrown over a small triangle. And now, amid a full chorus of voices and rat-tat-tat accompaniment of the ta-

bor, the stone germinated; presently a section of the cloth was drawn aside, and gave to view the tender shoot, characterized by two long leaves of a blackish-brown colour. The cloth was readjusted, and the incantation resumed. Not long was it, however, before the cloth was a second time drawn aside, and it was then seen that the two first leaves had given place to several green ones, and that the plant now stood nine or ten inches high. A third time, and the foliage was much thicker, the sapling being about thirteen to fourteen inches in height. A fourth time, and the little miniature tree, now about eighteen inches in height, had ten or twelve mangoes about the size of walnuts hanging about its branches. Finally, after the lapse of three or four minutes, the cloth was altogether removed, and the fruit, having the perfection of size, though not of maturity, was plucked and handed to the spectators, and, on being tasted, was found to be approaching ripeness, being sweetly acid.

We may add to this, that we have witnessed the same experiment in India and Thibet, and that more than once we provided the flower-pot ourselves, by emptying an old tin box of some Liebig extracts.¹ We filled it with earth with our own hands, and planted in it a small root handed to us by the conjurer, and until the experiment was ended never once removed our eyes from the pot, which was placed *in our own room*. The result was invariably the same as above described. Does the reader imagine that any prestidigitator could produce the same manifestation under the same conditions?

The learned Orioli, Corresponding Member of the Institute of France, gives a number of instances which show the marvellous effects produced by the will-power acting upon the invisible Proteus of the mesmerists. Says he:

Viero declares that he has seen certain persons, who simply by pronouncing certain words, arrest wild bulls and horses at headlong speed, and suspend in its flight the arrow which cleaves the air.²

Thomas Bartholini affirms the same. Says Du Potet:

When I trace upon the floor with chalk or charcoal this figure . . . a *fire*, a *light* fixes itself on it . . . Soon it attracts to itself the person who approaches it: it detains and fascinates him . . . and it is useless for him to try to cross the line. A *magic* power compels him to stand still. At the end of a few moments he yields, uttering sobs . . . *The cause is not in me*, it is in this entirely Kabbalistic sign; in vain would you employ violence.³ [143]

¹ [Liebig's Extract of Meat Company, or LEMCO, was the producer of a meat extract and the originator of Oxo extracts and beef stock cubes. It was named after Baron Justus von Liebig, the 19th century German organic chemist, who developed and promoted a method for industrial production of beef extract.]

² [F. Orioli, *Fatti relativi a mesmerismo*, 1842, pp. 88-93]

³ *La Magie dévoilée*, Paris 1875, p. 183

The “evil eye” is nothing but the direction of silent will, an invisible fluid charged with malicious desire and hatred, sent out from one person to another with the intention of harming him.

Will may be employed for a good or evil purpose.¹ The one is magic or theurgia; the other, sorcery or goëtia.

In a series of remarkable experiments made by Regazzoni in the presence of certain well-known French physicians, at Paris, on the 18th of May, 1856, they assembled on one night together, and Regazzoni, with his finger, traced an imaginary Kabbalistic line upon the floor, over which he made a few rapid passes. It was agreed that the mesmeric subjects, selected by the investigators and the committee for the experiments, and all strangers to him, should be brought blindfold into the room, and caused to walk toward the line, without a word being spoken to indicate what was expected of them. The subjects moved along unsuspectingly till they came to the invisible barrier, when, as it is described,

. . . their feet, *as if they had been suddenly seized and riveted*, adhere to the ground, while their bodies, carried forward by the rapid impulse of the motion, fall and strike the floor. The sudden rigidity of their limbs was like that of a frozen corpse, and their heels were rooted with mathematical precision upon the fatal line!²

In another experiment, it was agreed that upon one of the physicians giving a certain signal by a glance of the eye, the blindfolded girl should be made to fall on the ground, as if struck by lightning, by the magnetic fluid emitted by Regazzoni’s will. She was placed at a distance from the magnetizer; the signal was given, and instantly the subject was felled to the earth, without a word being spoken or a gesture made. Involuntarily one of the spectators stretched out his hand as if to catch her; but Regazzoni, in a voice of thunder, exclaimed,

Do not touch her! Let her fall; a magnetized subject is never hurt by falling.

Des Mousseaux, who tells the story, says that:

. . . marble is not more rigid than was her body; her head did not touch the ground; one of her arms remained stretched in the air; one of her legs was raised and the other horizontal. She remained in this unnatural posture an indefinite time. Less rigid is a statue of bronze.³

All the effects witnessed in the experiments of public lecturers upon mesmerism, were produced by Regazzoni in perfection, and without one spoken word to indicate what the subject was to do. He even by his silent will produced the most surprising effects upon the physical systems of persons totally unknown to him. Directions whispered by the committee in Regazzoni’s ear were immediately obeyed by the subjects, whose ears were stuffed with cotton, and whose eyes were bandaged. Nay, in

¹ [Consult “The occult influence of man’s active will” and “The Voice of the Will is the Atomic Point,” in our Constitution of Man Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² Des Mousseaux, *La Magie au XIX^{me} siècle*, p. 238

³ *ibid.*, p. 237

some cases it was not even necessary for them to express to the magnetizer what they desired, for their own mental requests were complied with with perfect fidelity.

Experiments of a similar character were made by Regazzoni in England, at a distance of three hundred paces from the subject brought to [144] him. The *jettatura*, or evil eye, is nothing but the direction of this invisible fluid, charged with malicious will and hatred, from one person to another, and sent out with the intention of harming him. It may equally be employed for a good or evil purpose. *In the former case it is magic; in the latter, sorcery.*

When mind wills, matter obeys.¹

The mysterious effects of attraction and repulsion are the unconscious agents of will;² fascination, such as exercised by some animals (and serpents over birds) is a conscious action of will, which is the result of thought.

What is the WILL? Can “exact science” tell? What is the nature of that intelligent, intangible, and powerful something which reigns supreme over all inert matter? The great Universal Idea willed, and the cosmos sprang into existence. I *will*, and my limbs obey. I *will*, and, my thought traversing space, which does not exist for it, envelops the body of another individual who is not a part of myself, penetrates through his pores, and, superseding his own faculties, if they are weaker, forces him to a pre-determined action. It acts like the fluid of a galvanic battery on the limbs of a corpse. The mysterious effects of attraction and repulsion are the *unconscious* agents of that will; fascination, such as we see exercised by some animals, by serpents over birds, for instance, is a *conscious* action of it, and the result of thought. Sealing-wax, glass, and amber, when rubbed, *i.e.*, when the latent heat which exists in every substance is awakened, attract light bodies; they exercise unconsciously, *will*; for inorganic as well as organic matter possesses a particle of the *divine* essence in itself, however infinitesimally small it may be. And how could it be otherwise? Notwithstanding that in the progress of its evolution it may from beginning to end have passed through millions of various forms, it must ever retain its germ-point of that *pre-existent matter*, which is the first manifestation and emanation of the Deity itself. What is then this inexplicable power of attraction but an atomical portion of that essence that scientists and Kabbalists equally recognize as the “principle of life” — the *Ākāśa*? Granted that the attraction exercised by such bodies may be blind; but as we ascend higher the scale of the organic beings in nature, we find this principle of life developing attributes and faculties which become more determined and marked with every rung of the endless ladder. Man, the most perfect of organized beings on earth, in whom matter and spirit — *i.e.*, *will* — are the most developed and powerful, is alone allowed to give a conscious impulse to that principle which emanates from him; and only he can impart to the magnetic fluid opposite and various impulses without limit as to

¹ [Cf. Paracelsus’ “the body thinks but the mind-spirit wills.”]

² [For an in-depth analysis of Will versus Desire, consult “Will and Desire,” in our Confusing Words Series, “Desire proper is being,” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series, and “Prayer is mental utterance in secret,” in our Down to Earth Series. — ED. PHIL.]

the direction. “He wills,” says Du Potet, “and *organized* matter obeys. It has *no poles*.”

Dr. Briere de Boismont, in his volume on *Hallucinations*, reviews a wonderful variety of visions, apparitions, and ecstasies, generally termed hallucinations. He says,

We cannot deny that in certain diseases we see developed a great surexcitation¹ of sensibility, which lends to the [145] senses a prodigious acuteness of perception. Thus, some individuals will perceive at considerable distances, others will announce the approach of persons who are really on their way, although those present can neither hear nor see them coming.²

A lucid patient, lying in his bed, announces the arrival of persons to see whom he must possess *transmural vision*, and this faculty is termed by Briere de Boismont — *hallucination*. In our ignorance, we have hitherto innocently supposed that in order to be rightly termed a *hallucination*, a vision must be subjective. It must have an existence only in the delirious brain of the patient. But if the latter announces the visit of a person, miles away, and this person arrives at the very moment predicted by the *seer*, then his vision was no more subjective, but on the contrary perfectly *objective*, for he saw that person in the act of coming. And how could the patient see, through solid bodies and space, an object shut out from the reach of our mortal sight, if he had not exercised his *spiritual* eyes on that occasion? Coincidence?

Cabanis speaks of certain nervous disorders in which the patients easily distinguished with the naked eye infusoria and other microscopical beings which others could only perceive through powerful lenses. He says,

I have met subjects, who saw in Cimmerian darkness as well as in a lighted room; . . . [others] who followed persons, tracing them out like dogs, and recognizing by the smell objects belonging to such persons or even such as had been only touched by them . . . with a sagacity which was hitherto observed only in animals.³

Exactly; because reason, which, as Cabanis says, develops only at the expense and loss of natural instinct, is a Chinese wall slowly rising on the soil of sophistry, and which finally shuts out man’s spiritual perceptions of which the instinct is one of the most important examples. Arrived at certain stages of physical prostration, when mind and the reasoning faculties seem paralyzed through weakness and bodily exhaustion, instinct — the spiritual *unity* of the five senses — sees, hears, feels, tastes, and smells, unimpaired by either time or space. What do we know of the exact limits of mental action? How can a physician take upon himself to distinguish the imaginary from the real senses in a man who may be living a spiritual life, in a body so exhausted of its usual vitality that it actually is unable to prevent the soul from *oozing* out from its prison? [146]

¹ [excessive excitation]

² Briere de Boismont, *Des Hallucinations*, etc., p. 301; ed. 1845 [p. 275 in Philadelphia ed., 1853]. See also Fairfield, *Ten Years with Spiritual Mediums*, p. 128 *et seq.*

³ P.J.G. Cabanis, *Rapport du Physique et du Moral de l’Homme*, Paris 1802; Vol. II, ch. vii: “Influence des maladies sur la formation des idées,” pp. 61-62. A respected N.Y. legislator has this faculty.

The divine light through which, unimpeded by matter, the soul perceives things past, present, and to come, as though their rays were focused in a mirror;

- The death-dealing bolt projected in an instant of fierce anger or at the climax of long-festered hate;
- The blessing wafted from a grateful or benevolent heart; and the curse hurled at an object — offender or victim;

— all have to pass through that universal agent, which under one impulse is the breath of God, and under another — the venom of the devil. It was *discovered* (?) by Baron Reichenbach and called OD, whether intentionally or otherwise we cannot say, but it is singular that a name should have been chosen which is mentioned in the most ancient books of the Kabbalah.

Our readers will certainly inquire what then is this invisible *all*? How is it that our scientific methods, however perfected, have never discovered any of the magical properties contained in it? To this we can answer, that it is no reason, because modern scientists are ignorant of them, that it should not possess all the properties with which the ancient philosophers endowed it. Science rejects many a thing today which she may find herself forced to accept tomorrow. A little less than a century ago the Academy denied Franklin's electricity, and, at the present day, we can hardly find a house without a conductor on its roof. Shooting at the barn door, the Academy missed the barn itself. Modern scientists, by their wilful scepticism and learned ignorance, do this very frequently.

Who can study the ancient religious and cosmogonic myths without perceiving that their striking similitude of conceptions, in their exoteric form and esoteric spirit, is no mere coincidence but the manifestation of a concurrent design and plan?

In-depth knowledge of Cosmogony¹ is an imperative prerequisite for Inner Wisdom.

Emepht,² the supreme, first principle, produced an egg; by brooding over which, and permeating the substance of it with its own vivifying essence, the germ contained within was developed; and *Ptah*, the active creative principle, proceeded from it, and began his work. From the boundless expanse of cosmic matter, which had formed itself under his breath, or *will*, this cosmic matter — astral light, æther, fire-mist,

¹ [Not any "cosmogony," the only authoritative and eye-opening Cosmogony is the one given out by H.P. Blavatsky's in *The Secret Doctrine*. Consult study notes, diagrams, and drawings, in our Secret Doctrine's First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Endnote 24 by Boris de Zirkoff: The term *Emepht* occurs in passages attributed to Porphyry: "*Emepht . . . cujus imaginem faciunt colore cæruleo*, etc." (Porphyry as quoted by Eusebius, *Præp. evang.*, III); also in Iamblichus, *De mysteriis ægyptiorum* viii, ch. 2, 3. It is quite possible that *Emepht* is a later, or Gnostic, faulty writing of the ancient Egyptian *Tephet* (Hebrew *Tophet*). Originally meaning abyss, it seems to have been another name for *Nun*, the primeval ocean, but later came to mean the Netherworld.

It is important to realize that H.P. Blavatsky was using terms which existed in various schools of ancient thought, and often gave to some of the Egyptian divinities a spelling used in Greek schools. A certain amount of confusion is therefore almost certain to arise in these matters.]

principle of life — it matters not how we may call it, this creative principle, or, as our modern philosophy terms it, law of evolution, by setting in motion the potencies latent in it, formed suns and stars, and satellites; controlled their emplacement by the immutable law of harmony, and peopled them “with every form and quality of life.” In the ancient Eastern mythologies, the cosmogonic myth states that there was but water (the father) and the prolific slime (the mother, *Ilus* or *Hylē*), from which crept forth the mundane snake-matter. It was the god *Phanēs*, the revealed one, the Word, or *Logos*.¹ How willingly this myth was accepted, even by the Christians who compiled the New Testament, may be easily inferred from the following fact: *Phanēs*, the revealed god, is represented in this snake-symbol as a *prōtogenos*, a being furnished with the heads of a *man*, a hawk or an eagle, a bull — *taurus*, and a lion, with wings on both sides. The heads relate to the zodiac, and typify the four seasons of the year, for the *mundane* serpent is the *mundane* year, while the serpent [147] itself is the symbol of *Kneph*, the hidden, or *unrevealed* deity — God the Father. Time is winged, therefore the serpent is represented with wings. If we remember that each of the four evangelists is represented as having near him one of the described animals — grouped together in Solomon’s triangle in the pentacle of Ezekiel, and to be found in the four cherubs or sphinxes of the sacred arch — we will perhaps understand the secret meaning, as well as the reason why the early Christians adopted this symbol; and how it is that the present Roman Catholics and the Greeks of the Oriental Church still represent these animals in the pictures of their evangelists which sometimes accompany the four Gospels. We will also understand why Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, had so insisted upon the necessity of the *fourth* gospel; giving as a reason that there could not be less than four of them, as there were *four* zones in the world, and four principal winds coming from the four cardinal points, etc.²

According to one of the Egyptian myths, the phantom-form of the isle of Chemmis (*Chemi*, ancient Egypt), which floats on the ethereal waves of the empyrean sphere, was called into being by Horus-Apollo, the sun-god, who caused it to evolve out of the mundane egg.

The giant Ymir typifies the rude organic matter, the blind cosmical forces in their chaotic state, before they received the intelligent impulse of the Divine Spirit, which set them into a regular motion according to immovable laws.

In the cosmogonical poem of *Völuspā* (the song of the prophetess), which contains the Scandinavian legends of the very dawn of ages, the phantom-germ of the universe is represented as lying in the *Ginnungagap* — or the cup of illusion, a boundless and void abyss. In this world’s matrix, formerly a region of night and desolation, *Nifelheim* (the Mist-place) dropped a ray of cold light (*æther*), which overflowed this cup and froze in it. Then the Invisible blew a scorching wind which dissolved the frozen waters and cleared the mist. These waters, called the streams of *Elivāgar*, dis-

¹ [Endnote 25 by Boris de Zirkoff: *Phanēs* is one of the Orphic Triad — Chaos, Chronos, *Phanēs*. Cf. Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, 2nd ed., 1832, pp. 295-311; Thos. Taylor, *Mystical Hymns of Orpheus*, London 1896, pp. 41-42; Proclus, *On the Timæus*, etc.; G.R.S. Mead, *Orpheus*. London: John M. Watkins, 1896; 2nd ed., 1965. Consult Table of Contents.]

² Irenæus, *Against Heresies* iii, 11, § 8

tilled in vivifying drops which, falling down, created the earth and the giant *Ymir*, who only had “the semblance of man” (male principle).

With him was created the cow, *Audhumla*¹ (female principle), from whose udder flowed *four* streams of milk,² which diffused themselves throughout space (the astral light in its purest emanation). The cow *Audhumla* produces a *superior* being, called *Buri*, handsome and powerful, by licking the stones that were covered with *mineral salt*.

Now, if we take into consideration that this mineral was universally [148] regarded

- By ancient philosophers as one of the chief formative principles in organic creation;
- By the alchemists as the universal menstruum, which, they said, was to be wrought from water; and
- By everyone else, even as it is regarded now by science as well as in the popular ideas, to be an indispensable ingredient for man and beast;

— we may readily comprehend the hidden wisdom of this allegory of the creation of man. Paracelsus calls salt “the centre of water, wherein metals ought to die,” etc.,³ and Van Helmont terms the *Alkahest*, “*summum et felicissimum omnium salium*,” the most successful of all salts.⁴

In the *Gospel according to Matthew*, Jesus says:

Ye are the *salt of the earth*: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?

And following the parable he adds:

Ye are *the light of the world*.⁵

This is more than an allegory; these words point to a direct and unequivocal meaning in relation to the spiritual and physical organisms of man in his dual nature, and show, moreover, a knowledge of the “secret doctrine,” the direct traces of which we find equally in the oldest ancient and current popular traditions, in both the Old and New Testaments, and in the writings of the ancient and mediæval mystics and philosophers.

But to return to our *Edda* legend. *Ymir*, the giant, falls asleep, and sweats profusely. This perspiration causes the pit of his left arm to generate out of that place a man and a woman, while his foot produces a son for them. Thus, while the mythic “cow” gives being to a race of superior spiritual men, the giant *Ymir* begets a race of evil and depraved men, the *Hrimthussar*, or frost-giants. Comparing notes with the Hin-

¹ The cow is the symbol of prolific generation and of intellectual nature. She was sacred to Isis in Egypt; to Krishna, in India, and to an infinity of other gods and goddesses personifying the various productive powers of nature. The cow was held, in short, as the impersonation of the Great Mother of all beings, both of the mortals and of the gods, of physical and spiritual generation of things.

² In *Genesis* ii, 10, the river of Eden was parted, “and became into *four* heads.”

³ [*Paracelsi opera omnia*, Geneva 1658: “Economy of Minerals,” etc.]

⁴ [*Ortus medicinæ*: “Potestas medicaminum” (Power Medicines), § 24, Amsterdam 1652]

⁵ vs. 14

du *Vedas*, we find it then, with slight modifications, the same cosmogonic legend in substance and details. Brahmā, as soon as Bhagavat, the Supreme God, endows him with creative powers, produces animated beings, wholly spiritual at first. The *Devatās*, inhabitants of the *Swarga's* (the celestial) region, are unfit to live on earth, therefore Brahmā creates the *Daityas* (giants, who become the dwellers of the *Pātāla*, the lower regions of space), who are also unfit to inhabit *Mrityu-loka* (the earth). To palliate the evil, the creative power evolves *from his mouth* the first Brahman, who thus becomes the progenitor of our race; from his right arm Brahmā creates *Kshatriya*, the warrior, and from his left *Kshatriyāni*, the wife of *Kshatriya*. Then their son *Vaiśya* springs from the right foot of the creator, and his wife *Vaiśyā* from the left. While in the Scandinavian legend *Buri* (the son of the cow *Audhumla*), a *superior* being, marries *Beisla*, a daughter of the depraved race of giants, in the Hindu tradition the first Brahman marries *Daiteyī*, also a daughter of the race of the giants; and in *Genesis* we see the sons of God taking for wives the daughters of men, and likewise producing [149] mighty men of old; the whole establishing an unquestionable identity of origin between the Christian inspired Book, and the heathen “fables” of Scandinavia and Hindostan. The traditions of nearly every other nation, if examined, will yield a like result.

As the reptile, upon casting his coat, becomes freed from a casing of gross matter and resumes its existence with renewed activity, so man, by casting off the gross material body, enters upon the next stage of his existence with greater powers and quickened vitality.

What modern cosmogonist could compress within so simple a symbol as the Egyptian serpent in a circle such a world of meaning? Here we have, in this creature, the whole philosophy of the universe: matter vivified by spirit, and the two conjointly evolving out of chaos (Force) everything that was to be. To signify that the elements are fast bound in this cosmic matter, which the serpent symbolizes, the Egyptians tied its tail *into a knot*.

There is one more important emblem connected with the sloughing of the serpent's skin, which, so far as we are aware, has never been heretofore noticed by our symbolists. As the reptile upon casting his coat becomes freed from a casing of gross matter, which cramped a body grown too large for it, and resumes its existence with renewed activity, so *man, by casting off the gross material body, enters upon the next stage of his existence with enlarged powers and quickened vitality*. Inversely, the Chaldean Kabbalists tell us that primeval man, who, contrary to the Darwinian theory was purer, wiser, and far more spiritual, as shown by the myths of the Scandinavian *Buri*, the Hindu *Devatās*, and the Mosaic “sons of God,” — in short, of a far higher nature than the man of the present Adamic race, became *despiritualized* or tainted with matter, and then, for the first time, was given the *fleshly body*, which is typified in *Genesis* in that profoundly significant verse:

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God *made coats of skin*, and clothed them.¹

¹ *Genesis* iii, 21

Unless the commentators would make of the First Cause a *celestial tailor*, what else can the apparently absurd words mean, but that the spiritual man had reached, through the progress of involution, to that point where matter, predominating over and conquering spirit, had transformed him into the physical man, or the second Adam, of the second chapter of *Genesis*?

This Kabbalistical doctrine is much more elaborated in the *Book of Jasher*.¹ In chapter vii, these garments of skin are taken by Noah into the ark, he having obtained them by inheritance from Methuselah and Enoch, who had them from Adam and his wife. Ham steals them from [150] his father Noah; gives them “in secret” to Cush, who conceals them from his sons and brothers, and passes them to Nimrod.²

The real Noah is Logos, Divine Thought concealed.³

While some Kabbalists, and even archæologists say that “Adam, Enoch, and Noah might, in outward appearance, be *different* men, but they were really the self-same divine person,”⁴ others explain that between Adam and Noah there intervened several cycles. That is to say, that every one of the antediluvian patriarchs stood as the representative of a race which had its place in a succession of cycles; and each of which races was less spiritual than its predecessor. Thus Noah, though a good man, could not have borne comparison with his ancestor, Enoch, who “walked with God and did not die.” Hence the allegorical interpretation which makes Noah have this coat of skin by inheritance from the second Adam and Enoch, but not wear it himself, for if otherwise, Ham could not have stolen it. But Noah and his children bridged the flood; and while the former belonged to the old and still spiritual antediluvian generation, insomuch as he was selected from all mankind for his purity, his children were *post-diluvian*. The coat of skin worn by Cush “in secret,” — *i.e.*, when

¹ This is claimed to be one of the missing books of the sacred Canon of the Jews, and is referred to in *Joshua* x, 13, and *2 Samuel* i, 18. It was discovered by Sidras, an officer of Titus, during the sack of Jerusalem, and published in Venice in the seventeenth century, as alleged in its preface by the Consistory of Rabbis, but the American edition, as well as the English, is reputed by the modern Rabbis, to be a forgery of the twelfth century.

[*Endnote 26 by Boris de Zirkoff*: The original work known under the title of the *Book of Jasher* is alluded to only in *Joshua* x, 13, and *2 Samuel* i, 18, and is considered as having been lost. There is wide room for conjecture as to its contents and nature. There are extant, however, under the same title, two Rabbinical works: one, a moral treatise written in A.D. 1394 by R. Shabbatai Carmuz Levita, of which a copy in MS. exists in the Vatican Library; the other, by R. Tham, treats of the laws of the Jews in eighteen chapters, and was printed in Italy in 1544, and at Cracow in 1586. An anonymous work, printed at Venice and Prague in 1625, and said to have made its first appearance at Naples, was believed by some Jews to be the record alluded to in *Joshua*. It contains the historical narrative of the *Pentateuch*, *Joshua*, and *Judges*, with many additional fables. R. Jacob published a German translation of it at Frankfort on the Main in 1674. This is the work which H.P. Blavatsky has in mind. It is said in the preface to the first edition to have been discovered at the destruction of Jerusalem by Sidrus, one of the officers of Titus, who, while searching a house for the purpose of plunder, found in a secret chamber a vessel containing the Books of the Law, the Prophets, and Hagiographa, with many others, which a venerable man was reading. Sidrus took the old man under his protection and built for him a house at Seville, where the books were safely deposited. The book under consideration is most likely the production of a Spanish Jew of the 13th century. A clumsy forgery in English, which first appeared in 1751 under the same title, had a considerable success for a while. It professed to be a translation from the Hebrew into English by Alcuin of Britain who discovered it in Persia during his pilgrimage. It was reprinted in Bristol in 1829 and again in 1833. The Catalogue of the British Museum gives the name of the author as Jacob Ilive.

At a later date, two other editions appeared: one by M.M. Noah, New York, 1840; and one at Salt Lake City, 1887. The passages quoted by H.P. Blavatsky have been checked by the 1840 edition.]

² [*Book of Jasher* vii, 24-29. New York, 1840]

³ [For an in-depth analysis of this statement, consult “Noah is Logos,” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

⁴ See Godfrey Higgins, *Anacalypsis*, Vol. I, p. 201; quoting Faber.

his spiritual nature began to be tainted by the material — is placed on Nimrod, the most powerful and strongest of physical men on this side of the flood — the last remnant of the antediluvian giants.¹

In the Scandinavian legend, *Ymir*, the giant, is slain by the sons of *Buri*, and the streams of blood flowing from his wounds were so copious that the flood drowned the whole race of ice and frost giants, and *Bergelmir* alone of that race was saved, with his wife, by taking refuge in a bark; which fact permitted him to transmit a new branch of giants from the old stock. But all the sons of *Buri* remained untouched by the flood.²

When the symbolism of this diluvian legend is unravelled, one perceives at once the real meaning of the allegory. The giant *Ymir* typifies the primitive rude organic *matter*, the blind cosmical forces, in their chaotic state, before they received the intelligent impulse of the Divine Spirit which set them into a regular motion dependent on immovable laws. The progeny of *Buri* are the “sons of God,” or the minor gods mentioned by Plato in the *Timæus*, and who were intrusted, as he expresses it, with the creation of men; for we see them taking the mangled remains of *Ymir* to the *Ginnungagap*, the chaotic abyss, and employing them for the creation of our world. His blood goes to form oceans and rivers; his bones, the mountains; his teeth, the rocks and cliffs; [151] his hair, the trees, etc.; while his skull forms the heavenly vault, supported by four pillars representing the four cardinal points. From the eye-brows of *Ymir* was created the future abode of man — *Midgard*. This abode (the earth), says the *Edda*, in order to be correctly described in all its minute particulars, must be conceived as *round as a ring*, or as a disk, floating in the midst of the Celestial Ocean (*Æther*). It is encircled by *Jormungand*, the gigantic *Midgard* — or Earth-Serpent, holding its tail in its mouth. This is the mundane snake, matter and spirit, combined product and emanation of *Ymir*, the gross rudimental matter, and of the spirit of the “sons of God,” who fashioned and created all forms. This emanation is the astral light of the Kabbalists, and the as yet problematical, and hardly known, æther, or the “hypothetical agent of great elasticity” of our physicists.

How sure the ancients were of this doctrine of man’s trinitarian nature may be inferred from the same Scandinavian legend of the creation of mankind. According to the *Völuspá*, *Odin*, *Höner*, and *Lodur*, who are the progenitors of our race, found in one of their walks on the ocean beach, two sticks floating on the waves, “powerless and without destiny.” *Odin* breathed in them the breath of life; *Höner* endowed them with soul and motion; and *Lodur* with beauty, speech, sight, and hearing. The man they called *Askr* — the ash,³ and the woman *Embla* — the alder. These first men are placed in *Midgard* (mid-garden, or Eden) and thus inherit, from their creators, matter or inorganic life; mind or soul; and pure spirit; the first corresponding to that part of their organism which sprung from the remains of *Ymir*, the giant-matter, the second from the *Æsir*, or gods, the descendants of *Buri*, and the third from the *Vaner*, or the representative of pure spirit.

¹ See Cory’s *Ancient Fragments*, “Berosus.” [Full text in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² We refer the reader for further particulars to the “Prose Edda” in Mallett’s *Northern Antiquities*, p. 404 *et seq.*

³ It is worthy of attention that in the Quiché *Popol-Vuh* the human race is created out of a reed, and in Hesiod out of the ash-tree, as in the Scandinavian narrative.

Lofty mountains, eggs, trees, snakes, and pillars, they all embody scientifically demonstrated truths of natural philosophy.

Mountains are allegories of primal cosmogony; trees, of the simultaneous evolution of spirit and matter; snakes and pillars, are symbolical memorials of various attributes of the parallel evolution of two opposing forces, eternally reacting upon each other.

The old Norse Yggdrasil is a three-rooted tree.¹

Another version of the *Edda* makes our visible universe spring from beneath the luxuriant branches of the mundane tree — the Yggdrasill, the tree with the *three* roots. Under the first root runs the fountain of life, *Urdhar*; under the second is the famous well of *Mimer*, in which lie deeply buried Wit and Wisdom. *Odin*, the *Alfader*, asks for a draught of this water; he gets it, but finds himself obliged to pledge one of his eyes for it; the eye being in this case the symbol of the Deity revealing itself in the wisdom of its own creation; for *Odin* leaves it at the bottom of the deep well. The care of the mundane tree is intrusted to three maidens (the Norns or *Parcæ*), *Urth*, *Verthandi*, and *Skuld* — or the Present, the Past, and the Future. Every morning, while fixing the term [152] of human life, they draw water from the *Urdhar*-fountain, and sprinkle with it the roots of the mundane tree, that it may live. The exhalations of the ash, *Yggdrasill*, condense, and falling down upon our earth call into existence and change of form every portion of the inanimate matter. This tree is the symbol of the *universal* Life, organic as well as inorganic; its emanations represent the spirit which vivifies every form of creation; and of its three roots, one extends to heaven, the second to the dwelling of the magicians — giants, inhabitants of the *lofty mountains* — and at the third, under which is the spring *Hvergelmer*, gnaws the monster *Nidhogg*, who constantly leads mankind into evil.

The Thibetans have also their mundane tree, the Zampun.

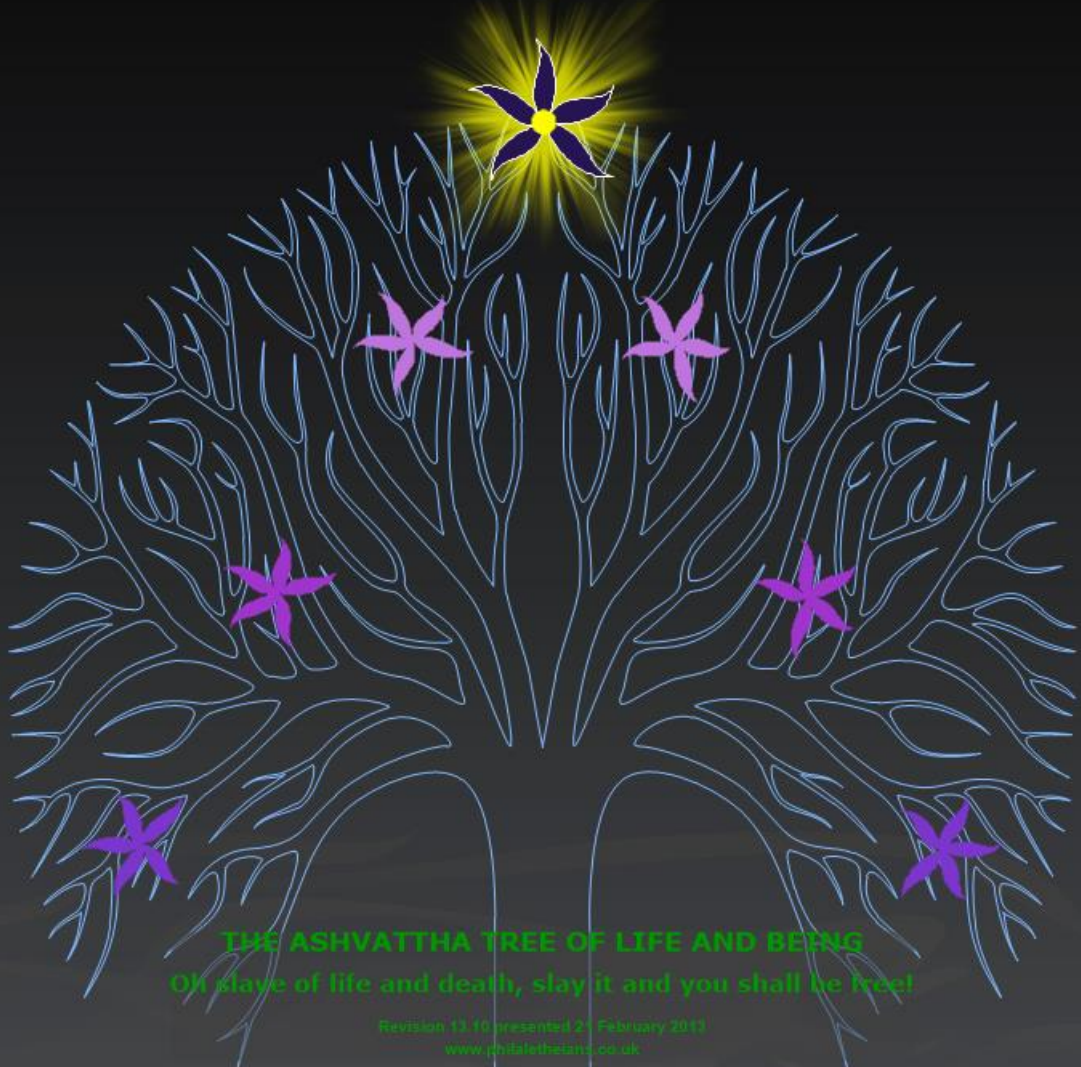
The Thibetans have also their mundane tree, and the legend is of an untold antiquity. With them it is called *Zampun*. The first of its three roots also extends to heaven, to the top of the highest mountains; the second passes down to the lower region; the third remains midway, and reaches the east.



The Ashvattha Tree of Life and Being (Drawing).

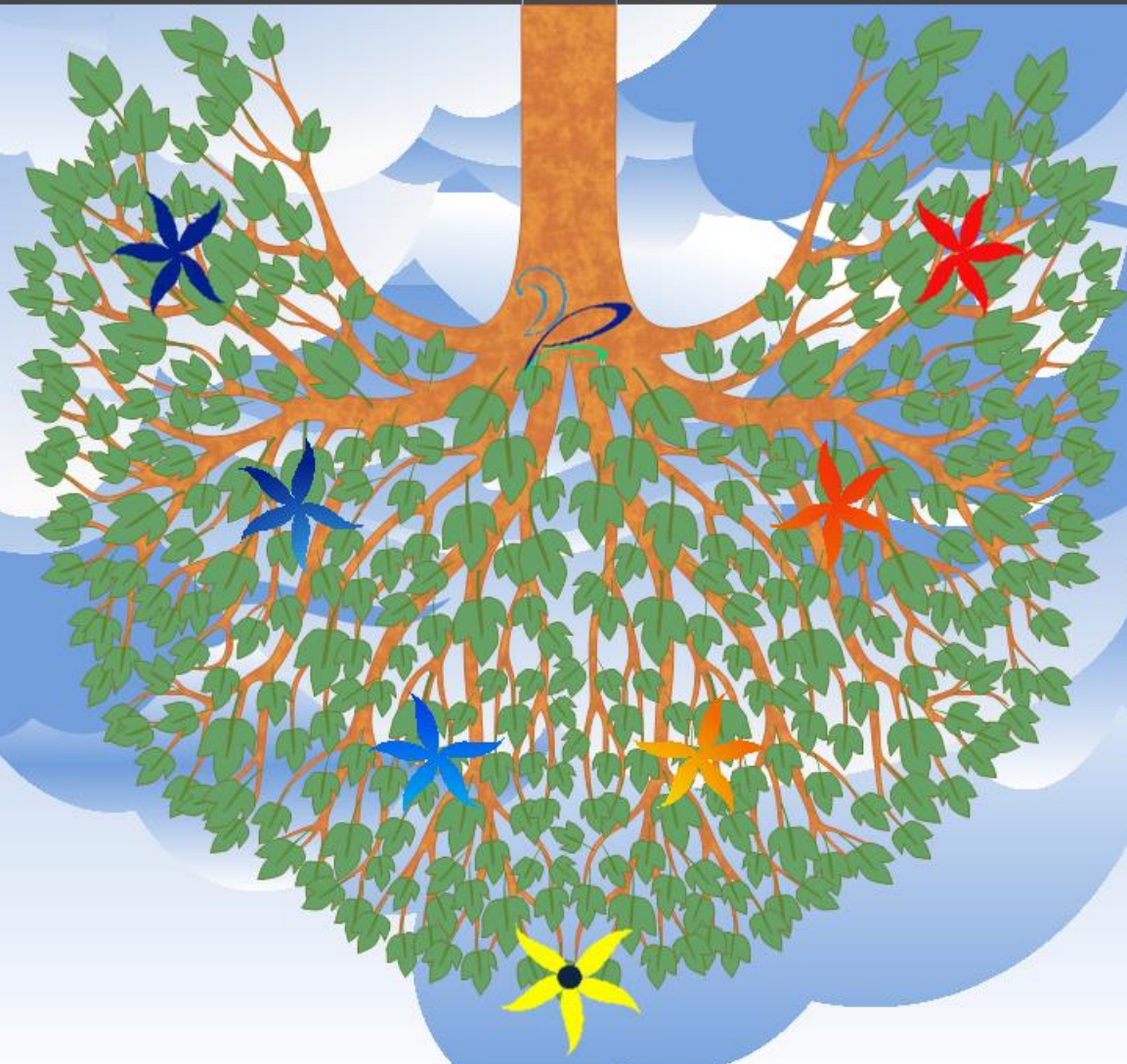
There now follows a Drawing from our Planetary Round and Globes Series. — ED. PHIL.

¹ [One root to the well *Uroarbrunnr* in heavens, one to the spring *Hvergelmir*, and a third to the well *Mimisbrunnr*.]



THE ASHVATTHA TREE OF LIFE AND BEING
Oh slave of life and death, slay it and you shall be free!

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www.philaletheians.co.uk



The mundane tree of the Hindus is the Ashvattha, with branches extending downward and roots upward.

Comparative study of ancient cosmogonies demonstrates that in those ages, which are shut out from our sight by the impenetrable mist of tradition, enfolding it as with a veil, religious thought developed in uniform sympathy in every portion of the globe.

The mundane tree of the Hindus is the *Aśvattha*.¹ Its branches are the components of the visible world; and its leaves the *Mantras* of the *Vedas*, symbols of the universe in its intellectual or moral character.

Who can study carefully the ancient religious and cosmogonic myths without perceiving that this striking similitude of conceptions, in their exoteric form and esoteric spirit, is the result of no mere coincidence, but manifests a concurrent design? It shows that already in those ages which are shut out from our sight by the impenetrable mist of tradition, human religious thought developed in uniform sympathy in every portion of the globe. Christians call this adoration of nature in her most concealed verities — Pantheism. But if the latter, which worships and reveals to us God in space in His only possible objective form — that of visible nature — perpetually reminds humanity of Him who created it, and a religion of theological dogmatism only serves to conceal Him the more from our sight, which is the better adapted to the needs of mankind?

Modern science insists upon the doctrine of evolution; so do human reason and the “secret doctrine,” and the idea is corroborated by the ancient legends and myths, and even by the Bible itself when it is read between the lines. We see a flower slowly developing from a bud, and the bud from its seed. But whence the latter, with all its predetermined programme of physical transformation, and its invisible, therefore *spiritual* forces which gradually develop its form, colour, and odour? The word *evolution* speaks for itself. The germ of the present human race must have pre-existed in the parent of this race, as the seed, in which lies hidden the flower of next summer, was developed in the capsule of its parent-flower; the parent may be but *slightly* different, but it still differs [153] from its future progeny. The antediluvian ancestors of the present elephant and lizard were, perhaps, the mammoth and the plesiosaurus; why should not the progenitors of our human race have been the “giants” of the *Vedas*, the *Völuspā*, and the Book of *Genesis*? While it is positively absurd to believe the “transformation of species” to have taken place according to some of the more materialistic views of the evolutionists, it is but natural to think that each genus, beginning with the molluscs and ending with monkey-man, has modified from its own primordial and distinctive form. Supposing that we concede that “animals have descended from at most only four or five progenitors”;² and that even *à la rigueur* “all the organic beings which have ever lived on *this earth* have descended from someone primordial form”;³ still no one but a stone-blind materialist, one utterly devoid of intuitiveness, can seriously expect to see “in the distant future . . . psychology . . .

¹ See J.A. Kanne, *Pantheum der Ältesten Naturphilosophie*.

² Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, p. 484 [1st ed., 1859]

³ *ibid.* Which latter word we cannot accept unless that “primordial form” is conceded to be the primal concrete form that spirit assumed as the *revealed* Deity.

based on a new foundation, that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation.”¹

Physical man, as a product of evolution, may be left in the hands of the man of exact science. None but he can throw light upon the *physical* origin of the race. But, we must positively deny the materialist the same privilege as to the question of man’s psychical and spiritual evolution, for he and his highest faculties *cannot* be proved on any conclusive evidence to be “as much products of evolution as the humblest plant or the lowest worm.”²

Having said so much, we will now proceed to show the evolution-hypothesis of the old Brahmans, as embodied by them in the allegory of the mundane tree. The Hindus represent their mythical tree, which they call *Aśvattha*, in a way which differs from that of the Scandinavians. It is described by them as growing in a reversed position, the branches extending downward and the roots upward; the former typifying the external world of sense, *i.e.*, the visible cosmical universe, and the latter the invisible world of spirit, because the roots have their *genesis* in the heavenly regions where, from the world’s creation, humanity has placed its invisible deity. The creative energy having originated in the primordial point, the religious symbols of every people are so many illustrations of this metaphysical hypothesis expounded by Pythagoras, Plato, and other [154] philosophers. “These Chaldeans,” says Philo,³ “were of opinion that the Kosmos, among the things that exist, is a single point, either being itself God [Theos] or that in it is God, comprehending the soul of all the things.”

The Egyptian Pyramid is another symbol of Universal Life.

The Egyptian Pyramid also symbolically represents this idea of the mundane tree. Its apex is the mystic link between heaven and earth, and stands for the root, while the base represents the spreading branches, extending to the four cardinal points of the universe of matter. It conveys the idea that all things had their origin in spirit — evolution having originally begun from above and proceeded downward, instead of the reverse, as taught in the Darwinian theory. In other words, there has been a gradual materialization of forms until a fixed ultimate of debasement is reached. This point is that at which the doctrine of modern evolution enters into the arena of speculative hypothesis. Arrived at this period, we will find it easier to understand Hæckel’s *Anthropogenie*, which traces the pedigree of man “from its protoplasmic root, sodden in the mud of seas which existed before the oldest of the fossiliferous rocks were deposited,” according to Professor Huxley’s exposition. We may believe man evolved “by gradual modification of a mammal of ape-like organization” still easier when we remember that (though in a more condensed and less elegant, but still as comprehensible, phraseology) the same theory was said by Berosus to have been taught many thousands of years before his time by the man-fish Ōannēs or Dagon, the semi-daimōn of Babylonia.⁴ We may add, as a fact of interest, that this ancient theory of evolution is not only embalmed in allegory and legend, but also depicted upon the

¹ Darwin, *op. cit.*, p. 488

² Lecture by T.H. Huxley, F.R.S., “Darwin and Haeckel,” *Popular Science Monthly*, March 1875

³ *On the Migration of Abraham* xxxii, 179

⁴ Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, p. 22 *et seq.* [Full text in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. — ED. PHIL.]

walls of certain temples in India, and, in a fragmentary form, has been found in those of Egypt and on the slabs of Nimrod and Nineveh, excavated by Layard.

The flaws of the Darwinian line of descent exposed.

But what lies back of the Darwinian line of descent? So far as he is concerned nothing but “unverifiable hypotheses.” For, as he puts it, he views all beings “as the lineal descendants of some few beings which lived long before the first bed of the Silurian system was deposited.”¹ He does not attempt to show us who these “few beings” were. But it answers our purpose quite as well, for in the admission of their existence at all, resort to the ancients for corroboration and elaboration of the idea receives the stamp of scientific approbation. With all the changes that our globe has passed through as regards temperature, climate, soil, and — if we may be pardoned, in view of recent developments — its electromagnetic condition, he would be bold indeed who dare say that anything [155] in present science contradicts the ancient hypothesis of ante-Silurian man. The flint axes first found by Boucher de Perthes, in the valley of the Somme, prove that men must have existed at a period so remote as to be beyond calculation. If we believe Büchner, man must have lived even during and before the glacial epoch, a subdivision of the quaternary or diluvian period probably extending very far back in it. But who can tell what the next discovery has in store for us?

Now, if we have indisputable proof that man has existed so long as this, there must have been wonderful modifications of his physical system, corresponding with the changes of climate and atmosphere. Does not this seem to show by analogy that, tracing backward, there may have been other modifications, which fitted the most remote progenitors of the “frost-giants” to live even contemporaneously with the Devonian fishes or the Silurian molluscs? True, they left no flint hatchets behind them, nor any bones or cave-deposits; but, if the ancients are correct, the races at that time were composed not only of giants, or “mighty men of renown,” but also of “sons of God.” If those who believe in the evolution of *spirit* as firmly as the materialists believe in that of *matter* are charged with teaching “unverifiable hypotheses,” how readily can they retort upon their accusers by saying that, by *their* own confession, their physical evolution is still “an unverified, if not actually an unverifiable hypothesis.”² The former have at least the inferential proof of legendary myth, the vast antiquity of which is admitted by both philologists and archæologists; while their antagonists have nothing of a similar nature, *unless they help themselves to a portion of the ancient picture-writings, and suppress the rest.*



¹ Darwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 448-89

² Huxley, “Darwin and Hæckel,” in: *Popular Science Monthly*, March 1875

There is a logos in every mythos, a groundwork of truth in every fiction.

It is more than fortunate that, while the works of some men of science — who have justly won their great reputations — will flatly contradict our hypotheses, the researches and labours of others not less eminent seem to fully confirm our views. In the recent work of Mr. Alfred R. Wallace, *The Geographical Distribution of Animals*, we find the author seriously favouring the idea of “some slow process of development” of the present species from others which have preceded them, his idea extending back over an innumerable series of cycles. And if animals, why not animal man, preceded still farther back by a thoroughly “spiritual” one — a “son of God”?

And now, we may once more return to the symbology of the olden times, and their physico-religious myths. Before we close this work, we hope to demonstrate more or less successfully how closely the conceptions of the latter were allied with many of the achievements of modern science [156] in physics and natural philosophy. Under the emblematical devices and peculiar phraseology of the priesthood of old lie latent hints of sciences as yet undiscovered during the present cycle. Well acquainted as may be a scholar with the hieratic writing and hieroglyphical system of the Egyptians, he must first of all learn to sift their records. He has to assure himself, compasses and rule in hand, that the picture-writing he is examining fits, to a line, certain fixed geometrical figures which are the hidden keys to such records, before he ventures on an interpretation.

Archaic double-sexed deities in dual cosmogonic myths, representing the physico-chemical principle of primordial creation, loudly proclaim their hidden meaning.

Mithras is the son of Bordj, the Persian mundane mountain.

Shiva is personated by Meru (Himalaya), the mundane mountain of the Hindus.¹

But there are myths which speak for themselves. In this class we may include the double-sexed first creators, of every cosmogony. The Greek Zeus-Zēn (æther), and Chthonia (the chaotic earth) and Mētis (the water), his wives; Osiris and Isis-Latona — the former god representing also æther — the first emanation of the Supreme Deity, Amen, the primeval source of light; the goddess earth and water again; Mithras,² the rock-born god, the symbol of the male mundane-fire, or the personified primordial light, and Mithra, the fire-goddess, at once his mother and his wife; the pure element of fire (the active, or male principle) regarded as light and heat, in conjunction with earth and water, or matter (female or passive elements of cosmical generation). Mithras is the son of Bordj, the Persian mundane mountain³ from which he flashes out as a radiant ray of light. Brahmā, the fire-god, and his prolific consort; and the

¹ [Śiva's heaven is believed to be situated in Kailāsa, a mountain peak of the Himālayas. Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES TO THE “AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF DAYANANDA SARASWATI SWAMI”) II p. 117]

² Mithras was regarded among the Persians as the *Theos ek petras* [Θεος εκ πετρας] — God of the rock.

³ Bordj is called a fire-mountain — a volcano; therefore it contains fire, rock, earth, and water — the male and active, and the female or passive elements. The myth is suggestive.

Hindu *Agni*, the refulgent deity, from whose body issue a thousand streams of glory and *seven* tongues of flame, and in whose honour the Sangika Brahmans preserve to this day a *perpetual* fire; *Śiva*, personated by the mundane mountain of the Hindus — the *Meru* (Himālaya). This terrific fire-god, who is said in the legend to have descended from heaven, like the Jewish Jehovah, *in a pillar of fire*, and a dozen of other archaic, double-sexed deities, all loudly proclaim their hidden meaning. And what can these dual myths mean but the physico-chemical principle of primordial creation? The first revelation of the Supreme Cause in its triple manifestation of spirit, force, and matter; the divine *correlation*, at its starting point of evolution, allegorized as the marriage of *fire* and water, products of electrifying spirit, union of the male active principle with the female passive element, which become the parents of their tellurian child, cosmic matter, the *prima materia*, whose spirit is æther, the ASTRAL LIGHT!¹

Thus all the world-mountains and mundane eggs, the mundane trees, and the mundane snakes and pillars, may be shown to embody scientifically [157] demonstrated truths of natural philosophy.

All of these mountains contain, with very trifling variations, the allegorically-expressed description of primal cosmogony:

The mundane trees, that of subsequent evolution of spirit and matter;

The mundane snakes and pillars, symbolical memorials of the various attributes of this double evolution in its endless correlation of cosmic forces.

Within the mysterious recesses of the mountain — the matrix of the universe — the gods (powers) prepare the atomic germs of organic life, and at the same time the life drink, which, when tasted, awakens in man-matter the *man-spirit*. The soma, the sacrificial drink of the Hindus, is that sacred beverage. For, at the creation of the *prima materia*, while the grossest portions of it were used for the physical embryo world, the more divine essence of it pervaded the universe, invisibly permeating and enclosing within its ethereal waves the newly-born infant, developing and stimulating it to activity as it slowly evolved out of the eternal chaos.

Christianity metamorphosed the ingenious myth of the Serpent into Satan, the Prince of Darkness.

From the poetry of abstract conception, these mundane myths gradually passed into the concrete images of cosmic symbols, as archæology now finds them. The snake, which plays such a prominent part in the imagery of the ancients, was degraded by the absurd interpretation of the serpent of the Book of *Genesis* into a synonym of Satan, the Prince of Darkness, whereas it is the most ingenious of all the myths in its various symbolisms.

- For one, as *Agathodaimōn*, it is the emblem of the healing art and of the immortality of man. It encircles the images of most of the sanitary or hygienic gods.

¹ [Endnote 27 by Boris de Zirkoff: When H.P. Blavatsky quoted this lengthy passage from *Isis Unveiled* in *The Secret Doctrine* (Vol. I, pp. 340-41), she altered the final wording to read: “. . . whose spirit is Æther, and whose shadow is the Astral Light,” which of course makes the meaning of the sentence much clearer.]

- *The cup of health*, in the Egyptian Mysteries, was entwined by serpents. As evil can only arise from an extreme in good, the serpent, under some other aspects, became typical of matter; which, the more it recedes from its primal spiritual source, the more it becomes subject of evil.
- In the oldest Egyptian imagery, as in the cosmogonic allegories of Kneph, the mundane snake, when typifying matter, is usually represented as contained within a circle; he lies straight across its equator, thus indicating that the universe of astral light, out of which the physical world evolved, while bounding the latter, is itself bound by *Emepht*, or the Supreme First Cause.
- *Ptah* producing *Rā*, and the myriad forms to which he gives life, are shown as creeping out of the mundane egg, because it is the most familiar form of that in which is deposited and developed the germ of every living being.
- When the serpent represents eternity and immortality, it encircles the world, biting its tail, and thus offering no solution of continuity. It then becomes the astral light.
- The disciples of the school of Pherecydes taught that æther (Zeus or Zēn) is the highest empyrean heaven, which encloses the supernal world, and its light (the astral) is the concentrated primordial element.

Such is the origin of the serpent, metamorphosed in Christian ages into Satan. It is the *Od*, the *Ob*, and the *Or* of Moses and the Kabbalists. When in its passive state, when it acts on those who are [158] unwittingly drawn within its current, the astral light is the *Ob*, or Python. Moses was determined to exterminate all those who, sensitive to its influence, allowed themselves to fall under the easy control of the vicious beings which move in the astral waves like fish in the water; beings who surround us, and whom Bulwer-Lytton calls in *Zanoni* “the dwellers of the threshold.”¹ It becomes the *Od*, as soon as it is vivified by the *conscious efflux* of an immortal soul; for then the astral currents are acting under the guidance of either an adept, a pure spirit, or an able mesmerizer, who is pure himself and knows how to direct the blind forces. In such cases even a high Planetary Spirit, one of the class of beings that have never been embodied (though there are many among these hierarchies who have lived on our earth), descends occasionally to our sphere, and purifying the surrounding atmosphere enables the *subject* to see, and opens in him the springs of true divine prophecy. As to the term *Or*, the word is used to designate certain occult properties of the universal agent. It pertains more directly to the domain of the alchemist, and is of no interest to the general public.

The author of the *Homoimerian* system of philosophy, Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ, firmly believed that the spiritual prototypes of all things, as well as their elements, were to be found in the boundless æther, where they were generated, whence they evolved, and whither they returned from earth. In common with the Hindus who had personified their Ākāśa (sky or æther) and made of it a deific entity, the Greeks and

¹ [Consult “Zanoni by Bulwer-Lytton,” in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Latins had deified Æther. Virgil calls Zeus, *pater omnipotens æther*,¹ *Magnus*, the great god, Æther.

These beings above alluded to are the elemental spirits of the Kabbalists,² whom the Christian clergy denounce as “devils,” the enemies of mankind. [159]

“Already Tertullian,” gravely remarks Des Mousseaux, in his chapter on the devils, “has *formally* discovered the secret of their cunning.”³

A priceless discovery, that. And now that we have learned so much of the mental labours of the holy fathers and their achievements in astral anthropology, need we be surprised at all, if, in the zeal of their spiritual explorations, they have so far neglected their own planet as at times to deny not only its right to motion but even its sphericity?

And this is what we find in Langhorne, the translator of *Plutarch*:

Dionysius of Halicarnassus is of [the] opinion that Numa built the temple of Vesta in a *round* form, to represent the figure of the earth, for by Vesta they meant the earth.⁴

Moreover, Philolaus, in common with all other Pythagoreans, held that the element of fire was placed in the centre of the universe; and Plutarch, speaking on the subject, remarks of the Pythagoreans that

. . . the earth they suppose not to be without motion, *nor* situated in the centre of the world, but to make its revolution round the sphere of fire, being neither one of the most valuable, nor principal parts of the great machine. Plato, too, is reported to have been of the same opinion.⁵

It appears, therefore, that the Pythagoreans anticipated Galileo’s *discovery*.

¹ Virgil, *Georgica*, Book II, 325; [full text in our Down to Earth Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² Porphyry and other philosophers explain the nature of the *dwellers*. They are mischievous and deceitful, though some of them are perfectly gentle and harmless, but so weak as to have the greatest difficulty in communicating with mortals whose company they seek incessantly. The former are not wicked through intelligent malice. The law of spiritual evolution not having yet developed their instinct into intelligence, whose highest light belongs but to immortal spirits, their powers of reasoning are in a latent state and, therefore, they themselves, irresponsible.

But the Latin Church contradicts the Kabbalists. St. Augustine has even a discussion on that account with Porphyry, the Neo-Platonist. “These spirits,” he says, “are deceitful, *not by their nature*, as Porphyry, the theurgist, will have it, but through malice. They pass themselves off for *gods* and *for the souls of the defunct*.” (*De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* x, 11) So far Porphyry agrees with him; “but they do not claim to be *demons* [read devils], for they are such in reality!” adds the Bishop of Hippo. But then, under what class should we place the men *without heads*, whom Augustine wishes us to believe he saw himself? or the satyrs of St. Jerome, which he asserts were exhibited for a considerable length of time at Alexandria? They were, he tells us, “men with the legs and tails of goats”; and, if we may believe him, one of these Satyrs was actually *pickled* and sent in a cask to the Emperor Constantine!

³ [*Mœers*, etc., pp. 44-45]

⁴ [Cf. Plutarch, *Lives*, “Numa,” § xi; also cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* ii, 15.

Endnote 27, also by Boris de Zirkoff: In Plutarch’s *Life of Numa*, Vesta is identified, according to the Pythagoreans, with fire and the Unit, the circular form imitating the shape of the universe.]

⁵ [*ibid.*]

Further insights into the vast, invisible universe.

The existence of such an invisible universe being once admitted — as seems likely to be the fact if the speculations of the authors of the *Unseen Universe*¹ are ever accepted by their colleagues — many of the phenomena, hitherto mysterious and inexplicable, become plain. It acts on the organism of the magnetized mediums, it penetrates and saturates them through and through, either directed by the powerful will of a mesmerizer, or by unseen beings who achieve the same result. Once that the silent operation is performed, the astral or sidereal phantom of the mesmerized subject quits its paralyzed, earthly casket, and, after having roamed in the boundless space, alights at the threshold of the mysterious “bourne.”² For it, the gates of the portal which marks the entrance to the “silent land,” are now but partially ajar; they will fly wide open before the soul of the entranced somnambulist only on that day when, united with its higher immortal essence, it will have quitted forever its mortal frame. Until then, the seer or seeress can look but through a chink; it depends on the acuteness of the clairvoyant’s spiritual sight to see more or less through it. [160]

Three heads are hewn in one another, and over one another.

The trinity in unity is an idea which all the ancient nations held in common. The three Devatās — the Hindu Trimūrti; the *Three Heads* of the Jewish Kabbalah. “Three heads are hewn in one another and over one another.”³ The trinity of the Egyptians and that of the mythological Greeks were alike representations of the first triple emanation containing two male and one female principles. It is the union of the male *Logos*, or wisdom, the revealed Deity, with the female *Aura* or *Anima Mundi* — “the holy *Pneuma*,” which is the *Sephīrah* of the Kabbalists and the *Sophia* of the refined Gnostics — that produced all things visible and invisible. While the true metaphysical interpretation of this universal dogma remained within the sanctuaries, the Greeks, with their poetical instincts, impersonated it in many charming myths. In the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus, the god Bacchus, among other allegories, is represented as in love with the soft, genial breeze (the Holy Pneuma), under the name of *Aura Placida*.⁴ And now we will leave Godfrey Higgins to speak: “When the ignorant Fathers were constructing their calendar, they made out of this gentle zephyr two Roman Catholic saints!!” — SS. Aura and Placida; nay, they even went so far as to transfer the jolly god into St. Bacchus, and actually *show his coffin and relics at Rome*. The festival of the two “blessed saints,” Aura and Placida, occurs on the 5th of October, close to the festival of St. Bacchus.⁵

How far more poetical, and how much greater the religious spirit to be found in the “heathen” Norse legends of creation! In the boundless abyss of the mundane pit, the Ginnungagap, where rage in blind fury and conflict cosmic matter and the primordial

¹ [*The Unseen Universe; or Physical Speculations on a Future State*. First edition published anonymously in London, 1875, by two British sages: Balfour Stewart (1828–1887) and Peter Guthrie Tait (1831–1901). 3rd ed., New York: Macmillan & Co. 1875; 197pp. — ED. PHIL.]

² [goal or destination]

³ “Tria capita exsculpta sunt, unum intra alterum, et alterum supra alterum” — *Zohar*, “Idra Suta,” § ii

⁴ [Gentle Breeze]

⁵ G. Higgins, *Anacalypsis*, Vol. II, p. 85; also Dupuis, *Origine de tous les cultes* iii, p. 151

forces, suddenly blows the thaw-wind. It is the “unrevealed God,” who sends his beneficent breath from Muspelsheim, the sphere of empyreal fire, within whose glowing rays dwells this great Being, far beyond the limits of the world of matter; and the *animus* of the Unseen, the Spirit brooding over the dark, abysmal waters, calls order out of chaos, and once having given the impulse to all creation the FIRST CAUSE retires, and remains for evermore in *statu abscondito!*¹

There is both religion and science in these Scandinavian songs of heathendom. As an example of the latter, take the conception of Thor, the son of Odin. Whenever this Hercules of the North would grasp the [161] handle of his terrible weapon, the thunderbolt or electric hammer, he is obliged to put on his *iron* gantlets. He also wears a magical belt known as the “*girdle of strength*,” which, whenever girded about his person, greatly augments his celestial power. He rides upon a car drawn by two rams with silver bridles, and his awful brow is encircled by a wreath of stars. His chariot has a pointed iron pole, and the spark-scattering wheels continually roll over rumbling thunder-clouds. He hurls his hammer with resistless force against the rebellious frost-giants, whom he dissolves and annihilates. When he repairs to the Urdar fountain, where the gods meet in conclave to decide the destinies of humanity, he alone goes on foot, the rest of the deities being mounted. He walks, for fear that in crossing Bifröst (the rainbow), the many-hued Æsir-bridge, he might set it on fire with his thunder-car, at the same time causing the Urdar waters to boil.

Volcanos and geothermal springs are caused by powerful underground electric currents.

Rendered into plain English, how can this myth be interpreted but as showing that the Norse legend makers were thoroughly acquainted with electricity? Thor, the euhemerization of electricity, handles his peculiar element only when protected by gloves of *iron*, which is its natural conductor. His belt of strength is a closed circuit, around which the isolated current is compelled to run instead of diffusing itself through space. When he rushes with his car through the clouds, he is electricity in its *active* condition, as the sparks scattering from his wheels and the rumbling thunder of the clouds testify. The pointed iron pole of the chariot is suggestive of the lightning rod; the two rams which serve as his coursers are the familiar ancient symbols of the male or generative power; their silver bridles typify the female principle, for silver is the metal of Luna, Astartē, Diana. Therefore in the ram and his bridle we see combined the active and passive principles of nature in opposition, one rushing forward, and the other restraining, while both are in subordination to the world-permeating, electrical principle, which gives them their impulse. With the electricity supplying the impulse, and the male and female principle combining and recombining in endless correlation, the result is — evolution of visible nature, the crown-glory of which is the planetary system, which in the mythic Thor is allegorized by the circlet of glittering orbs which bedeck his brow. When in his active condition, his awful thunderbolts destroy everything, even the lesser other Titanic forces. But he goes afoot over the rainbow bridge, Bifröst, because to mingle with other less powerful gods than himself, he is obliged to be in a *latent* state, which he could not be in his

¹ Mallett, *Northern Antiquities*, pp. 401-6, and “The Songs of a Völuspá” in the *Edda*.

car; otherwise he would set on fire and annihilate all. The meaning of the Urdhar-fountain, that Thor is afraid to make boil, and the cause of his reluctance, will only be comprehended by our physicists when the reciprocal electro-magnetic relations of the innumerable members of the planetary system, now just suspected, shall be thoroughly determined. Glimpses of the truth are given in the [162] recent scientific essays of Professors Mayer and T. Sterry Hunt. The ancient philosophers believed that not only volcanos, but boiling springs were caused by concentrations of underground electric currents, and that this same cause produced mineral deposits of various natures, which form curative springs. If it be objected that this fact is not distinctly stated by the ancient authors, who, in the opinion of our century were hardly acquainted with electricity, we may simply answer that not all the works embodying ancient wisdom are now extant among our scientists. The clear and cool waters of Urdhar were required for the daily irrigation of the mystical mundane tree; and if they had been disturbed by Thor, or active electricity, they would have been converted into mineral springs unsuited for the purpose. Such examples as the above will support the ancient claim of the philosophers that *there is a logos in every mythos*, or a groundwork of truth in every fiction.



Part 2.

On the Invisible World of Elements, Elementals, and Elementaries.¹

Thou great First Cause, least understood.

— POPE, *Universal Prayer* 5

Whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis heaven itself that points out our hereafter
And intimates eternity to man.
ETERNITY! Thou pleasing, dreadful thought!

— ADDISON

There is another and a better world.

— KOTZEBUE, *The Stranger*

God or the infinite and uncreated spirit, a divine substance² of the highest virtue and excellency, produced everything else by emanative causality.

From *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I, ch. VII (ELEMENTS, ELEMENTALS, AND ELEMENTARIES), pp. 205-52.

AFTER ACCORDING SO MUCH SPACE to the conflicting opinions of our men of science about certain occult phenomena of our modern period, it is but just that we give attention to the speculations of mediæval alchemists and certain other illustrious men. Almost without exception, ancient and mediæval scholars believed in the arcane doctrines of wisdom. These included Alchemy, the Chaldeo-Jewish Kabbalah, the esoteric systems of Pythagoras and the old Magi, and those of the later Platonic philosophers and theurgists. We also propose in subsequent pages to treat of the Indian Gymnosophists and the Chaldean astrologers. We must not neglect to show the grand truths underlying the misunderstood religions of the past. The four elements of our fathers, earth, air, water, and fire, contain for the student of alchemy and ancient psychology — or as it is now termed, *magic* — many things of which our philosophy has never dreamed. We must not forget that what is now called *Necromancy* by the Church, and *Spiritualism* by modern believers, and that includes the evoking of departed spirits, is a science which has, from remote antiquity, been almost universally diffused over the face of the globe.

¹ [Consult “Blavatsky on Elementals and Elementaries,” in our Blavatsky Speaks Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Consisting of infinite attributes]

Although neither an alchemist, magician, nor astrologer, but simply a great philosopher, Henry More, of Cambridge University, a man universally esteemed, may be named as a shrewd logician, scientist, and metaphysician. His belief in witchcraft was firm throughout his life. His faith in immortality and able arguments in demonstration of the survival of man's spirit after death are all based on the Pythagorean system, adopted by Cardan, Van Helmont, and other mystics. The infinite and [206] uncreated spirit that we usually call GOD, a substance of the highest virtue and excellency, produced everything else by *emanative causality*. God thus is the primary substance, the rest, the secondary; if the former created matter with a power of moving itself, he, the primary substance, is still the cause of that motion as well as of the matter, and yet we rightly say that it is matter which moves itself.¹

We may define this kind of spirit we speak of to be a substance indiscernible, that can move itself, that can penetrate, contract, and dilate itself, and can also penetrate, move, and alter matter . . .²

— which is the third emanation. He firmly believed in apparitions, and stoutly defended the theory of the individuality of every soul in which “personality, memory, and conscience will surely continue in the future state.” He divided the astral spirit of man after its exit from the body into two distinct entities: the “ærial” and the “æthereal vehicle.” During the time that a disembodied man moves in its ærial clothing, he is subject to *Fate* — *i.e.*, evil and temptation, attached to its earthly interests, and therefore is not utterly pure; it is only when he casts off this garb of the first spheres and becomes æthereal that he becomes sure of his immortality.

For what shadow can that body cast that is a pure and transparent light, such as the æthereal vehicle is? And therefore that oracle is then fulfilled, when the soul has ascended into that condition we have already described, in which alone it is out of the reach of fate and mortality.³

He concludes his work by stating that this transcendent and divinely pure condition was the only aim of the Pythagoreans.

As to the sceptics of his age, his language is contemptuous and severe. Speaking of Scot, Adie, and Webster, he terms them

. . . our new inspired saints . . . sworn advocates of the witches, who thus madly and boldly, against all sense and reason, against all antiquity, all interpreters, and against the Scripture itself, will have even no Samuel in the scene, but a cunning confederate knave, whether the Scripture, or these *in-blown* buffoons, puffed up with nothing but ignorance, vanity, and stupid infidelity, are to be believed, let any one judge . . .⁴

¹ [Cf. “Virgil’s mens agitat molem,” in our Mystic Verse and Insights Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² *An Antidote against Atheism* (1653) I, iv

³ [Henry More, *The Immortality of the Souls* (1659), III, ch. xix, p. 548]

⁴ [Glavill, *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, p. 48; letter from H. More to its author, 25th May 1678]

He adds,

What kind of language would this eminent divine have used against our sceptics of the nineteenth century?

Descartes, although a worshipper of matter, was one of the most devoted teachers of the magnetic doctrine and, in a certain sense, even of Alchemy. His system of physics was very much like that of other great philosophers. Space, which is infinite, is composed, or rather filled up with a fluid and elementary matter, and is the sole fountain of all life, [207] enclosing all the celestial globes and keeping them in perpetual motion. The magnet-streams of Mesmer are disguised by him into the Cartesian vortices, and both rest on the same principle. Ennemoser does not hesitate to say that both have more in common “than people suppose, who have not carefully examined the subject.”¹

The esteemed philosopher, Gabriel Naudé, was the warmest defender of the doctrines of occult magnetism and its first propounders,² in 1679. The magico-theosophical philosophy is fully vindicated in his works.

The world is underpinned by magnetic sympathy or attraction between men, animals, plants, and even minerals.

The well-known Dr. Hufeland has written a work on magic³ in which he propounds the theory of the universal magnetic sympathy between men, animals, plants, and even minerals. The testimony of Campanella, Van Helmont, and Servius, is confirmed by him in relation to the sympathy existing between the different parts of the body, as well as between the parts of all organic and even inorganic bodies.

Such also was the doctrine of Sebastian Wirdig. It may even be found expounded in his works, with far more clearness, logic, and vigour, than in those of other mystical authors who have treated of the same subject. In his famous treatise, *The New Spiritual Medicine*, he demonstrates, on the ground of the later-accepted fact of universal attraction and repulsion — now called “gravitation” — that the whole nature is *ensouled*. Wirdig calls this magnetic sympathy “the accordance of spirits.” Everything is drawn to its like, and converges with natures congenial to itself. Out of this sympathy and antipathy arises a constant movement in the whole world, and in all its parts, and uninterrupted communion between heaven and earth, which produces universal harmony. Everything lives and perishes through magnetism; one thing affects another one, even at great distances, and its “congenitals” may be influenced to health and disease by the power of this sympathy, at any time, and notwithstanding the intervening space.⁴ “Hufeland,” says Ennemoser, “gives the account of a nose which had been cut from the back of a porter, but which, when the porter died, died

¹ *The History of Magic*, Vol. II, p. 272

² La Haye, *Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui on été faussement soupçonnés de magie*, 1679

³ *Über die Sympathie*, etc., Berlin 1817

⁴ *Nova medicina spiritum*, 1673

too, and fell off from its artificial position. A piece of skin,” adds Hufeland, “taken from a living head, had its hair turn grey at the same time as that on the head from which it was taken.”¹

More! Each planet is inhabited by spiritual beings, who exercise influences over other beings inhabiting more gross and material spheres than their own, and especially over our earth.

Kepler, the forerunner of Newton in many great truths, even in that of the universal “gravitation” which he very justly attributed to magnetic attraction, notwithstanding that he terms astrology “the insane daughter of a most wise mother” — Astronomy, shares the Kabbalistic belief [208] that the spirits of the stars are so many “intelligences.” *He firmly believes that each planet is the seat of an intelligent principle, and that they are all inhabited by spiritual beings, who exercise influences over other beings inhabiting more gross and material spheres than their own and especially [over] our earth.*² As Kepler’s spiritual starry influences were superseded by the vortices of the more materialistic Descartes, whose atheistical tendencies did not prevent him from believing that he had found out a diet that would prolong his life five hundred years and more, so the vortices of the latter and his astronomical doctrines may someday give place to the *intelligent* magnetic streams which are directed by the *Anima Mundi*.

There is only One Magnet in the Universe, and this is the Central Spiritual Sun. From It proceeds the magnetization of everything else.

Baptista Porta, the learned Italian philosopher, notwithstanding his endeavours to show to the world the groundlessness of their accusations of magic being a superstition and sorcery, was treated by later critics with the same unfairness as his colleagues. This celebrated alchemist left a work on *Natural Magic*, in which he bases all of the occult phenomena possible to man upon the world-soul which binds all with all. He shows:

That the astral light acts in harmony and sympathy with all nature;

That it is the essence out of which our spirits are formed; and

That by acting in unison with their parent-source, our sidereal bodies are rendered capable of producing magic wonders.

The whole secret depends on our knowledge of kindred elements. He believed in the philosopher’s stone, “of which the world hath so great an opinion, which hath been bragged of in so many ages and *happily attained unto by some.*” Finally, he throws out many valuable hints as to its “spiritual meaning.”³ In 1643, there appeared among the mystics a monk, Father Kircher, who taught a complete philosophy of

¹ *The History of Magic*, Vol. II, p. 271

² It would be a useless and too long labour to enter here upon the defence of Kepler’s theory of relation between the five regular solids of geometry and the magnitudes of the orbits of five principal planets, rather derided by Prof. Draper in his *Conflict*, etc., ch. ix. Many are the theories of the ancients that have been avenged by modern discovery. For the rest, we must bide our time.

³ *Magia naturalis*, Book I, v, viii, x, xiv; Lugduni 1569

universal magnetism. His numerous works¹ embrace many of the subjects merely hinted at by Paracelsus. His definition of magnetism is very original, for he contradicted Gilbert's theory that the earth was a great magnet. He asserted that although every particle of matter, and even the intangible invisible "powers" were magnetic, they did not themselves constitute a magnet. *There is but one MAGNET in the universe, and from it proceeds the magnetization of everything existing.* This magnet is of course what the Kabbalists term [209] the central Spiritual Sun, or God. The sun, moon, planets, and stars he affirmed are highly magnetic; but they have become so by induction from living in the universal magnetic fluid — the Spiritual light. He proves the mysterious sympathy existing between the bodies of the three principal kingdoms of nature, and strengthens his argument by a stupendous catalogue of instances. Many of these were verified by naturalists, but still more have remained unauthenticated; therefore, according to the traditional policy and very equivocal logic of our scientists, they are denied. For instance, he shows a difference between mineral magnetism and zoömagnetism, or animal magnetism. He demonstrates it in the fact that except in the case of the lodestone all the minerals are magnetized by the higher potency, the animal magnetism, while the latter enjoys it as the direct emanation from the first cause — the Creator. A needle can be magnetized by simply being held in the hand of a strong-willed man, and amber develops its powers more by the friction of the human hand than by any other object; therefore man can impart his own life, and, to a certain degree, *animate* inorganic objects. This, "in the eyes of the foolish, is sorcery." "The sun is the most magnetic of all bodies," he says; thus anticipating the theory of General Pleasonton by more than two centuries. "The ancient philosophers never denied the fact," he adds; "but have perceived that the sun binds all things to himself, and also imparts this uniting power to other things."²

As a proof of it he brings the instance of a number of plants being especially attracted to the sun, and others to the moon, and showing their irresistible sympathy to the former by following its course in the heavens. The plant known as the *Tithymalus*,³ faithfully follows its sovereign, even when it is invisible on account of the fog. The acacia uncloses its petals at its rising, and closes them at its setting. So does the Egyptian lotos and the common sunflower. The nightshade exhibits the same predilection for the moon.

As examples of antipathies or sympathies among plants, he instances the aversion which the vine feels for the cabbage, and its fondness toward the olive-tree; the love of the ranunculus for the water-lily, and of the rue for the fig. The antipathy which sometimes exists even among kindred substances is clearly demonstrated in the case of the Mexican pomegranate, whose shoots, when cut to pieces, repel each other with the "most extraordinary ferocity."



¹ [Among others] *Magnes sive de arte magnetici*, Coloniae 1643

² [Ennemoser, *The History of Magic*, Vol. II, pp. 269-70]

³ Kircher, *op. cit.*, lib. III, cap. iv, p. 643. [*Τιθύμαλος*, in Greek. Cf. *Euphorbia spathulata*, a species of spurge known by the common names warty spurge and roughpod spurge.]

There are two kinds of magnetic attraction: sympathy and fascination; the one is holy and natural; the other, unholy and unnatural.

The magnetism of pure love is the originator of every created thing. In its ordinary sense, love between the sexes is electricity.

Athanasius Kircher calls sensual love the fever of species; Éliphas Lévi, an intoxication of the astral light.

Kircher accounts for every feeling in human nature as results of changes in our magnetic condition. Anger, jealousy, friendship, love, and [210] hatred, are all modifications of the magnetic atmosphere which is developed in us and constantly emanates from us. Love is one of the most variable, and therefore the aspects of it are numberless. Spiritual love, that of a mother for her child, of an artist for some particular art, love as pure friendship, are purely magnetic manifestations of sympathy in congenial natures. *The magnetism of pure love is the originator of every created thing.* In its ordinary sense love between the sexes is electricity, and he calls it *amor febris speciei*, the fever of species. There are two kinds of magnetic attraction: sympathy and fascination; the one holy and natural, the other evil and unnatural. To the latter, fascination, we must attribute the power of the poisonous toad, which upon merely opening its mouth, forces the passing reptile or insect to run into it to its destruction. The deer, as well as smaller animals, are attracted by the breath of the boa, and are made irresistibly to come within its reach. The electric fish, the torpedo, repels the arm with a shock that for a time benumbs it. To exercise such a power for beneficent purposes, man requires three conditions:

- 1 Nobility of soul;
- 2 Strong will and imaginative faculty;
- 3 A subject weaker than the magnetizer; otherwise he will resist.

A man free from worldly incentives and sensuality may cure in such a way the most “incurable” diseases, and his vision may become clear and prophetic.

A curious instance of the above-mentioned universal attraction between all the bodies of the planetary system and everything organic as well as inorganic pertaining to them, is found in a quaint old volume of the seventeenth century. It contains notes of travel and an official report to the King of France, by his Ambassador, de la Loubère, upon what he has seen in the kingdom of Siam. “At Siam,” he says, “there are two species of fresh-water fish, which they respectively call *pal-out* and *pla-cadi* fish. Once salted and placed uncut [whole] in the pot, they are found to exactly follow the flux and reflux of the sea, growing higher and lower in the pot as the sea ebbs or flows.”¹ De la Loubère experimented with this fish for a long time, together with a government engineer, named Vincent, and, therefore, vouches for the truth of this assertion, which at first had been dismissed as an idle fable. So powerful is this mys-

¹ *New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam*, by de la Loubère, French Ambassador to Siam in the years 1687-88, Part II, ch. iv, p. 35; London 1693.

terious attraction that it affected the fishes even when their bodies became totally rotten and fell to pieces.

It is especially in the countries unblest with civilization that we should seek for an explanation of the nature, and observe the effects of that subtle power, which ancient philosophers called the “world’s soul.” [211]

In the East only, and on unexplored parts of the earth, will the student of psychology be able to satisfy his truth-hungering soul.

In the East only, and on the boundless tracts of unexplored Africa, will the student of psychology find abundant food for his truth-hungering soul. The reason is obvious. The atmosphere in populous neighbourhoods is badly vitiated by the smoke and fumes of manufactories, steam-engines, railroads, and steamboats, and especially by the miasmatic exhalations of the living and the dead. Nature is as dependent as a human being upon conditions before she can work, and her mighty breathing, so to say, can be as easily interfered with, impeded, and arrested, and the correlation of her forces destroyed in a given spot, as though she were a man. Not only climate, but also occult influences daily felt not only modify the physio-psychological nature of man, but even alter the constitution of so-called inorganic matter in a degree not fairly realized by European science. Thus the London *Medical and Surgical Journal* advises surgeons not to carry lancets to Calcutta, because it has been found by personal experience “that English steel could not bear the atmosphere of India”; so a bunch of English or American keys will be completely covered with rust twenty-four hours after having been brought to Egypt; while objects made of native steel in those countries remain unoxidized. So, too, it has been found that a Siberian Shaman who has given stupendous proofs of his occult powers among his native Chukchis, is gradually and often completely deprived of such powers when coming into smoky and foggy London. Is the inner organism of man less sensitive to climatic influences than a bit of steel? If not, then why should we cast doubt upon the testimony of travellers who may have seen the Shaman, day after day, exhibit phenomena of the most astounding character in his native country, and deny the possibility of such powers and such phenomena, only because he cannot do as much in London or Paris? In his lecture on *The Lost Arts*, Wendell Phillips proves that besides the psychological nature of man being affected by a change of climate, Oriental people have physical senses far more acute than the Europeans. The French dyers of Lyons, whom no one can surpass in skill, he says,

. . . have a theory that there is a certain delicate shade of blue that Europeans *cannot see* . . . [and] in Kashmīr, where the girls make shawls worth \$30,000, they will show him [the dyer of Lyons] three hundred distinct colours, which he not only cannot make, but *cannot even distinguish*.¹

If there is such a vast difference between the acuteness of the external senses of two races, why should there not be the same in their psychological powers? Moreover, the eye of a Kashmīr girl is able to see *objectively* a colour which does exist, but which being inappreciable by the European, is therefore non-existent for him. Why then not concede, that some peculiarly-endowed organisms, which are thought to be

¹ *The Lost Arts*, pp. 17-18

possessed of that mysterious faculty called *second sight*, [212] see their pictures as objectively as the girl sees the colours; and that therefore the former, instead of mere objective hallucinations called forth by imagination are, on the contrary, reflections of real things and persons impressed upon the astral æther, as explained by the old philosophy of the *Chaldean Oracles*, and surmised by those modern discoverers, Babbage, Jevons, and the authors of *The Unseen Universe*?

Teaches Paracelsus:

Three spirits live and actuate man; three worlds pour their beams upon him; but all three only as the image and echo of one and the same all-constructing and uniting principle of production.

The first is the spirit of the elements [terrestrial body and vital force in its brute condition];

The second, the spirit of the stars [sidereal or astral body — the soul];

The third is the *Divine spirit* [*Augoeides*].”¹

Our human body, being possessed of “primeval earth-stuff,” as Paracelsus calls it, we may readily accept the tendency of modern scientific research “to regard the processes of both animal and vegetable life as simply physical and chemical.” This theory only the more corroborates the assertions of old philosophers and the Mosaic Bible, that from the dust of the ground our bodies were made, and to dust they will return. But we must remember that

Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.²

Man is a little world inside the great universe. Like a foetus, he is suspended by three spirits in the matrix of the Macrocosmos.

The Pythagorean Monas, which lives “in solitude and darkness,” may remain on this earth forever invisible and impalpable. When, by successive transformations throughout the ages, this once impalpable Atom finds itself reclothed in that primordial essence, which is identical with that of its Creator, then the Sons of God will once more “shout for joy” at the return of the Pilgrim.

Man is a little world — a microcosm inside the great universe. Like a foetus, he is suspended, by all his *three* spirits, in the matrix of the macrocosmos; and while his terrestrial body is in constant sympathy with its parent earth, his astral soul lives in unison with the sidereal *anima mundi*. He is in it, as it is in him, for the world-pervading element fills all space, and *is* space itself, only shoreless and infinite. As to his third spirit, the divine, what is it but an infinitesimal ray, one of the countless radiations proceeding directly from the Highest Cause — the Spiritual Light of the

¹ [*Opera omnia*, s.v. “The End of Birth, and Consideration of the Stars”]

² [H.W. Longfellow, *A Psalm of Life*]

World? This is the trinity of organic and inorganic nature — the spiritual and the physical, which are three in one, and of which Proclus says that —

The first monad is the Eternal God;

The second, eternity;

The third, the paradigm, or pattern of the universe;

— the three constituting the Intelligible Triad. Everything in this visible universe is the outflow of this Triad, and a microcosmic triad itself. And thus they move in majestic procession in the fields of eternity, around the spiritual sun, as in the heliocentric system the celestial bodies move round the visible suns. The Pythagorean *Monas*, which lives “in solitude and darkness,” may remain on this earth forever invisible, impalpable, and undemonstrated by experimental science. Still the whole universe will be gravitating around it, as it did from the “beginning of time,” and [213] with every second, man and atom approach nearer to that solemn moment in the eternity, when the Invisible Presence will become clear to their spiritual sight. When every particle of matter, even the most sublimated, has been cast off from the last shape that forms the ultimate link of that chain of double evolution which, throughout millions of ages and successive transformations, has pushed the entity onward; and when it shall find itself reclothed in that primordial essence, identical with that of its Creator, then this once impalpable organic atom will have run its race, and the sons of God will once more “shout for joy” at the return of the pilgrim.

Man possesses a double celestial power, and his triple nature stands in relationship to all things. Being the mirror of the universe, man is allied to heaven.

Says Van Helmont,

Man is the mirror of the universe, and his triple nature stands in relationship to all things.

The will of the Creator, through which all things were made and received their first impulse, is the property of every living being. Man, endowed with an additional spirituality, has the largest share of it on this planet. It depends on the proportion of matter in him whether he will exercise its magical faculty with more or less success. Sharing this divine potency in common with every inorganic atom, he exercises it through the course of his whole life, whether consciously or otherwise. In the former case, when in the full possession of his powers, he will be the master, and the *magnale magnum* (the universal soul) will be controlled and guided by him. In the cases of animals, plants, minerals, and even of the average of humanity, this æthereal fluid which pervades all things, finding no resistance, and being left to itself, moves them as its impulse directs. Every created being in this sublunary sphere, is formed out of the *magnale magnum*, and is related to it. Man possesses a double celestial power, and is allied to heaven. This power is

. . . not only in the outer man, but to a degree also in the animals, and perhaps in all other things, as all things in the universe stand in a relation to each other; or, at least, God is in all things, as the ancients have observed it with a worthy correctness. It is necessary that the magic strength should be awakened in

the outer as well as in the inner man . . . And if we call this a magic power, the uninstructed only can be terrified by the expression. But, if you prefer it, you can call it a spiritual power — *spirituale robur vocitaveris* . . . There is, therefore, such magic power in the inner man. But, as there exists a certain relationship between the inner and the outer man, this strength must be diffused through the whole man.¹

In an extended description of the religious rites, monastic life, and “superstitions” of the Siamese, de la Loubère cites among other things the wonderful power possessed by the *Talapoins* (the monks, or the holy [214] men of Buddha) over the wild beasts. He says:

The Talapoin of Siam will pass whole weeks in the dense woods under a small awning of branches and palm leaves, and never make a fire in the night to scare away the wild beasts, as all other people do who travel through the woods of this country . . . The people consider it a miracle that no Talapoin is ever devoured . . . The tigers, elephants, and rhinoceroses — with which the neighbourhood abounds — respect him; and travellers placed in secure ambuscade have often seen these wild beasts lick the hands and feet of the sleeping Talapoins.²

“They all use magic,” adds the French gentleman, “and think all nature animated [ensouled]; they believe in tutelar geniuses.” But that which seems to shock the author most is the idea which prevails among the Siamese, “that all that man was in his bodily life, he will be after death.” Remarks de la Loubère,

When the Tatar, which now reigns at China, would force the Chinese to shave their hair after the Tatarian fashion, several of them chose rather to suffer death than to go, they said, into the other world, and appear before their ancestors without hair; imagining that they shaved the head of the soul also!³

“Now, what is altogether impertinent,” adds the Ambassador, “in this absurd opinion is, that the Orientals attribute the human figure rather than any other to the soul.” Without enlightening his reader as to the particular shape these benighted Orientals ought to select for their disembodied souls, de la Loubère proceeds to pour out his wrath on these “savages.” Finally, he attacks the memory of the old king of Siam, the father of the one to whose court he was sent, by accusing him of having foolishly spent over two million livres in search of the philosopher’s stone. He says:

The Chinese, reputed so wise, have for three or four thousand years had the folly of believing in the existence, and of seeking out, a universal remedy by which they hope to exempt themselves from the necessity of dying. They base themselves on some foolish traditions, concerning some *rare* persons that are reported to have made gold, and to have lived some ages; there are some very strongly established facts among the Chinese, the Siamese, and other Orientals, concerning those that know how to render themselves immortal, either ab-

¹ Baptista Van Helmont, *Ortus medicinæ*, Francof. et Hafn (1652), p. 610 *et seq.*

² De la Loubère, *Kingdom of Siam*, etc., Part III, ch. xvii, p. 115

³ *ibid.*, Part III, ch. xix, pp. 119, 120

solutely, or in such a manner that they can die no otherwise than by violent death. Wherefore, they name some persons who have withdrawn themselves from the sight of men to enjoy free and peaceable life. They relate wonders concerning the knowledge of these pretended immortals.¹

If Descartes, a Frenchman and a scientist, could, in the midst of civilization, firmly believe that such a universal remedy had been found, [215] and that if possessed of it he could live at least five hundred years, why are not the Orientals entitled to the same belief? The master-problems of both life and death are still unsolved by occidental physiologists. Even sleep is a phenomenon about whose cause there is a great divergence of opinion among them. How, then, can they pretend to set limits to the possible, and define the impossible?

Music exercises a singular therapeutic power over certain diseases, especially those of the nervous class.

From the remotest ages the philosophers have maintained the singular power of music over certain diseases, especially of the nervous class. Kircher recommends it, having experienced its good effects in himself, and he gives an elaborate description of the instrument he employed. It was a harmonica composed of five tumblers of a very thin glass, placed in a row. In two of them were two different varieties of wine; in the third, brandy; in the fourth, oil; in the fifth, water. He extracted five melodious sounds from them in the usual way, by merely rubbing his finger on the edges of the tumblers.² The sound has an attractive property; it draws out disease, which streams out to encounter the musical wave, and the two, blending together, disappear in space. Asclepiades employed music for the same purpose, some twenty centuries ago; he blew a trumpet to cure sciatica, and its prolonged sound making the fibres of the nerves to palpitate, the pain invariably subsided. Democritus in like manner affirmed that many diseases could be cured by the melodious sounds of a flute. Mesmer used this very harmonica described by Kircher for his magnetic cures. The celebrated Scotchman, Wm. Maxwell, offered to prove to various medical faculties that with certain magnetic means at his disposal, he would cure “six of the diseases abandoned by them as incurable; such as epilepsy, impotence, insanity, lameness, dropsy, and continued as well as intermittent fevers.”³

The familiar story of the exorcism of the “evil spirit from God” that obsessed Saul, will recur to everyone in this connection. It is thus related:

And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.⁴

Maxwell, in his *De medicina magnetica*, expounds the following propositions, all which are the very doctrines of the alchemists and kabbalists.

¹ De la Loubère, *Kingdom of Siam*, etc., Part II, ch. x, p. 63

² [A. Kircher, *Magnes*, etc., *Coloniæ* 1643]

³ *De medicina magnetica*, Frankfort 1659, Preface

⁴ 1 *Samuel* xvi, 23

That which men call the world-soul, is a life, as fire, spiritual, fleet, light, and æthereal as light itself. It is a life-spirit everywhere, and everywhere the same. . . . All matter is destitute of action, except as it is ensouled by this spirit. This spirit maintains all things in their peculiar condition. It is found in nature free from all fetters; and he who understands how to unite it with a harmonizing body, possesses a treasure which exceeds all riches. [216]

This spirit is the common bond of all quarters of the earth, and lives through and in all — *adest in mundo quid commune omnibus mixtis, in quo ipsa permanent.*

He who knows this universal life-spirit and its application can prevent all injuries.¹

If thou canst avail thyself of this spirit and fix it on some particular body thou wilt perform the mystery of magic.

He who knows how to operate on men by this universal spirit, can heal, and this at any distance that he pleases.²

He who can invigorate the particular spirit through the universal one, *might continue his life to eternity.*³

There is a blending together of spirits, or of emanations, even when they are far separated from each other. And what is this blending together? It is an eternal and incessant outpouring of the rays of one body into another.

“In the meantime,” says Maxwell, “it is not *without danger* to treat of this. Many abominable abuses of this may take place.”

Dire are the consequences of abusing magnetic powers.

And now let us see what are these abuses of mesmeric and magnetic powers in some healing mediums.

Healing, to deserve the name, requires either faith in the patient, or robust health united with a strong will, in the operator. *With expectancy supplemented by faith, one can cure himself of almost any morbid condition.* The tomb of a saint; a holy relic; a talisman; a bit of paper or a garment that has been handled by the supposed healer; a nostrum; a penance, or a ceremonial; the laying on of hands, or a few words impressively pronounced — either will do. It is a question of temperament, imagination, self-cure. In thousands of instances, the doctor, the priest, or the relic has had credit for healings that were solely and simply due to the patient’s unconscious will. The woman with the bloody issue who pressed through the throng to touch the robe of Jesus, was told that her “faith” had made her whole.

The influence of mind over the body is so powerful that it has effected miracles at all ages.

¹ Aphorism 22

² Aphorism 69

³ Aphorism 70

“How many unhoped-for, sudden, and prodigious cures have been effected by imagination,” says Salverte. “Our medical books are filled with facts of this nature which would easily pass for miracles.”¹ [217]

But, if the patient has no faith, what then? If he is physically negative and receptive, and the healer strong, healthy, positive, determined, the disease may be extirpated by the imperative will of the operator, which, consciously or unconsciously, draws to and reinforces itself with the universal spirit of nature, and restores the disturbed equilibrium of the patient’s aura. He may employ as an auxiliary, a crucifix — as Gassner did; or impose the hands and “will,” like the French Zouave Jacob, like our celebrated American, Newton, the healer of many thousands of sufferers, and like many others; or like Jesus, and some apostles, he may cure by the word of command. The process in each case is the same.

In all these instances, the cure is radical and real, and without secondary ill effects. But, when one who is himself physically diseased, attempts healing, he not only fails of that, but often imparts his illness to his patient, and robs him of what strength he may have. The decrepit King David reinforced his failing vigour with the healthy magnetism of the young Abishag;² and the medical works tell us of an aged lady of Bath, England, who broke down the constitutions of two maids in succession, in the same way. The old sages, and Paracelsus also, removed disease by applying a healthy organism to the afflicted part, and in the works of the above-said fire-philosopher, their theory is boldly and categorically set forth. If a diseased person — medium or not — attempts to heal, his force may be sufficiently robust to displace the disease, to disturb it in the present place, and cause it to shift to another, where shortly it will appear; the patient, meanwhile, thinking himself cured.

But, what if the healer be morally diseased? The consequences may be infinitely more mischievous; for it is easier to cure a bodily disease than cleanse a constitution infected with moral turpitude. The mystery of Morzine, Cévennes, and that of the Jansenists, is still as great a mystery for physiologists as for psychologists. If the gift of prophecy, as well as hysteria and convulsions, can be imparted by “infection,” why not every vice? The healer, in such a case, conveys to his patient — who is now his victim — the moral poison that infects his own mind and heart. His magnetic touch is defilement; his glance, profanation. Against this insidious taint, there is no protection for the passively-receptive subject. The healer holds him under his power, spell-bound and powerless, as the serpent holds a poor, weak bird. The evil that one such “healing medium” can effect is incalculably great; and such healers there are by the hundred.

But, as we have said before, there are real and God-like healers, who, notwithstanding all the malice and scepticism of their bigoted opponents, [218] have become famous in the world’s history. Such are the Curé d’Ars, Jacob, and Newton. Such, also, were Gassner, the clergyman of Klörsterle, and the well-known Valentine Greatrakes, the ignorant and poor Irishman, who was endorsed by the celebrated Robert Boyle, President of the Royal Society of London, in 1670. In 1870, he would

¹ *The Philosophy of Magic*, Vol. II, p. 87

² *1 Kings* i, 1-4

have been sent to Bedlam,¹ in company with other healers, if another president of the same society had had the disposal of the case, or Professor Lankester would have “summoned” him under the *Vagrant Act* for practicing upon Her Majesty’s subjects “by *palmistry* or otherwise.”

Only the pure in heart can heal the ills of the body. Magical powers are never possessed by those addicted to vicious indulgences.

But, to close a list of witnesses which might be extended indefinitely, it will suffice to say that, from first to last, from Pythagoras down to Éliphas Lévi, from highest to humblest, every one teaches *that the magical power is never possessed by those addicted to vicious indulgences*. Only the pure in heart “see God,” or exercise divine gifts — only such can heal the ills of the body, and allow themselves, with relative security, to be guided by the “invisible powers.” Such only can give peace to the disturbed spirits of their brothers and sisters, for the healing waters come from no poisonous source; grapes do not grow on thorns, and thistles bear no figs. But, for all this, “magic has nothing supernal in it”; it is a science, and even the power of “casting out devils” was a branch of it, of which the Initiates made a special study. “That skill which expels daimōns out of human bodies, is a science useful and sanative to men,” says Josephus.²

The foregoing sketches are sufficient to show why we hold fast to the wisdom of the ages, in preference to any new theories that may have been hatched from the occurrences of our later days, respecting the laws of intermundane intercourse and the occult powers of man. While phenomena of a physical nature may have their value as a means of arousing the interest of materialists, and confirming, if not wholly, at least inferentially, our belief in the survival of our souls and spirits, it is questionable whether, under their present aspect, the modern phenomena are not doing more harm than good. Many minds, hungering after proofs of immortality, are fast falling into fanaticism; and, as Stow remarks, “fanatics are governed rather by imagination than judgment.”

Undoubtedly, believers in the modern phenomena can claim for themselves a diversity of endowments, but the “discerning of spirits” is evidently absent from this catalogue of “spiritual” gifts. Speaking of the “Diakka,” whom he one fine morning had discovered in a shady corner of the “Summer Land,” A.J. Davis, the great American seer, remarks:

A Diakka is one who takes insane delight in *playing parts*, in juggling [219] *tricks*, in *personating* opposite characters; to whom prayer and profane utterances are of equi-value; surcharged with a passion for lyrical narrations . . . morally deficient, he is without the active feelings of justice, philanthropy, or tender affection. He knows nothing of what men call the sentiment of gratitude; the ends of hate and love are the same to him; his motto is often fearful and terrible to others — SELF is the whole of private living, and exalted annihilation

¹ [A pejorative term, meaning uproar and confusion, for the Bethlem Royal Hospital, a psychiatric hospital in London, founded in 1247, that was representative of the worst excesses of asylums in the era of lunacy reform.]

² Josephus, *Antiquities*, VIII, ii, 5

the end of all private life. Only yesterday, one said to a lady medium, signing himself *Swedenborg*, this:

Whatsoever is, has been, will be, or may be, *that I AM*; and private life is but the aggregative phantasms of thinking throbbles, rushing in their rising onward to the central heart of eternal death!¹

Porphyry, whose works — to borrow the expression of an irritated phenomenalist — “are mouldering like every other antiquated trash in the closets of oblivion,” speaks thus of these *Diakka* — if such be their name — rediscovered in the nineteenth century:

It is with the direct help of these bad daimōns, that every kind of sorcery is accomplished . . . it is the result of their operations, and men who injure their fellow-creatures by enchantments, usually pay great honours to these bad daimōns, and especially to their chief. These spirits pass their time in deceiving us, with a great display of cheap prodigies and *illusions*; their ambition is to be taken for gods, and their leader demands to be recognized as the supreme god.²

The spirit signing himself *Swedenborg* — just quoted from Davis’ *Diakka*, and hinting that he is the *I AM*, singularly resembles this chief leader of Porphyry’s bad daimōns.

What more natural than this vilification of the ancient and experienced theurgists by certain mediums, when we find Iamblichus, the expositor of spiritualistic theurgy, strictly forbidding all endeavours to procure such phenomenal manifestations; unless, after a long preparation of moral and physical purification, and under the guidance of experienced theurgists. When, furthermore, he declares that, with very few exceptions, for a person “to appear elongated or thicker, or be borne aloft in the air,” is a sure mark of obsession by *bad daimōns*.³

Everything in this world has its time, and truth, however based upon unimpeachable evidence, will not root or grow, unless, like a plant, it is thrown into soil in its proper season. “The age must be prepared,” [220] says Professor Cooke; and some thirty years ago this humble work would have been doomed to self-destruction by its own contents. But the modern phenomenon, notwithstanding the daily *exposés*, the ridicule with which it is crowned at the hand of every materialist, and its own numerous errors, grows and waxes strong in facts, if not in wisdom and spirit. What would have appeared twenty years ago simply preposterous, may well be listened to now that the phenomena are endorsed by great scientists. Unfortunately, if the manifestations in-

¹ *The Diakka and their Earthly Victims; being an Explanation of much that is False and Repulsive in Spiritualism*, New York 1873; pp. 10-11.

See Chapter on the human spirits becoming the denizens of the *eighth* sphere, whose end is generally the *annihilation* of personal individuality.

² Porphyry, *De abstinence* ii, 41, 42. [Endnote 30 by Boris de Zirkoff: While it is not definitely known which particular translation of Porphyry Blavatsky quotes from, yet the wording is substantially the same, with minor variations, as in Thomas Taylor’s *Select Works of Porphyry* (London 1823), wherein may be found the complete text of the *Abstinence from Animal Food*.* The same applies to Blavatsky’s other quotes from Porphyry, on pages 332 and 333 of Vol. I.]

* [Consult “Taylor’s Vindication of the Rights of Brutes,” in our *Down to Earth Series*. — ED. PHIL.]

³ *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, etc.*, III, v *et seq.* (tr. Thos. Taylor)

crease in power daily, there is no corresponding improvement in philosophy. The discernment of spirits is still as wanting as ever.

The great majority of materialised “spirits” in this world are of the unintellectual and bigoted sort.

Perhaps, among the whole body of spiritualist writers of our day, not one is held in higher esteem for character, education, sincerity, and ability, than Epes Sargent of Boston, Massachusetts.¹ His monograph entitled *The Proof Palpable of Immortality*, deservedly occupies a high rank among works upon the subject. With every disposition to be charitable and apologetic for mediums and their phenomena, Mr. Sargent is still compelled to use the following language:

The power of spirits to reproduce *simulacra* of persons who have passed from the earth-life, suggests the question, how far can we be assured of the identity of *any* spirit, let the tests be what they may? We have not yet arrived at that stage of enlightenment that would enable us to reply confidently to this inquiry . . . There is much that is yet a puzzle in the language and action of this class of materialized spirits.²

As to the intellectual calibre of most of the spirits which lurk behind the physical phenomena, Mr. Sargent will unquestionably be accepted as a most competent judge, and he says, “the great majority, as in this world, are of the unintellectual sort.” If it is a fair question, we would like to ask why they should be so lacking in intelligence, if they are human spirits? Either intelligent human spirits *cannot* materialize, or, the spirits that do materialize have not human intelligence, and, therefore, by Mr. Sargent’s own showing, they may just as well be “elementary” spirits, who have ceased to be human altogether, or those daimōns, which, according to the Persian Magi and Plato, hold a middle rank between gods and disembodied men.

There is good evidence, that of Mr. Crookes for one, to show that many “materialized” spirits talk in an audible voice. Now, we have shown, on the testimony of ancients, that the voice of human spirits is not and *cannot* be articulated; being, as Emanuel Swedenborg declares, “a deep suspiration.” Who of the two classes of witnesses may be trusted more safely? Is it the ancients who had the experience of so many ages in theurgical practices, or modern spiritualists, who have had none at all, and who have no facts upon which to base an opinion, except such as [221] have been communicated by “spirits,” whose identity they have no means of proving? There are mediums whose organisms have called out sometimes hundreds of these would-be “human” forms. And yet we do not recollect to have seen or heard of one expressing anything but the most commonplace ideas. This fact ought surely to arrest the attention of even the most uncritical spiritualist. If a spirit can speak at all, and if the way is opened to intelligent as well as to unintellectual beings, why should they not sometimes give us addresses in some remote degree approximating in quality to the communications we receive through the “direct writing”? Mr. Sargent puts forward a very suggestive and important idea in this sentence.

¹ [Refer to Appendix, Boris de Zirkoff on Epes Sargent, biographical notes from his *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings* (BIBLIOGRAPHY) III pp. 528-30. — ED. PHIL.]

² [pp. 44-45]

How far they are limited in their mental operations and in their recollections by the act of materialization, or how far by the intellectual horizon of the medium is still a question.¹

If the same kind of “spirits” materialize that produce the direct writing, and both manifest through mediums, and the one talk nonsense, while the other often give us sublime philosophical teachings, why should their mental operations be limited “by the intellectual horizon of the medium” in the one instance more than in the other? The materializing mediums — at least so far as our observation extends — are no more uneducated than many peasants and mechanics who at different times have, under supernal influences, given profound and sublime ideas to the world. The history of psychology teems with examples in illustration of this point, among which that of Böhme, the inspired but ignorant shoemaker, and our own Davis, are conspicuous. As to the matter of unintellectuality we presume that no more striking cases need be sought than those of the child-prophets of Cévennes, poets and seers, such as have been mentioned in previous chapters. When spirits have once furnished themselves with vocal organs to speak at all, it surely ought to be no more difficult for them to talk as persons of their assumed respective education, intelligence, and social rank would in life, instead of falling invariably into one monotonous tone of commonplace and, but too often, platitude. As to Mr. Sargent’s hopeful remark, that “the science of Spiritualism being still in its infancy, we may hope for more light on this question,” we fear we must reply, that *it is not through “dark cabinets” that this light will ever break.*²

It is not always the minds, which are the most “scientifically trained,” that are the best in matters of simple common sense and honest truth.

Have they not, these Titans of thought, dragged down God from His hiding-place, and given us instead a protoplasm?

It is simply ridiculous and absurd to require from every investigator who comes forward as a witness to the marvels of the day and psychological phenomena the diploma of a master of arts and sciences. The experience of the past forty years is an evidence that it is not always the minds which are the most “scientifically trained” that are the best in [222] matters of simple common sense and honest truth. Nothing blinds like fanaticism, or a one-sided view of a question. We may take as an illustration Oriental magic or ancient spiritualism, as well as the modern phenomena. Hundreds, nay thousands of perfectly trustworthy witnesses, returning from residence and travels in the East, have testified to the fact that uneducated fakirs, sheiks, dervishes, and lamas have, in their presence, without confederates or mechanical appliances, produced wonders. They have affirmed that the phenomena exhibited by them were in contravention of all the *known* laws of science, and thus tended to prove the existence of many yet unknown occult potencies in nature, seemingly directed by preterhuman intelligences. What has been the attitude assumed by our scientists

¹ Epes Sargent, *Proof Palpable of Immortality*, p. 45

² See *Matthew* xxiv, 26

toward this subject? How far did the testimony of the most “scientifically” trained minds make impression on their own? Did the investigations of Professors Hare and de Morgan, of Crookes and Wallace, de Gasparin and Thury, Wagner and Butlerof, etc., shake for one moment their scepticism? How were the personal experiences of Jaccoliot with the fakirs of India received, or the psychological elucidations of Professor Perty, of Geneva, viewed? How far does the loud cry of mankind, craving for palpable and demonstrated signs of a God, an individual soul, and of eternity, affect them; and what is their response? They pull down and destroy every vestige of spiritual things, but they erect nothing. “We cannot get such signs with either retorts or crucibles,” they say; “hence, it’s all but a delusion!” In this age of cold reason and prejudice, even the Church has to look to science for help. Creeds built on sand, and high-towering but rootless dogmas, crumble down under the cold breath of research, and pull down *true* religion in their fall. But the longing for some outward sign of a God and a life hereafter remains as tenaciously as ever in the human heart. In vain is all sophistry of science; it can never stifle the voice of nature. Only her representatives have poisoned the pure waters of simple faith, and now humanity mirrors itself in waters made turbid with all the mud stirred up from the bottom of the once pure spring. The anthropomorphic God of our fathers is replaced by anthropomorphic monsters; and what is still worse, by the reflection of humanity itself in these waters, whose ripples send it back the distorted images of truth and facts as evoked by its misguided imagination. “It is not a miracle that we want,” writes the Reverend Brooke Herford, “but to find palpable evidence of the spiritual and the divine. It is not to the prophets that men cry for such a ‘sign,’ but rather to the scientists. Men feel as if all that groping about in the foremost verge or innermost recesses of creation should bring the investigator at length close to the deep, underlying facts of all things, to some unmistakable signs of God.” The signs are there, and the scientists too; what can we expect more of them, now [223] that they have done so well their duty? Have they not, these Titans of thought, dragged down God from His hiding-place, and given us instead a *protoplasm*?

A presumptuous scepticism that rejects facts and statements, without diligent examination of the underlying truth, is more injurious than unquestioning credulity.

At the Edinburgh meeting of the British Association, in 1871, Sir William Thomson said: “Science is bound by the everlasting law of honour to face fearlessly every problem which can fairly be presented to it.” In his turn, Professor Huxley remarks: “With regard to the miracle-question, I can only say that the word ‘impossible’ is not, to my mind, applicable to matters of philosophy.” The great Humboldt remarks that “a presumptuous scepticism that rejects facts without examination of their truth is, in some respects, more injurious than unquestioning credulity.”

These men have proved untrue to their own teachings. The opportunity afforded them by the opening of the Orient, to investigate for themselves the phenomena alleged by every traveller to take place in those countries, has been rejected. Did our physiologists and pathologists ever so much as think of availing themselves of it to settle this most momentous subject of human thought? Oh, no; for they would never dare. It is not to be expected that the principal Academicians of Europe and America

should undertake a joint journey to Thibet and India, and investigate the fakir marvel on the spot! And were one of them to go as a solitary pilgrim and witness all the miracles of creation, in that land of wonders, who, of his colleagues, could be expected to believe his testimony?

It would be as tedious as superfluous to begin a restatement of facts, so forcibly put by others. A.R. Wallace and W. Howitt,¹ have repeatedly and cleverly described the thousand and one absurd errors into which the learned societies of France and England have fallen, through their blind scepticism. If Cuvier could throw aside the fossil excavated in 1828 by Boué, the French geologist, only because the anatomist thought himself wiser than his colleague, and would not believe that human skeletons could be found eighty feet deep in the mud of the Rhine; and if the French Academy could discredit the assertions of Boucher de Perthes, in 1846, only to be criticised in its turn in 1860, when the truth of de Perthes' discoveries and observations was fully confirmed by the whole body of geologists finding flint weapons in the drift-gravels of northern France; and if J. McEnery's testimony, in 1825, to the fact that he had discovered worked flints, together with the remains of extinct animals, in Kent's Hole Cavern,² was laughed at; and that of Godwin Austen to the same effect, in 1840, ridiculed still more, if that were possible; and all that excess of scientific scepticism and merriment could, in 1865, finally come to grief, and be shown to have been entirely [224] uncalled for; when, says Mr. Wallace, "all the previous reports for forty years have been confirmed, and have been shown to be even less wonderful than the reality"; who can be so credulous as to believe in the infallibility of our science? And why wonder at the exhibition of such a lack of moral courage in individual members of this great and stubborn body known as modern science?

Thus fact after fact has been discredited. From all sides we hear constant complaints. "Very little is known of psychology!" sighs one F.R.S. "We must confess that we know little, if anything, in physiology," says another. "Of all sciences, there is none which rests upon so uncertain a basis as medicine," reluctantly testifies a third. "What do we know about the presumed nervous fluids? . . . Nothing, as yet," puts in a fourth one; and so on in every branch of science. And, meanwhile, phenomena, surpassing in interest all others of nature, and to be solved only by physiology, psychology, and the "as yet unknown" fluids, are either rejected as delusions, or, if even true, "do not interest" scientists. Or, what is still worse, when a *subject*, whose organism exhibits in itself the most important features of such occult though natural potencies, offers his person for an investigation, instead of an honest experiment being attempted with him he finds himself entrapped by a scientist (?) and paid for his trouble with a sentence of three months' imprisonment! This is indeed promising.³

¹ See Wallace, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, and W. Howitt, *History of the Supernatural*, Vol. II.

² See Wallace's paper read before the Dialectical Society, in 1871, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

³ [Cf. endnote 32 by Boris de Zirkoff.]

The perpetual lamps of alchemy stand for the incorruptible and immortal spirit.

It is easy to comprehend that a fact given in 1731, testifying to another fact which happened during the papacy of Paul III, for instance, is disbelieved in 1876. And when scientists are told that the Romans preserved lights in their sepulchres for countless years by the *oiliness of gold*; and that one of such ever-burning lamps was found brightly burning in the tomb of Tullia, the daughter of Cicero, notwithstanding that the tomb had been shut up fifteen hundred and fifty years,¹ — they have a certain right to doubt, and even disbelieve the statement, until they assure themselves, on the evidence of their own senses, that such a thing is possible. In such a case they can reject the testimony of all the ancient and medieval philosophers. The burial of living fakirs and their subsequent resuscitation, after thirty days of inhumation, may have a suspicious look to them. So also with the self-infliction of mortal wounds, and the exhibition of their own bowels to the persons present by various lamas, who heal such wounds almost instantaneously.

For certain men who deny the evidence of their own senses as to phenomena produced in their own country, and before numerous witnesses, the narratives to be found in classical books, and in the notes of [225] travellers, must of course seem absurd. But what we will never be able to understand is the collective stubbornness of the Academies, in the face of such bitter lessons in the past, to these institutions which have so often “darkened counsel by words without knowledge.” Like the Lord answering Job “out of the whirlwind,” magic can say to modern science:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding!²

And, who art thou who dare say to nature,

Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

But what matters it if they do deny? Can they prevent phenomena taking place in the four corners of the world, if their scepticism were a thousand times more bitter? Fakirs will still be buried and resuscitated, gratifying the curiosity of European travellers; and lamas and Hindu ascetics will wound, mutilate, and even disembowel themselves, and find themselves all the better for it; and the denials of the whole world will not blow sufficiently to extinguish the perpetually-burning lamps in certain of the subterranean crypts of India, Thibet, and Japan. One of such lamps is mentioned by the Rev. S. Mateer,³ of the London Mission. In the temple of Trivandrum, in the kingdom of Travancore, South India,

. . . there is a deep well inside the temple, into which immense riches are thrown year by year, and in another place, in a hollow covered by a stone, a great golden lamp, which was lit over 120 years ago, still continues burning,

¹ N. Bailey, *Φιλολογος*, 2nd ed., 1731

² [*Job xxxviii*, 4]

³ [Cf. *The Land of Charity*, p. 161]

— says this missionary in his description of the place. Catholic missionaries attribute these lamps, as a matter of course, to the obliging services of the devil. The more prudent Protestant divine mentions the fact, and makes no commentary. The Abbé Huc has seen and examined one of such lamps, and so have other people whose good luck it has been to win the confidence and friendship of Eastern lamas and divines. No more can be denied the wonders seen by Captain Lane in Egypt; the Benares experiences of Jacolliot and those of Sir Charles Napier; the levitations of human beings in broad daylight, and which can be accounted for only on the explanation given in the Introductory chapter of the present work.¹ Such levitations are testified to — besides Mr. Crookes — by Professor Perty, who shows them produced in open air, and lasting sometimes twenty minutes; all these phenomena and many more have happened, do, and will happen in every country of this globe, and that in spite of all the sceptics and scientists that ever were evolved out of the Silurian mud.

Among the ridiculed claims of alchemy is that of the *perpetual* lamps. If we tell the reader that we have seen such, we may be asked — in case that [226] the sincerity of our personal belief is not questioned — how we can tell that the lamps we have observed are perpetual, as the period of our observation was but limited? Simply that, as we know the ingredients employed, and the manner of their construction, and the natural law applicable to the case, we are confident that our statement can be corroborated upon investigation in the proper quarter. What that quarter is, and from whom that knowledge can be learned, our critics must discover, by taking the pains we did. Meanwhile, however, we will quote a few of the 173 authorities who have written upon the subject. None of these, as we recollect, have asserted that these sepulchral lamps would burn perpetually, but only for an indefinite number of years, and instances are recorded of their continuing alight for many centuries. It will not be denied that, if there is a natural law by which a lamp can be made without replenishment to burn ten years, there is no reason why the same law could not cause the combustion to continue one hundred or one thousand years.

Among the many well-known personages who firmly believed and strenuously asserted that such sepulchral lamps burned for several hundreds of years, and would have continued to burn *maybe* forever, had they not been extinguished, or the vessels broken by some accident, we may reckon the following names:

Clemens Alexandrinus, Hermolaus Barbarus, Appian, Burattinus, Citesius, Coelius, Foxius, Costæus, Casalius, Cedrenus, Delrius, Ericius, Gesnerus, Jacobonus, Leander, Libavius, Lazius, Pico della Mirándola, Eugenius Philalethes, Licetus, Maiolus, Maturantius, Baptista Porta, Pancirollus, Ruscilius, Scardeonius, Ludovicus Vives, Volateranus, Paracelsus, several Arabian alchemists, and finally, Pliny, Solinus, Kircher, and Albertus Magnus.²

¹ See article on “Æthrobasy.”

² [Cf. Bibliographical endnote 32 by Boris de Zirkoff.]

The Egyptians, more than any other people, hoped that their ever-burning lamp would help the material soul to part with its earthly dwelling, and unite forever with its divine counterpart.

The discovery is claimed by the ancient Egyptians, those sons of the Land of Chemistry.¹ At least, they were a people who used these lamps far more than any other nation, on account of their religious doctrines. The astral soul of the mummy was believed to be lingering about the body for the whole space of the three thousand years of the circle of necessity. Attached to it by a magnetic thread, which could be broken but by its own exertion, the Egyptians hoped that the ever-burning lamp, symbol of their incorruptible and immortal spirit, would at last decide the more material soul to part with its earthly dwelling, and unite forever with its divine SELF. Therefore lamps were hung in the sepulchres of the rich. Such lamps are often found in the subterranean caves of the dead, and Licetus has written a large folio to prove that in his time, whenever a sepulchre was opened, a burning lamp was found within the tomb, but was [227] instantaneously extinguished on account of the *desecration*. T. Livius, Burrattinus, and Michael Schatta, in their letters to Kircher,² affirm that they found many lamps in the subterranean caves of old Memphis. Pausanias³ speaks of the golden lamp in the temple of Minerva at Athens, which he says was the workmanship of Callimachus, and burnt a whole year. Plutarch⁴ affirms that he saw one in the temple of Jupiter Ammon, and that the priests assured him that it had burnt continually for years, and though it stood in the open air, neither wind nor water could extinguish it. St. Augustine, the Catholic authority, also describes a lamp in the fane of Venus, of the same nature as the others, inextinguishable either by the strongest wind or by water.⁵ A lamp was found at Edessa, says Cedrenus, “which, being hidden at the top of a certain gate, burned 500 years.” But of all such lamps, the one mentioned by Maximus Olybius of Padua is by far the more wonderful. It was found near Ateste, and Scardeonius⁶ gives a glowing description of it:

In a large earthen urn was contained a lesser, and in that a burning lamp, which had continued so for 1500 years, by means of a most pure liquor contained in two bottles, one of gold and the other of silver. These are in the custody of Franciscus Maturantius, and are by him valued at an exceeding rate.⁷

Taking no account of exaggerations, and putting aside as mere unsupported negation the affirmation by modern science of the impossibility of such lamps, we would ask whether, in case these inextinguishable fires are found to have really existed in the ages of “miracles,” the lamps burning at Christian shrines and those of Jupiter, Minerva, and other Pagan deities, ought to be differently regarded. According to certain theologians, it would appear that the former (for Christianity also claims such

¹ *Psalms* cv, 23, 27. “The Land of Ham,” or חַם, *ham*; Sahidic, *κημε*; Coptic, *χημ*; whence the term alchemy and chemistry.

² A. Kircher, *Œdipus ægypt. theatr. hierogl.*, Vol. III, p. 554

³ [*Itinerary*, “Attica,” xxvi, 7]

⁴ [*On the Cessation of Oracles*, § 2]

⁵ [*De civitate Dei*, XXI, vi]

⁶ Lib. I, Class 3, *cap. ult.*

⁷ [Cf. Thos. Taylor, *Description of Greece by Pausanias*, London 1824, Vol. III, Notes, pp. 217-19]

lamps) have burned by a *divine*, miraculous power, and that the light of the latter, made by “heathen” art, was supported by the wiles of the devil. Kircher and Licetus¹ show that they were ordered in these two diverse ways. The lamp at Antioch, which burned 1500 years, in an open and public place, over the door of a church, was preserved by the “*power of God*,” who “hath made so infinite a number of stars to burn with perpetual light.” As to the Pagan lamps, St. Augustine assures us they were the work of the devil, “who deceives us in a thousand ways.” What more easy for Satan to do than represent a flash of light, or a bright flame to them who first enter into such a subterranean cave? This was [228] asserted by all good Christians during the Papacy of Paul III, when upon opening a tomb in the Appian Way, at Rome, there was found the entire body of a young girl swimming in a bright liquor which had so well preserved it, that the face was beautiful and like life itself. At her feet burned a lamp, whose flame vanished upon opening the sepulchre. From some engraved signs it was found to have been buried for over 1500 years, and supposed to have been the body of Tulliola, or Tullia, Cicero’s daughter.²

Chemists and physicists deny that perpetual lamps are possible, alleging that whatever is resolved into vapour or smoke cannot be permanent, but must consume; and as the oily nutriment of a lighted lamp is exhaled into a vapour, hence the fire cannot be perpetual for want of food. Alchemists, on the other hand, deny that all the nourishment of kindled fire must of necessity be converted into vapour. They say that there are things in nature which will not only resist the force of fire and remain in-consumable, but will also prove inextinguishable by either wind or water. In an old chemical work of the year 1705, called *Νεκροκηδεία*,³ the author gives a number of refutations of the claims of various alchemists. But though he denies that a fire can be made to burn *perpetually*, he is half-inclined to believe it possible that a lamp should burn several hundred years. Besides, we have a mass of testimony from alchemists who devoted years to these experiments and came to the conclusion that it was possible.

There are some peculiar preparations of gold, silver, and mercury; also of naphtha, petroleum, and other bituminous oils. Alchemists also name the oil of camphor and amber, the *Lapis asbestos seu Amianthus*, the *Lapis Carystius*, *Cyprius*, and *Linum vivum seu Creticum*, as employed for such lamps. They affirm that such matter can be prepared either of gold or silver, reduced to fluid, and indicate that gold is the fittest *pabulum* for their wondrous flame, as, of all metals, gold wastes the least when either heated or melted, and, moreover, can be made to reabsorb its oily humidity as soon as exhaled, so continuously feeding its own flame when it is once lighted. The Kabbalists assert that the secret was known to Moses, who had learned it from the Egyptians; and that the lamp ordered by the “Lord” to burn on the tabernacle, was an inextinguishable lamp.

¹ [De lucernis antiquorum]

² The details of this story may be found in the work of Erasmus Franciscus, who quotes from Pflaumerus, Pancirollus [Rerum memorabilium], and many others.

³ [Νεκροκηδεία, or the Art of Embalming, etc., by Thos. Greenhill, London, 1705]

And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure olive oil beaten for the light, *to cause the lamp to burn always.*¹

Licetus also denies that these lamps were prepared of metal, but on [229] page 44 of his work mentions a preparation of quicksilver filtrated seven times through white sand by fire, of which, he says, lamps were made that would burn perpetually. Both Maturantius and Citesius firmly believe that such a work can be done by a purely chemical process. This liquor of quicksilver was known among alchemists as *Aqua Mercurialis*, *Materia Metallorum*, *Perpetua Dispositio*, and *Materia prima Artis*, also *Oleum Vitri*. Tritenheim and Bartolomeo Korndorf both made preparations for the inextinguishable fire, and left their recipes for it.²

Asbestos, which was known to the Greeks under the name of *Ασβεστος*, or *inextinguishable*, is a kind of stone, which once set on fire [230] cannot be quenched, as Pliny and Solinus tell us. Albertus Magnus describes it as a stone of an iron colour, found mostly in Arabia. It is generally found covered with a hardly-perceptible oleaginous moisture, which upon being approached with a lighted candle will immediately catch fire. Many were the experiments made by chemists to extract from it this indissoluble oil, but they are alleged to have all failed. But, are our chemists prepared to say that the above operation is utterly impracticable? If this oil could once be extracted there can be no question but it would afford a perpetual fuel. The ancients might well boast of having had the secret of it, for, we repeat, there are experimenters living at this day who have done so successfully. Chemists who have vainly tried it, have asserted that the fluid or liquor chemically extracted from that stone was more of a watery than oily nature, and so impure and feculent that it could not burn; oth-

¹ *Exodus* xxvii, 20

² “R. *Sulphur. Alum u. t. a. ʒ iv*; sublime them into flowers to ʒ ij. of which add of crystalline *Venetian Borax* powdered ʒ j.; upon these affuse high rectified spirit of wine and digest it, then abstract it and pour on fresh; repeat this so often till the sulphur melts like wax, without any smoke, upon a hot plate of brass; this is for the *pabulum*, but the wick is to be prepared after this manner: gather the threads or thrums of the *Lapis asbestos*, to the thickness of your middle, and the length of your little finger; which done, put them into a *Venetian glass*, and covering them over with the aforesaid depurated sulphur or aliment, set the glass in sand for the space of twenty-four hours, so hot that the sulphur may bubble all the while. The wick being thus besmeared and anointed, is to be put into a glass like a scallop-shell, in such manner, that some part of it may lie above the mass of prepared sulphur; then setting this glass upon hot sand, you must melt the sulphur, so that it may lay hold of the wick, and when it is lighted, it will burn with a perpetual flame and you may set this *lamp* in any place where you please.”

The other is as follows:

“R. *Solis tosti*, lb. j.; affuse over it strong wine vinegar, and abstract it to the consistency of oil; then put on fresh vinegar and macerate and distil it as before. Repeat this four times successively, then put into this vinegar *vitri. antimonii subtilis s. lævigat*, lb. j.; set it on ashes in a close vessel for the space of six hours, to extract its tincture, decant the liquor, and put on fresh, and then extract it again; this repeat so often till you have got out all the redness. Coagulate your extractions to the consistency of oil, and then rectify them in *Balneo Mariæ* [*Bain-Marie*]. Then take the antimony, from which the tincture was extracted, and reduce it to a very fine meal, and so put it into a glass bolthead; pour upon it the rectified oil, which abstract and cohobate seven times, till such time as the powder has imbibed all the oil, and is quite dry. This extract again with spirit of wine, so often, till all the essence be got out of it, which put into a *Venice* matrass, well luted with paper five-fold, and then distil it so that the spirit being drawn off, there may remain at the bottom an inconsumable oil, to be used with a wick after the same manner with the sulphur we have described before.”

“These are the eternal lights of *Trithemius*,” says Libavius, his commentator, “which indeed, though they do not agree with the pertinacy of naphtha, yet these things can illustrate one another. Naphtha is not so durable as not to be burned, for it exhales and deflagrates, but if it be fixed by adding the juice of the *Lapis asbestinos*, it can afford perpetual fuel,” — says this learned person. We may add that we have ourselves seen a lamp so prepared, and we are told that since it was first lighted on May 2nd, 1871, it has not gone out. As we know the person who is making the experiment incapable to deceive any one, being himself an ardent experimenter in Hermetic secrets, we have no reason to doubt his assertion.

[Cf. Greenhill, *op. cit.*, p. 351 *et seq.*]

ers affirmed, on the contrary, that the oil, as soon as exposed to the air, became so thick and solid that it would hardly flow, and when lighted emitted no flame, but escaped in dark smoke; whereas the lamps of the ancients are alleged to have burned with the purest and brightest flame, without emitting the slightest smoke. Kircher, who shows the practicability of purifying it, thinks it so difficult as to be accessible only to the highest adepts of alchemy.

A Cypriote knight had both flax and linen made out of asbestos, which were cleaned by simply throwing them in the fire.

St. Augustine, who attributes the whole of these arts to the Christian scapegoat, the devil, is flatly contradicted by Ludovicus Vives,¹ who shows that all such would-be magical operations are the work of man's industry and deep study of the hidden secrets of nature, wonderful and miraculous as they may seem. H. Podocatharo, a Cypriote knight,² had both flax and linen made out of another asbestos, which T. Porcacchi says³ he saw at the house of this knight. Pliny calls this flax *linum vivum*,⁴ and Indian flax, and says it is done out of *asbestinon*, a kind of flax of which they made cloth that was to be cleaned by throwing it in the fire. He adds that it was as precious as pearls and diamonds, for not only was it very rarely found but exceedingly difficult to be woven, on account of the shortness of the threads. Being beaten flat with a hammer, it is soaked in warm water, and when dried its filaments can be easily divided into threads like flax and woven into cloth. Pliny asserts he has seen some towels made of it, and assisted in an experiment of purifying them by fire.⁵ Baptista Porta also states that he found the same at Venice, in the hands of a Cyprian lady; he calls this discovery of Alchemy a *secretum optimum*.

Dr. Grew, in his description of the curiosities in Gresham College [231] (seventeenth century),⁶ believes the art, as well as the use of such linen, altogether lost, but it appears that it was not quite so, for we find the Museum Septalius boasting of the possession of thread, ropes, paper, and network done of this material as late as 1726; some of these articles made, moreover, by the own hand of Septalius, as we learn in Greenhill's *Art of Embalming*.⁷ Says the author:

Grew seems to make *Asbestinus Lapis* and *Amianthus* all one, and calls them in English the thrum-stone; he says it grows in short threads or thrums, from about a quarter of an inch to an inch in length, parallel and glossy, as fine as those small, single threads the silk-worms spin, and very flexible like to flax or tow.

¹ Commentary upon St. Augustine's *The City of God* (lib. xxii)

² The author of *De rebus Cypriis*, 1566

³ [*Funerali Antichi*, etc., Venetia 1574, 1591]

⁴ [Or asbestine, a mineral compound composed of pure fibrous magnesium silicate, with physical characteristics between those of asbestos and talc.]

⁵ [*Natural History*, XIX, iv]

⁶ *Catalogue of Curiosities at Gresham College*, London 1681

⁷ p. 361

A similarly made gown, such as the Buddhist monks wear, thrown into a large pit full of glowing coals and taken out two hours afterward, was as clear as if it had been washed with soap and water.

That the secret is not altogether lost is proved by the fact that some Buddhist convents in China and Thibet are in possession of it. Whether made of the fibre of one or the other of such stones, we cannot say, but we have seen in a monastery of female Talapoin^s,¹ a yellow gown, such as the Buddhist monks wear, thrown into a large pit, full of glowing coals, and taken out two hours afterward as clear as if it had been washed with soap and water.

Similar severe trials of asbestos having occurred in Europe and America in our own times, the substance is being applied to various industrial purposes, such as roofing-cloth, incombustible dresses and fire-proof safes. A very valuable deposit on Staten Island, in New York harbour, yields the mineral in bundles, like dry wood, with fibres of several feet in length. The finer variety of asbestos, called *αμιαντος* (undefiled) by the ancients, took its name from its white, satin-like lustre.

The wick of certain perpetual lamps was made out of Carystian stone.²

The ancients made the wick of their perpetual lamps from another stone also, which they called *Lapis Carystius*. The inhabitants of the city of Carystos seemed to have made no secret of it, as Matthæus Raderus³ says in his work⁴ that they

. . . kemb'd, spun, and wove this downy stone into mantles, table linen, and the like, which when foul they purified again with fire instead of water.

¹ [Buddhist monks]

² [Cf. excerpt from James Yates, *Textrinum Antiquorum: An Account of the Art of Weaving Among the Ancients*, Part I. London: Taylor & Walton, 1843; ch. I, pp. 356-57:

The fullest account of the properties and uses of Asbestos is contained in the following passage from Sotacus, a Greek author who wrote on Stones. (Sotacus is several times quoted by Pliny, L. xxxvi, xxxvii, as a foreign writer on Stones. The reading *Σωτακου* in Apollonius is conjectural instead of *Τακου*. But the necessity and correctness of the emendation cannot be disputed.)

The passage occurs in the *Historiæ Commentitiæ*, attributed to Apollonius Dyscolus (*cap.* 36). The Carystian stone (*ο Καρυστιος λεγομενος λιθος*) has woolly and coloured appendages (*επιφυσεις*), which are spun and woven into napkins (*χειρεκμαγεια*). This substance is also twisted into wicks, which, when burnt, are bright, but do not consume. The napkins, when dirty (*των εκμαγειων των ρυπαινομενων*), are not washed with water, but a fire is made of sticks (*αλλα κληματις καιεται*), and then the napkin (*το εκμαγειου*) is put into it. The dirt (*ρυπος*) disappears, and the napkin is rendered white and pure by the fire, and is applicable to the same purposes as before. The wicks remain burning with oil continually without being consumed. This stone is produced in Carystus, from which it has its name, and in great abundance in Cyprus under rocks to the left of Elmæum, as you go from Gerandros to Soli (*Πολυς δε εν Κυπρω, καταβαινοντων απο του Γερανδρου ως επι Σολους πορευομενοις, εν αριστερα του Ελμαιου υποκατω πεντρων*).

“At Carystus,” says Strabo, “under Mount Ocha in Eubœa is produced the stone, which is combed and woven so as to make napkins (*χειρομακτρα*) or handkerchiefs. When these have become dirty, instead of being washed, they are thrown into a flame and thus purified.” (Lib. x, p. 19, ed. Sieb. This passage is quoted by Stephanus of Byzantium, v. *Καρυστιος*) — ED. PHIL.]

³ [A learned Jesuit, 1561–1634, a man of piety and erudition, and an able teacher.]

⁴ *Comment. on the 77th Epigram of the IXth Book of Martial*. [Cf. Greenhill, *op. cit.*, p. 351 *et seq.*]

Pausanias, in “Attica,”¹ and Plutarch² also assert that the wicks of lamps were made from this stone; but Plutarch adds that it was no more to be found in his time. Licetus is inclined to believe that the perpetual lamps used by the ancients in their sepulchres had no wicks at all, as very few have been found; but Ludovicus Vives is of a contrary opinion and affirms that he has seen quite a number of them.

Licetus, moreover, is firmly persuaded that a . . .

. . . *pabulum* for fire may be given with such an equal temperament as cannot be consumed but [232] after a long series of ages, and so that neither the matter shall exhale but strongly resist the fire, nor the fire consume the matter, but be restrained by it, as it were with a chain, from flying upward.

To this, Sir Thomas Browne, speaking of lamps which have burned many hundred years, included in small bodies, observes that . . .

. . . this proceeds from the purity of the oil, which yields no fuliginous³ exhalations to suffocate the fire; for if air had nourished the flame, it had not continued many minutes, for it would have been spent and wasted by the fire.⁴

But he adds,

. . . the art of preparing this inconsumable oil is lost.

Not quite; and time will prove it, though all that we now write should be doomed to fail, like so many other truths.

A little philosophy inclineth a man’s mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth man’s mind about to religion.

We are told, in behalf of science, that she accepts no other mode of investigation than observation and experiment. Agreed; and have we not the records of say three thousand years of observation of facts going to prove the occult powers of man? As to experiment, what better opportunity could have been asked than the so-called modern phenomena have afforded? In 1869, various scientific Englishmen were invited by the London Dialectical Society to assist in an investigation of these phenomena. Let us see what our philosophers replied. Professor Huxley wrote:

I have no time for such an inquiry, which would involve much trouble and (unless it were unlike all inquiries of that kind I have known) much annoyance . . . I take no interest in the subject . . . but supposing the phenomena to be genuine — they do not interest me.⁵

¹ [Itinerary, “Attica,” xxvi]

² *On the Cessation of Oracles*, § 2, 43

³ [sooty]

⁴ *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, Book III, p. 161; London 1636

⁵ London Dialectical Society’s *Report on Spiritualism*, p. 229

Mr. George H. Lewes expresses a wise thing in the following sentence:

When any man says that phenomena are produced by no known physical laws, he declares he knows the laws by which they are produced.¹

Professor Tyndall expresses doubt as to the possibility of good results at any *séance* which he might attend. His presence, according to the opinion of Mr. C. Varley, throws everything in confusion.² Professor Carpenter writes,

I have satisfied myself by personal investigation, that, whilst a great number of what pass as such [*i.e.*, spiritual manifestations] are the results of intentional imposture, and many others of self-deception, there are certain phenomena which are quite genuine, and must be considered as fair subjects of scientific study . . . the source of these phenomena does not lie in any communication *ab-extra*, but [they] depend upon the *subjective* condition of the individual which operates according to certain recognized physiological laws . . . the process to which I have given the name “*unconscious cerebration*” . . . performs a [233] large part in the production of the phenomena known as spiritualistic.³

And it is thus that the world is apprised through the organ of exact science, that *unconscious cerebration* has acquired the faculty of making the guitars fly in the air and forcing furniture to perform various clownish tricks!

So much for the opinions of the English scientists. The Americans have not done much better. In 1857, a committee of Harvard University warned the public against investigating this subject, which “corrupts the morals and degrades the intellect.” They called it, furthermore, “a contaminating influence, which surely tends to lessen the truth of man and the purity of woman.” Later, when Professor Robert Hare, the great chemist, defying the opinions of his contemporaries, investigated spiritualism, and became a believer, he was immediately declared *non compos mentis*; and in 1874, when one of the New York daily papers addressed a circular letter to the principal scientists of this country, asking them to investigate, and offering to pay the expenses, they, like the guests bidden to the supper, “with one consent, began to make excuses.”

Yet, despite the indifference of Huxley, the jocularly of Tyndall, and the “unconscious cerebration” of Carpenter, many a scientist as noted as either of them, has investigated the unwelcome subject, and, overwhelmed with the evidence, become converted. And another scientist, and a great author — although not a spiritualist — bears this honourable testimony:

That the spirits of the dead occasionally revisit the living, or haunt their former abodes, has been in all ages, in all European countries, a fixed belief, not confined to rustics, but participated in by the intelligent . . . If human testimony on such subjects can be of any value, there is a body of evidence reaching from the

¹ London Dialectical Society’s *Report on Spiritualism*, p. 230

² *ibid.*, p. 265

³ *ibid.*, p. 267

remotest ages to the present time, as *extensive and unimpeachable as is to be found* in support of anything whatever.¹

Unfortunately, human scepticism is a stronghold capable of defying any amount of testimony. And to begin with Mr. Huxley, our men of science accept but so much as suits them, and no more.

Oh shame to men! devil with devil damn'd
Firm concord holds — *men* only disagree
Of creatures rational . . .²

How can we account for such divergence of views among men taught out of the same textbooks and deriving their knowledge from the same [234] source? Clearly, this is but one more corroboration of the truism that no two men see the same thing exactly alike. This idea is admirably formulated by Dr. J.J. Garth Wilkinson, in a letter to the Dialectical Society. Says he,

I have long been convinced, by the experience of my life as a pioneer in several heterodoxies which are rapidly becoming orthodoxies, that nearly all truth is temperamental to us, or given in the affections and intuitions, and that discussion and inquiry do little more than feed temperament.

This profound observer might have added to his experience that of Bacon, who remarks that

. . . a *little* philosophy inclineth a man's mind to atheism, but *depth* in philosophy bringeth man's mind about to religion.

That which science today calls gravitation, the ancients and the mediæval Hermetists called magnetism, attraction, and affinity.³

The occult properties of electricity and magnetism were known to the theurgists of the earliest Mysteries recorded in history, those of Samothrace, thousands of years prior to the historical period.

Magic in prehistoric periods had a part in the mysteries. The greatest phenomena, the so-called miracles, rested on the arcane knowledge of the ancient priests of physics and all the branches of chemistry, or rather alchemy.

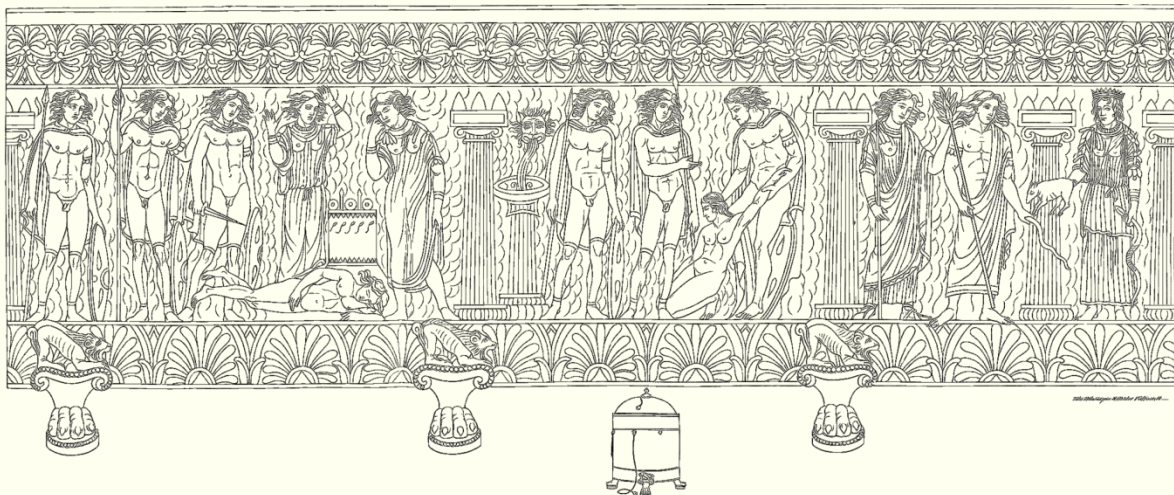
Professor Carpenter vaunts the advanced philosophy of the present day which “ignores no fact however strange that can be attested by valid evidence”; and yet he would be the first to reject the claims of the ancients to philosophical and scientific knowledge, although based upon evidence quite “as valid” as that which supports the pretensions of men of our times to philosophical or scientific distinction. In the department of science, let us take for example the subjects of electricity and electro-magnetism, which have exalted the names of Franklin and Morse to so high a place

¹ Draper, *The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, pp. 120-21

² Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book II

³ [Consult “The influence of geomagnetism on weather and man,” in our Masters Speak Series. — ED. PHIL.]

upon our roll of fame. Six centuries before the Christian era, Thales is said to have discovered the electric properties of amber; and yet the later researches of Schweigger, as given in his extensive works on symbolism, have thoroughly demonstrated that all the ancient mythologies were based on the science of natural philosophy, and show that the most occult properties of electricity and magnetism were known to the theurgists of the earliest Mysteries recorded in history, those of Samothrace. Diodorus of Sicily, Herodotus, and Sanchoniathon, the Phœnician — the oldest of historians — tell us that these Mysteries originated in the night of time, centuries and probably thousands of years prior to the historical period. One of the best proofs of it we find in a most remarkable picture, in Raoul-Rochette's *Monuments inédits d'antiquité figurée*,¹ in which, like the "erect-haired Pan," all the figures have their hair streaming out in every direction — except the central figure of the Kabeirian Demeter, from whom the power issues, and one other, a kneeling man.²



The picture, according to Schweigger, evidently represents a part of the ceremony of initiation. And yet it is not so long since the elementary works on natural philosophy began to be ornamented with cuts of *electrified* heads, with hair [235] standing out in all directions, under the influence of the electric fluid. Schweigger shows that a *lost natural philosophy of antiquity* was connected with the most important religious ceremonies. He demonstrates in the amplest manner, that *magic* in the prehistoric periods had a part in the mysteries and that the greatest phenomena, the so-called miracles — whether Pagan, Jewish, or Christian — rested in fact on the arcane knowledge of the ancient priests of physics and all the branches of chemistry, or rather alchemy.

In chapter XI,³ which is entirely devoted to the wonderful achievements of the ancients, we propose to demonstrate our assertions more fully.⁴ We will show, on the

¹ [Paris 1833, Plate 58]

² Ennemoser, *The History of Magic*, Vol. II; and Schweigger, *Introduction to Mythology through Natural History*, Halle, 1836; pp. 132, 228

³ ["Psychological and Physical Marvels"]

⁴ [Endnote 33 by Boris de Zirkoff: This statement is correct only within certain limits. Chapter XIV is by far the most important chapter in *Isis Unveiled* in regard to the achievements of the ancients. According to Col. Olcott (*Old Diary Leaves* i, 211), portions of chapter XIV were precipitated for Blavatsky by one of the Adept-Brothers.]

evidence of the most trustworthy classics, that at a period far anterior to the siege of Troy, the learned priests of the sanctuaries were thoroughly acquainted with electricity and even lightning-conductors. We will now add but a few more words before closing the subject.

The twins brothers, Castor and Pollux, are personifications of the twin polarity of electricity and magnetism.

The Dioscouroi constantly die and return to life together for it is absolutely necessary that one should die that the other may live.

The theurgists so well understood the minutest properties of magnetism, that, without possessing the lost key to their arcana, but depending wholly upon what was known in their modern days of electro-magnetism, Schweigger and Ennemoser have been able to trace the identity of the “twin brothers,” the Dioscouroi, with the polarity of electricity and magnetism. Symbolical myths, previously supposed to be meaningless fictions, are now found to be “the cleverest and at the same time most profound expressions of a strictly scientifically defined truth of nature,” according to Ennemoser.¹

In their unbounded glorification of matter, our physicists proclaim matter the sole and autocratic sovereign of a Boundless Universe.

If they could, they would forcibly divorce matter from her consort, and place the widowed queen on the great throne of nature made vacant by the exiled spirit.

Our physicists pride themselves on the achievements of our century and exchange antiphonal hymns of praise. The eloquent diction of their class lectures, their flowery phraseology, require but a slight modification to change these lectures into melodious sonnets. Our modern Petrarchs, Dantes, and Torquato Tassos rival with the troubadours of old in poetical effusion. In their unbounded glorification of matter, they sing the amorous commingling of the wandering atoms, and the loving interchange of protoplasms, and lament the coquettish fickleness of “forces” which play so provokingly at hide-and-seek with our grave professors in the great drama of life, called by them “force-correlation.” Proclaiming matter sole and autocratic sovereign of the Boundless Universe, they would forcibly divorce her from her consort, and place the widowed queen on the great throne of nature made vacant by the exiled spirit. And now, they try to make her appear as attractive as they can by incensing and worshipping at the shrine of their own building. Do they forget, or are they utterly unaware of the fact, that in the absence of its [236] legitimate sovereign, this throne is but a whitened sepulchre, inside of which all is rottenness and corruption! That matter without the spirit which vivifies it, and of which it is but the “gross purgation,” to use a Hermetic expression, is nothing but a soulless corpse, whose limbs, in order to be moved in predetermined directions, require an intelligent operator at the great galvanic battery called LIFE!

¹ *The History of Magic*, Vol. II, p. 23

The Platonic philosophy was one of order, system, and proportion.

It embraced the evolution of worlds and species, the correlation and conservation of energy, the transmutation of material form, and the indestructibility of matter and of spirit.

In what particular is the knowledge of the present century so superior to that of the ancients? When we say knowledge we do not mean that brilliant and clear definition of our modern scholars of particulars to the most trifling detail in every branch of exact science; of that tuition which finds an appropriate term for every detail insignificant and microscopic as it may be; a name for every nerve and artery in human and animal organisms, an appellation for every cell, filament, and rib in a plant; but the philosophical and ultimate expression of every truth in nature.

The greatest ancient philosophers are accused of shallowness and a superficiality of knowledge of those details in exact sciences of which the moderns boast so much. Plato is declared by his various commentators to have been utterly ignorant of the anatomy and functions of the human body; to have known nothing of the uses of the nerves to convey sensations; and to have had nothing better to offer than vain speculations concerning physiological questions. He has simply generalized the divisions of the human body, they say, and given nothing reminding us of anatomical facts. As to his own views on the human frame, the microcosmos being in his ideas the image in miniature of the macrocosmos, they are much too transcendental to be given the least attention by our exact and materialistic sceptics. The idea of this frame being, as well as the universe, formed out of triangles, seems preposterously ridiculous to several of his translators. Alone of the latter, Professor Jowett, in his introduction to the *Timæus*, honestly remarks that the modern physical philosopher,

. . . hardly allows to his notions the merit of being “the dead men’s bones” out of which he has himself risen to a higher knowledge;¹

forgetting how much the metaphysics of olden times has helped the “physical” sciences of the present day. If, instead of quarrelling with the insufficiency and at times absence of terms and definitions strictly scientific in Plato’s works, we analyze them carefully, the *Timæus*, alone, will be found to contain within its limited space the germs of every new discovery. The circulation of the blood and the law of gravitation are clearly mentioned, though the former fact, it may be, is not so clearly defined as to withstand the reiterated attacks of modern [237] science; for according to Prof. Jowett, the specific discovery that the blood flows out at one side of the heart through the arteries, and returns through the veins at the other, was unknown to him, though Plato was perfectly aware “that blood is a fluid in constant motion.”

¹ B. Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato* (1871), Vol. II, § 8

Plato's method, like that of geometry, was to descend from universals to particulars.

Plato's method, like that of geometry, was to descend from universals to particulars. Modern science vainly seeks a first cause among the permutations of molecules; the former sought and found it amid the majestic sweep of worlds. For him it was enough to know the great scheme of creation and to be able to trace the mightiest movements of the universe through their changes to their ultimates. The petty details, whose observation and classification have so taxed and demonstrated the patience of modern scientists, occupied but little of the attention of the old philosophers. Hence, while a fifth-form boy of an English school can prate more learnedly about the little things of physical science than Plato himself, yet, on the other hand, the dullest of Plato's disciples could tell more about great cosmic laws and their mutual relations, and demonstrate a familiarity with, and control over, the occult forces which lie behind them, than the most learned professor in the most distinguished academy of our day.

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

The unprofitableness of modern scientific research is evidenced in the fact that while we have a name for the most trivial particle of mineral, plant, animal, and man, the wisest of our teachers are unable to tell us anything definite about the vital force which produces the changes in these several kingdoms. It is necessary to seek further for corroboration of this statement than the works of our highest scientific authorities themselves.

It requires no little moral courage in a man of eminent professional position to do justice to the acquirements of the ancients, in the face of a public sentiment which is content with nothing else than their abasement. When we meet with a case of the kind we gladly lay a laurel at the feet of the bold and honest scholar. Such is Professor Jowett, Master of Balliol College, and Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford, who, in his translation of Plato's works, speaking of "the physical philosophy of the ancients as a whole," gives them the following [238] credit:

- 1 "That the nebular theory was the received belief of the early physicists." Therefore it could not have rested, as Draper asserts,¹ upon the telescopic discovery made by Sir Wm. Herschel.
- 2 "That the development of animals out of frogs who came to land, and of man out of the animals, was held by Anaximenes in the sixth century before Christ." The professor might have added that this theory antedated Anaximenes by

¹ *The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, p. 240

some thousands of years, perhaps; that it was an accepted doctrine among Chaldeans, and that Darwin's evolution of species and monkey theory are of an antediluvian origin.

- 3 "That, even by Philolaus and the early Pythagoreans, the earth was held to be a body like the other stars revolving in space."¹ Thus Galileo, studying some Pythagorean fragments, which are shown by Reuchlin to have yet existed in the days of the Florentine mathematician;² being, moreover, familiar with the doctrines of the old philosophers, but reasserted an astronomical doctrine which prevailed in India at the remotest antiquity.
- 4 The ancients " . . . thought that there was a sex in plants as well as in animals." Thus our modern naturalists had but to follow in the steps of their predecessors.
- 5 "That musical notes depended on the relative length or tension of the strings from which they were emitted, and were measured by ratios of number."
- 6 "That mathematical laws pervaded the world and even qualitative differences were supposed to have their origin in number"; and
- 7 "The annihilation of matter was denied by them, and held to be a *transformation* only."

"Although one of these discoveries might have been supposed to be a happy guess," adds Prof. Jowett, "we can hardly attribute them all to mere coincidences."³

In short, the Platonic philosophy was one of order, system, and proportion; it embraced the evolution of worlds and species, the correlation and conservation of energy, the transmutation of material form, the indestructibility of matter and of spirit. Their position in the latter respect being far in advance of modern science, and binding, the arch of their [239] philosophical system with a keystone at once perfect and immovable. If science has made such colossal strides during these latter days — if we have such clearer ideas of natural law than the ancients — why are our inquiries as to the nature and source of life unanswered? If the modern laboratory is so much richer in the fruits of experimental research than those of the olden time, how comes it that we make no step except on paths that were trodden long before the Christian era? How does it happen that the most advanced standpoint that has been reached in our times only enables us to see, in the dim distance up the Alpine path of knowledge, the monumental proofs that earlier explorers have left to mark the plateaus they had reached and occupied?

¹ Plutarch, *Lives*, "Numa," § xi

² Some Kabbalistic scholars assert that the Greek original Pythagoric sentences of Sextus, which are now said to be lost, existed still, in a convent at Florence, at that time, and that Galileo was acquainted with these writings. They add, moreover, that a treatise on astronomy, a manuscript by Archytas, a direct disciple of Pythagoras, in which were noted all the most important doctrines of their school, was in the possession of Galileo. Had some Ruffinus got hold of it, he would no doubt have perverted it, as Presbyter Ruffinus has perverted the above-mentioned sentences of Sextus, replacing them with a fraudulent version, the authorship of which he sought to ascribe to a certain Bishop Sextus. See Taylor's Introduction to *Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras*, London 1818, p. xvii.

³ B. Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato* (1871), Vol. II, Introduction to the *Timæus*, § 8

If modern masters are so much in advance of the old ones, why do they not restore to us the lost arts of our postdiluvian forefathers? Why do they not give us the unfading colours of Luxor — the bright vermilion and dazzling blue which decorate the walls of this place, and are as bright as on the first day of their application; the Tyrian purple; the indestructible cement of the pyramids and of ancient aqueducts; the Damascus blade, which can be turned like a corkscrew in its scabbard without breaking; the gorgeous, unparalleled tints of the stained glass that is found amid the dust of old ruins and beams in the windows of ancient cathedrals; and the secret of the true malleable glass? And if chemistry is so little able to rival even with the early mediæval ages in some arts, why boast of achievements which, according to strong probability, were perfectly known thousands of years ago? The more archæology and philology advance, the more humiliating to our pride are the discoveries which are daily made, the more glorious testimony do they bear in behalf of those who, perhaps on account of the distance of their remote antiquity, have been until now considered ignorant flounders in the deepest mire of superstition.

Why should we forget that, ages before the prow of the adventurous Genoese clove¹ the Western waters, the Phœnician vessels had circumnavigated the globe, and spread civilization in regions now silent and deserted? What archæologist will dare assert that the same hand which planned the Pyramids of Egypt, Karnak, and the thousand ruins now crumbling to oblivion on the sandy banks of the Nile, did *not* erect the monumental Nagkon-Wat of Cambodia? or trace the hieroglyphics on the obelisks and doors of the deserted Indian village, newly discovered in British Columbia by Lord Dufferin? or those on the ruins of Palenque and Uxmal of Central America? Do not the relics we treasure in our museums — last mementos of the long “lost arts” — speak loudly in favour of ancient civilization? And do they not prove, over and over again, that nations and continents that have passed away have buried along with them arts and sciences, which neither the first crucible ever [240] heated in a mediæval cloister, nor the last cracked by a modern chemist have revived, nor will — at least, in the present century.

“They were not without some knowledge of optics,” Professor Draper magnanimously concedes to the ancients; others positively deny to them even that little. “The convex lens found at Nimrud shows that they were not unacquainted with magnifying instruments.”² Indeed? If they were not, all the classical authors must have lied. For, when Cicero tells us that he had seen the entire *Iliad* written on skin of such a miniature size, that it could easily be rolled up inside a nut-shell,³ and Pliny asserts that Nero had a ring with a small glass in it, through which he watched the performance of the gladiators at a distance⁴ — could audacity go farther? Truly, when we are told that Mauritius could see from the promontory of Sicily over the entire sea to the coast of Africa, with an instrument called *nauscopite*, we must either think that all these witnesses lied, or that the ancients were more than slightly acquainted with

¹ [passed through]

² *The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, p. 14

³ [According to Pliny, in *Naturalis Historia*, VII, xii, 85]

⁴ [*Naturalis Historia*, XXXVII, xvi]

optics and magnifying glasses. Wendell Phillips states that he has a friend who possesses an extraordinary ring,

. . . perhaps three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and on it is the naked figure of the god Hercules. By the aid of glasses, you can distinguish the interlacing muscles, and *count every separate hair on the eyebrows* . . . Rawlinson brought home a stone about twenty inches long and ten wide, containing an entire treatise on mathematics. It would be perfectly illegible without glasses . . .

In Dr. Abbott's Museum there is a ring of Cheops, to which Bunsen assigns 500 B.C. "The signet of the ring is about the size of a quarter of a dollar, and the engraving is *invisible* without the aid of glasses . . . [At] Parma, they will show you a gem once worn on the finger of Michelangelo Buonarroti, of which the engraving is 2,000 years old, and on which there are the figures of *seven* women. You must have the aid of glass in order to distinguish the forms at all . . . So the microscope," adds the learned lecturer, "instead of dating from our time, finds its brothers in the Books of Moses — and these are infant brothers."¹

The foregoing facts do not seem to show that the ancients had merely "some knowledge of optics." Therefore, totally disagreeing in this particular with Professor Fiske and his criticism of Professor Draper's *Conflict* in his *Unseen World*, the only fault we find with the admirable book of Draper is that, as an historical critic, he sometimes uses his own optical instruments in the wrong place. While, in order to magnify the atheism of the Pythagorean Bruno, he looks through convex lenses; [241] whenever talking of the knowledge of the ancients, he evidently sees things through *concave* ones.

It is simply worthy of admiration to follow in various modern works the cautious attempts of both pious Christians and sceptical, albeit very learned men, to draw a line of demarcation between what we are and what we are not to believe, in ancient authors. No credit is ever allowed [to] them without being followed by a qualifying caution. If Strabo tells us that ancient Nineveh was forty-seven miles in circumference, and his testimony is accepted, why should it be otherwise the moment he testifies to the accomplishment of Sibylline prophecies? Where is the common sense in calling Herodotus the "Father of History," and then accusing him, in the same breath, of silly gibberish, whenever he recounts marvellous manifestations, of which he was an eye-witness? Perhaps, after all, such a caution is more than ever necessary, now that our epoch has been christened the Century of Discovery. The disenchantment may prove too cruel for Europe. Gunpowder, which has long been thought an invention of R. Bacon and B. Schwartz, is now shown in the schoolbooks to have been used by the Chinese for levelling hills and blasting rocks, centuries before our era. Says Draper,

In the Museum of Alexandria there was a machine invented by Hero, the mathematician, a little more than 100 years B.C. It revolved by the agency of steam,

¹ [W. Phillips, *The Lost Arts*, pp. 15-16]

and was of the form that we should now call a reaction-engine . . . Chance had nothing to do with the invention of the modern steam-engine.¹

Europe prides herself upon the discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo, and now we are told that the astronomical observations of the Chaldeans extend back to within a hundred years of the flood; and Bunsen fixes the flood at not less than 10,000 years before our era.² Moreover, a Chinese emperor, more than 2,000 years before the birth of Christ (*i.e.*, before Moses) put to death his two chief astronomers for not predicting an eclipse of the sun.

It may be noted, as an example of the inaccuracy of current notions as to the scientific claims of the present century, that the discoveries of the indestructibility of matter and force-correlation, especially the latter, are heralded as among our crowning triumphs. It is “the most important discovery of the present century,” as Sir William Armstrong expressed it in his famous address as president of the British Association. But, this “important discovery” is no discovery after all. Its origin, apart from the undeniable traces of it to be found among the old philosophers, is lost in the dense shadows of prehistoric days. Its first vestiges are discovered [242] in the dreamy speculations of Vedic theology, in the doctrine of emanation and absorption, the Nirvana in short. John Eriugena³ outlined it in his bold philosophy in the eighth century, and we invite anyone to read his *De divisione naturæ*,⁴ who would convince himself of this truth. Science tells that when the theory of the indestructibility of matter (also a very, very old idea of Democritus, by the way) was demonstrated, it became necessary to extend it to force. No material particle can ever be lost; no part of the force existing in nature can vanish; hence, force was likewise proved indestructible, and its various manifestations or forces, under divers aspects, were shown to be mutually convertible, and but different modes of motion of the material particles. And thus was rediscovered the force-correlation. Mr. Grove, so far back as 1843, gave to each of these forces, such as heat, electricity, magnetism, and light, the character of convertibility; making them capable of being at one moment a cause, and at the next an effect.⁵ But whence come these forces, and whither do they go, when we lose sight of them? On this point science is silent.

The theory of “force-correlation,” though it may be in the minds of our contemporaries “the greatest discovery of the age,” can account for neither the beginning nor the end of one of such forces; neither can the theory point out the cause of it. Forces may be convertible, and one may produce the other, still, no exact science is able to explain the alpha and omega of the phenomenon. In what particular are we then in advance of Plato who, discussing in the *Timæus* the primary and secondary qualities of matter, and the feebleness of human intellect, is thus paraphrased by Jowett: “God knows the original qualities of things; man can only hope to attain to probab-

¹ *The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, p. 311

² *Egypt's Place in Universal History*, Vol. V, p. 88

³ [John Scotus Eriugena, c. 815–877, Irish theologian, neoplatonic philosopher, and poet.]

⁴ [*Peri Physeon* or Concerning Nature, 862-66]

⁵ W.R. Grove, *The Correlation of Physical Forces*, London 1843, Preface

ity.”¹ We have but to open one of the several pamphlets of Huxley and Tyndall to find precisely the same confession; but they improve upon Plato by not allowing even God to know more than themselves; and perhaps it may be upon this that they base their claims of superiority? The ancient Hindus founded their doctrine of emanation and absorption on precisely that law. The *To Ov*, the primordial point in the boundless circle, “whose circumference is nowhere, and the centre everywhere,” emanating from itself all things, and manifesting them in the visible universe under multifarious forms; the forms interchanging, commingling, and, after a gradual transformation from the pure spirit (or the Buddhistic “*nothing*”), into the grossest matter, beginning to recede and as gradually re-emerge into their primitive state, which is the absorption into Nirvana² — what else is this but correlation of forces? [243]

Science tells us that heat may be shown to develop electricity, electricity produce heat; and magnetism to evolve electricity, and *vice versa*. Motion, they tell us, results from motion itself, and so on, *ad infinitum*. This is the A B C of occultism and of the earliest alchemists. The indestructibility of matter and force being discovered and proved, the great problem of eternity is solved. What need have we more of spirit? Its uselessness is henceforth scientifically demonstrated!

In the same manner as lovers gradually advance from that beauty, which is apparent, to that which is divine; so the ancient priests attributed the alliance and sympathy between natural things to the underlying interconnectedness of all things.

The Divine Proclus pointed out certain mysterious peculiarities of plants, minerals, and animals, all of which are well known to our naturalists, but none of which are explained.

Thus modern philosophers may be said not to have gone one step beyond what the priests of Samothrace, the Hindus, and even the Christian Gnostics well knew. The former have shown it in that wonderfully ingenious mythos of the Dioscouroi, or “the sons of heaven”; the twin brothers, spoken of by Schweigger,

. . . who constantly die and return to life together, while it is absolutely necessary *that one should die that the other may live*.³

They knew as well as our physicists, that when a force has disappeared it has simply been converted into another force. Though archæology may not have discovered any ancient apparatus for such special conversions, it may nevertheless be affirmed with perfect reason and upon analogical deductions that nearly all the ancient religions

¹ B. Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato* (1871), Vol. II, § 8

² Beginning with Godfrey Higgins and ending with Max Müller, every archæologist and philologist who has fairly and seriously studied the old religions, has perceived that taken literally they could only lead them on a false track. Dr. Lardner disfigured and misrepresented the old doctrines — whether unwittingly or otherwise — in the grossest manner. The *pravritti*, or the existence of nature when alive, in activity, and the *nirvritti*, or the rest, the state of non-living, is the Buddhistic esoteric doctrine. The “pure nothing,” or non-existence, if translated according to the esoteric sense, would mean the “pure spirit,” the NAMELESS or something our intellect is unable to grasp, hence no-thing. But we will speak of it further.

³ [Schweigger, *Introduction to Mythology through Natural History*, Halle 1836; pp. 132, 228]

were based on such indestructibility of matter and force — plus the emanation of the whole from an æthereal, spiritual fire — or the central sun, which is God or spirit, on the knowledge of whose potentiality is based ancient theurgic magic.

In the manuscript commentary of Proclus on magic he gives the following account:

In the same manner as lovers gradually advance from that beauty which is apparent in sensible forms, to that which is divine; so the ancient priests, when they considered that there is a certain alliance and sympathy in natural things to each other, and of things manifest to occult powers, and discovered that all things subsist in all, they fabricated a sacred science from this mutual sympathy and similarity. Thus they recognized things supreme in such as are subordinate, and the subordinate in the supreme; in the celestial regions, terrene properties subsisting in a causal and celestial manner; and in earth celestial properties, but according to a terrene condition.¹

Proclus then proceeds to point to certain mysterious peculiarities of [244] plants, minerals, and animals, all of which are well known to our naturalists, but none of which are explained. Such are the rotatory motion of the sunflower, of the heliotrope, of the lotus — which, before the rising of the sun, folds its leaves, drawing the petals within itself, so to say, then expands them gradually, as the sun rises, and draws them in again as it descends to the west — of the sun and lunar stones and the helioselenus, of the cock and lion, and other animals. He says,

Now the ancients, having contemplated this mutual sympathy of things [celestial and terrestrial] applied them for occult purposes, both celestial and terrene natures, by means of which, through a certain similitude, they deduced divine virtues into this inferior abode . . . all things are full of divine natures; terrestrial natures receiving the plenitude of such as are celestial, but celestial of *super-celestial* essences, while every order of things proceeds gradually in a beautiful descent from *the highest to the lowest*.² For whatever particulars are collected into one above the order of things, are afterwards dilated in descending, *various souls being distributed under their various ruling divinities*.³

Proclus, who combined Theosophy and Theurgy, also advocated a divine science that is firmly and solely based on the mysterious affinities between organic and inorganic bodies, the visible productions of the four kingdoms, and the invisible powers of the universe.

Evidently Proclus does not advocate here simply a superstition, but science; for notwithstanding that it is occult, and unknown to our scholars, who deny its possibilities, magic is still a science. It is firmly and solely based on the mysterious affinities existing between organic and inorganic bodies, the visible productions of the four kingdoms, and the invisible powers of the universe. That which science calls gravitation, the ancients and the mediæval Hermetists called magnetism, attraction, affini-

¹ [M. Ficino, *Procli de anima ac dæmone, de sacrificio et magia*, Venice 1497]

² [This is the exact opposite of the modern theory of evolution. — H.P. Blavatsky]

³ Ficino, *op. cit.*

ty. It is the universal law, which is understood by Plato and explained in *Timæus*¹ as the attraction of lesser bodies to larger ones, and of similar bodies to similar, the latter exhibiting a magnetic power rather than following the law of gravitation. The anti-Aristotelean formula that *gravity causes all bodies to descend with equal rapidity, without reference to their weight*, the difference being caused by some other *unknown* agency, would seem to point a great deal more forcibly to *magnetism* than to gravitation, the former attracting rather in virtue of the substance than of the weight. A thorough familiarity with the occult faculties of everything existing in nature, visible as well as invisible; their mutual relations, attractions, and repulsions; the cause of these, traced to the *spiritual* principle which pervades and animates all things; the ability to furnish the best conditions for this principle to manifest itself, in other words a profound and exhaustive knowledge of natural law — this *was* and *is* the basis of magic. [245] In his “Notes on Ghosts and Goblins,” when reviewing some facts adduced by certain illustrious defenders of the spiritual phenomena, such as Professor de Morgan, Mr. Robert Dale Owen, and Mr. Wallace, among others — Mr. Richard A. Proctor says that he . . .

cannot see any force in the following remarks by Professor Wallace:

“How is such evidence as this,” he [Wallace] says, speaking of one of Owen’s stories, “refuted or explained away? Scores, and even hundreds, of equally-attested facts are on record, but no attempt is made to explain them. They are simply ignored, and in many cases admitted to be inexplicable.”

To this Mr. Proctor jocularly replies that as

. . . our philosophers declare that they have long ago decided these ghost stories to be all delusions; *therefore* they need only be ignored; and they feel much “worritted”² that fresh evidence should be adduced, and fresh converts made, some of whom are so unreasonable as to ask for a new trial, on the ground that the former verdict was contrary to the evidence.

He goes on to say,

All this affords excellent reason why the “converts” should not be ridiculed for their belief; but something more to the purpose must be urged before “the philosophers” can be expected to devote much of their time to the inquiry suggested. It ought to be shown that *the well-being of the human race is to some important degree concerned in the matter*, whereas the trivial nature of all ghostly conduct hitherto recorded is admitted even by “converts.”³

Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten has collected a great number of authenticated facts from secular and scientific journals, which show with what serious questions our scientists sometimes replace the vexed subject of “Ghosts and Goblins.” She quotes from a Washington paper a report of one of these solemn conclaves, held on the evening of April 29th, 1854. Professor Hare of Philadelphia, the venerable chemist,

¹ [62, 63]

² [past tense form of worrit, to be worried]

³ [R.A. Proctor, *The Borderland of Science*, etc., London 1873, pp. 436-37]

who was so universally respected for his individual character, as well as for his life-long labours for science, “was *bullied* into silence” by Professor Henry, as soon as he had touched the subject of spiritualism. Says the authoress:

The impertinent action of one of the members of the “American Scientific Association” was sanctioned by the majority of that distinguished body and subsequently endorsed by all of them in their proceedings.¹

On the following morning, in the report of the session, the *Spiritual Telegraph* thus commented upon the events:

It would seem that a subject like this [presented by Professor Hare] was one which would lie peculiarly within the domain of “science.” But the “American Association for the Promotion of Science”² decided [246] that it was either unworthy of their attention or dangerous for them to meddle with, and so they voted to put the invitation on the table. We cannot omit in this connection to mention that the “American Association for *the Promotion of Science*” held a very learned, extended, grave, and profound discussion at the same session, *upon the cause why “roosters” crow between twelve and one o’clock at night!*

A subject worthy of philosophers; and one, moreover, which must have been shown to effect “the well-being of the human race” in a *very “important degree.”*

Persons have been known to fall sick simultaneously with the uprooting of a tree planted upon their natal day, and dying when the tree died.

It is sufficient for one to express belief in the existence of a mysterious sympathy between the life of certain plants and that of human beings, to assure being made the subject of ridicule. Nevertheless, there are many well-authenticated cases going to show the reality of such an affinity. Persons have been known to fall sick simultaneously with the uprooting of a tree planted upon their natal day, and dying when the tree died. Reversing affairs, it has been known that a tree planted under the same circumstances withered and died simultaneously with the person whose twin brother, so to speak, it was. The former would be called by Mr. Proctor an “effect of the imagination”; the latter a “curious coincidence.”

Max Müller gives a number of such cases in his essay “On Manners and Customs.” He shows this popular tradition existing in Central America, in India, and Germany. He traces it over nearly all Europe; finds it among the Maori Warriors, in British Guiana, and in Asia. Reviewing Tyler’s *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, a work in which are brought together quite a number of such traditions, the great philologist very justly remarks the following:

If it occurred in Indian and German tales only, we might consider it as ancient Aryan property; but when we find it again in Central America, nothing remains but either to admit a later communication between European settlers and native American story-tellers . . . or to inquire whether there is not some intelli-

¹ E. Hardinge-Britten, *Modern American Spiritualism*, etc., London 1873, pp. 436-37

² The full and correct name of this learned Society is “The American Association for the *Advancement of Science.*” It is, however, often called for brevity’s sake, “The American Scientific Association.”

ble and truly human element in this supposed sympathy between the life of flowers and the life of man.¹

There is a lamentable departure of divinity from man, when nothing worthy of celestial concerns is heard or believed.

Alas! The divine intellect is veiled in man; his animal brain alone philosophises.

The present generation of men, who believe in nothing beyond the superficial evidence of their senses, will doubtless reject the very idea of such a sympathetic power existing in plants, animals, and even stones. The caul² covering their inner sight allows them to see but that which they cannot well deny. The author of the *Asclepian Dialogue* furnishes us with a reason for it, that might perhaps fit the present period and account for this epidemic of unbelief. In our century, as then, [247]

. . . there is a lamentable departure of divinity from man, when nothing worthy of heaven or celestial concerns is heard or believed, and when every divine voice is by a *necessary* silence dumb.³

Or, as the Emperor Julian has it, “the *little* soul” of the sceptic “is indeed acute, but sees nothing with a vision healthy and sound.”

In spiritually fertile periods the occult powers of plants, animals, and minerals magically sympathize with their “superior” nature, and the divine soul of man is in perfect harmony with his “inferior” young brethren.

Formerly, magic was a universal science, entirely in the hands of the sacerdotal savant. Though the focus was jealously guarded in the sanctuaries, its rays illuminated the whole of mankind.

We are at the bottom of a cycle and evidently in a transitory state. Plato divides the intellectual progress of the universe during every cycle into fertile and barren periods. In the sublunary regions, the spheres of the various elements remain eternally

¹ [Chips, etc., Vol. II, p. 271]

² [A historical headdress worn by women that covers tied-up hair.]

³ See Thos. Taylor, *Select Works of Plotinus*, London 1817, pp. 554-55 fn. [Endnote 34 by Boris de Zirkoff: In Thos. Taylor’s *Select Works of Plotinus*, pp. 554-55 fn., the wording of this passage is somewhat different, namely:

“ . . . New statutes and new laws shall be established, and nothing religious or which is worthy of heaven, or celestial concerns, shall be heard, or believed by the mind. There will be a lamentable departure of the Gods from men, noxious angels will alone remain, who being mingled with human nature will violently impel the miserable men [of that time] to war, to rapine, to fraud, and to everything contrary to the nature of the soul . . . Every divine voice shall be dumb by a necessary silence . . . ”

The *Asclepian Dialogue*, of which the above is an excerpt, is also known under the title of “The Perfect Sermon, or the Asclepius,” and “A Sermon of Initiation.” It has also been referred to as “Thrice-greatest Hermes Concerning the Nature of the Gods.” The Greek original which, according to Lactantius (*Divine Institutes* iv, 6, and vii, 8), was known as the *logos teleios*, is lost, and only a Latin version has come down to us. Taylor’s English rendering is from the Latin translation of extant Hermetic writings by Marsiglio Ficino (Marsilius Ficinus) which were originally published in 1471.

Consult the scholarly translation of G.R.S. Mead, together with his Commentary, in Vol. II, p. 307 *et seq.*, of his *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*. London and Benares: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1906; 2nd impression, 1949; 3rd impr. (reset), John M. Watkins, London 1964.]

in perfect harmony with the divine nature, he says; “but their parts,” owing to a too close proximity to earth, and their commingling with the *earthly* (which is matter, and therefore the realm of evil), “are sometimes according, and sometimes contrary to [divine] nature.” When those circulations — which Éliphas Lévi calls “currents of the astral light” — in the universal æther which contains in itself every element, take place in harmony with the divine spirit, our earth and everything pertaining to it enjoys a fertile period. The occult powers of plants, animals, and minerals magically sympathize with the “superior natures,” and the divine soul of man is in perfect intelligence with these “inferior” ones. But during the barren periods, the latter lose their magic sympathy, and the spiritual sight of the majority of mankind is so blinded as to lose every notion of the superior powers of its own divine spirit. We are in a barren period: the eighteenth century, during which the malignant fever of scepticism broke out so irrepressibly, has entailed unbelief as an hereditary disease upon the nineteenth. The divine intellect is veiled in man; his animal brain alone *philosophizes*.

Every sentence of Pythagoras, like most of the ancient maxims, had a deeper meaning.

For example, “do not stir the fire with a sword,” meant that, by governing the tongue and being quiet, friendship is produced from strife, and the fire of anger is extinguished.

Formerly, magic was a universal science, entirely in the hands of the sacerdotal savant. Though the focus was jealously guarded in the sanctuaries, its rays illuminated the whole of mankind. Otherwise, how are we to account for the extraordinary identity of “superstitions,” customs, traditions, and even sentences, repeated in popular proverbs so widely scattered from one pole to the other that we find exactly the same ideas among the Tartars and Laplanders as among the southern nations of Europe, the inhabitants of the steppes of Russia, and the aborigines of North and South America? For instance, Tylor shows one of the ancient Pythagorean maxims, “Do not stir the fire with a sword,” as popular among a number of nations which have not the slightest connection with each other. He quotes De Plano Carpini, who found this tradition prevailing among the Tartars so far back as in 1246.¹ A Tartar will not consent for any amount of money to stick a knife into the fire, or touch it with any sharp or pointed instrument, for fear of cutting the “head of the fire.” [248] The Kamtchadals of North-eastern Asia consider it a great sin so to do. The Sioux Indians of North America dare not touch the fire with either needle, knife, or any sharp instrument. The Kalmucks entertain the same dread; and an Abyssinian would rather bury his bare arms to the elbows in blazing coals than use a knife or axe near them. All these facts Tylor also calls “simply curious coincidences.”² Max Müller, however, thinks

¹ [Edward B. Tylor, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization*; 3rd ed. London: John Murray, 1878; ch. x, p. 276]

² [Cf. The student of the early *History of Mankind* finds in Comparative Mythology the same use and the same difficulty which lie before him in so many other branches of his subject. He can sometimes show, in the mythical tales current among several peoples, coincidences so quaint, so minute, or so complex, that they could hardly have arisen independently in two places, and these coincidences he claims as proofs of historical connexion between the tribes or nations among whom they are found.” *ibid.*, ch. xii. p. 333]

that they lose much of their force by the fact of the Pythagorean doctrine being at the bottom of it.¹

Every sentence of Pythagoras, like most of the ancient maxims, has a dual signification; and, while it had an occult physical meaning, expressed literally in its words, it embodied a moral precept, which is explained by Iamblichus in his *Life of Pythagoras*. This “dig not fire with a sword,” is the ninth symbol in the *Protreptics* of this Neo-Platonist. “This symbol,” he says, “exhorts to prudence.” It shows “the propriety of not opposing sharp words to a man full of fire and wrath, nor contending with him. For frequently by words you will agitate and disturb an ignorant man, and will yourself suffer things dreadful and unpleasant. Heraclitus also testifies to the truth of this symbol. For he says, ‘It is difficult to fight with anger; for whatever is necessary to be done redeems the soul.’ And this he says truly. For many, by gratifying anger, have changed the condition of their soul, and have made death preferable to life. But by governing the tongue and being quiet, friendship is produced from strife, the fire of anger being extinguished, and you yourself will not appear to be destitute of intellect.”²

There is nothing new under the Sun.³

Yet, modern scientists have reaped more palms and laurels for their great “discoveries” than Lucretius, Cicero, Plutarch, and Seneca had hairs on their heads.

We have had misgivings sometimes; we have questioned the impartiality of our own judgment, our ability to offer a respectful criticism upon the labours of such giants as some of our modern philosophers — Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer, Carpenter, and a few others. In our immoderate love for the “men of old” — the primitive sages — we were always afraid to trespass the boundaries of justice and refuse their dues to those who deserve them. Gradually this natural fear gave way before an unexpected reinforcement. We found out that we were but the feeble echo of public opinion, which, though suppressed, has sometimes found relief in able articles scattered throughout the periodicals of the country. One of such can be found in the *National Quarterly Review* of December, 1875, entitled “Our Sensational Present-Day Philosophers.” It is a very able article, discussing fearlessly the claims of several of our scientists to new discoveries in regard to the nature of matter, the human soul, the mind, the universe; how the universe came into existence, etc. “The religious world has been much startled,” the author proceeds to say, [249] “and not a little excited by the utterances of men like Spencer, Tyndall, Huxley, Proctor, and a few others of the same school.” Admitting very cheerfully how much science owes to each of those gentlemen, nevertheless the author “most emphatically” denies that they have made any discoveries at all.

¹ [*Chips*, etc., Vol. II, p. 273]

² Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, etc., p. 338; ed. Thos. Taylor, London 1818. [Cf. “From the stronghold of your Soul, chase all your foes away,” in our Constitution of Man Series. — ED. PHIL.]

³ *Ecclesiastes* i, 9

There is nothing new in the speculations, even of the most “advanced” of them; nothing which was not known and taught, in one form or another, thousands of years ago.

He does not say that these scientists

. . . put forward their theories as their own discoveries, but they leave the fact to be implied, and the newspapers do the rest . . . The public, which has neither time nor the inclination to examine the facts . . . adopts the faith of the newspapers . . . and wonders what will come next! . . . The supposed originators of such startling theories are assailed in the newspapers. Sometimes the obnoxious scientists undertake to defend themselves, but we cannot recall a single instance in which they have candidly said, ‘Gentlemen, be not angry with us; we are merely *revamping* stories which are nearly as old as the mountains.’ This would have been the simple truth; but even scientists or philosophers, are not always proof against the weakness of encouraging any notion which they think may secure niches for them among the immortal ones.¹

Huxley, Tyndall, and even Spencer have become lately the great oracles, the “infallible popes” on the dogmas of protoplasm, molecules, primordial forms, and atoms. They have reaped more palms and laurels for their great discoveries than Lucretius, Cicero, Plutarch, and Seneca had hairs on their heads. Nevertheless, the works of the latter teem with ideas on the protoplasm, primordial forms, etc., let alone the atoms, which caused Democritus to be called the *atomic* philosopher. In the same *Review* we find this very startling denunciation:

Who, *among the innocent*, has not been astonished, even within the last year, at the wonderful results accomplished by oxygen? What an excitement Tyndall and Huxley have created by proclaiming, in their own ingenious, oracular way, just the very doctrines which we have just quoted from Liebig; yet, as early as 1840, Professor Lyon Playfair translated into English the most ‘advanced’ of Baron Liebig’s works.²

Another recent utterance, which startled a large number of innocent and pious persons, is, that every thought we express, or attempt to express, produces a certain wonderful change in the substance of the brain. But, for this and a good deal more of its kind, our philosophers had only to turn to the pages of Baron Liebig. Thus, for instance, [250] that scientist proclaims: →

¹ *The National Quarterly Review*, Vol. XXXII, No. 63, December 1875 to March 1876. New York: Edward I. Sears, 1976; -pp. 78-79

² *ibid.*, pp. 93-94

Physiology has sufficiently decisive grounds for the opinions, that *every thought, every sensation* is accompanied by a change in the composition of the *substance of the brain*; that every motion, every manifestation of force is the result of a transformation of the structure, or of its substance.¹

Thus, throughout the sensational lectures of Tyndall, we can trace, almost to a page, the whole of Liebig's speculations, interlined now and then with the still earlier views of Democritus and other Pagan philosophers. A potpourri of old hypotheses elevated by the great authority of the day into quasi-demonstrated formulas, and delivered in that pathetic, picturesque, mellow, and thrillingly-eloquent phraseology so pre-eminently his own.

Plutarch said that an idea has no subsistence by itself, but gives figure and form to shapeless matter and becomes the cause of its manifestation.²

Further, the same reviewer shows us many of the identical ideas and all the material requisite to demonstrate the great discoveries of Tyndall and Huxley, in the works of Dr. Joseph Priestley, author of *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*, and even in Herder's *Philosophy of History*.

"Priestley," adds the author, "was not molested by government, simply because he had no ambition to obtain fame by proclaiming his atheistic views from the house-top . . . This philosopher . . . was the author of from seventy to eighty volumes, and the discoverer of oxygen." It is in these works that "he puts forward those identical ideas which have been declared so 'startling,' 'bold,' etc., as the utterances of our present-day philosophers."³

"Our readers," he proceeds to say, "remember what an excitement has been created by the utterances of some of our modern philosophers as to the origin and nature of ideas, but those utterances, like others that preceded and followed them, contain nothing new."⁴ Says Plutarch,

An idea is a *being* incorporeal, which has no subsistence by itself, but gives figure and form unto shapeless matter, and *becomes the cause of its manifestation*.⁵

¹ *The National Quarterly Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 93, quoting Leibig from *New Materialism*.

[A similarly worded quotation had been published earlier in the *British Quarterly Review*, Vol. LXX. London: John Murray, June to September 1842; p. 105. That quotation was part of an extensive review of *Animal Chemistry; or the Application of Organic Chemistry to the Elucidation of Physiology and Pathology*, by Justus Liebig, M.D., Art. IV, pp. 98-128. Edited from the German MS. by William Gregory, M.D., Professor of Chemistry, King's College, Aberdeen. 8vo. London 1842. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Consult "Plutarch on the tranquillity of the mind," "Plutarch on whether water or land animals are the most crafty," and "Plutarch on why eating animals is repulsive," in our Down to Earth Series.

Also, "Plutarch on Man's progress in Virtue," "Plutarch on Moral Virtue," and "Plutarch on whether vice is sufficient to render a man unhappy," in our Living the Life Series. — ED. PHIL.]

³ [*The National Quarterly Review*, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96]

⁴ [*op. cit.*, p. 82]

⁵ *De placitio philosophorum*, lib. I, cap. x

Verily, no modern atheist, Mr. Huxley included, can outvie Epicurus in materialism; he can but mimic him. And what is his “protoplasm,” but a *réchauffé* of the speculations of the Hindu Svābhāvikas or Pantheists, who assert that all things, the gods as well as men and animals, are born from Svabhāva¹ or their own nature?² As to Epicurus, this is what Lucretius makes him say:³

The soul, thus produced, must be *material*, because we trace it issuing from a material source; because it exists, and exists alone in a material system; is nourished by material food; grows with the growth of the body; becomes matured with its maturity; declines with its decay; and hence, whether belonging to man [251] or brute, must die with its death.

Nevertheless, we would remind the reader that Epicurus is here speaking of the *Astral Soul*, not of Divine Spirit. Still, if we rightly understand the above, Mr. Huxley’s “mutton-protoplasm” is of a very ancient origin, and can claim for its birthplace, Athens, and for its cradle, the brain of old Epicurus.

Further, still, anxious not to be misunderstood or found guilty of depreciating the labour of any of our scientists, the author closes his essay by remarking,

We merely want to show that, at least, that portion of the public which considers itself intelligent and enlightened should cultivate its memory, or remember the ‘advanced’ thinkers of the past much better than it does. Especially should those do so who, whether from the desk, the rostrum, or the pulpit, undertake to instruct all willing to be instructed by them. There would then be much less groundless apprehension, . . . much less charlatanism, and above all, much less plagiarism, than there is.⁴

The great body of ancient materialists, sceptical as they now seem to us, believed still in a God.

Truly says Cudworth that the greatest ignorance of which our modern wiseacres accuse the ancients is their belief in the soul’s immortality. Like the old sceptic of Greece, our scientists — to use an expression of the same Dr. Cudworth — are afraid that if they admit spirits and apparitions they must admit a God too; and there is nothing too absurd, he adds, for them to suppose, in order to keep out the existence of God.⁵ The great body of ancient materialists, sceptical as they now seem to us, thought otherwise, and Epicurus, who rejected the soul’s immortality, believed still in a God, and Democritus fully conceded the reality of apparitions. The pre-existence and God-like powers of the human spirit were believed in by most all the sages of ancient days. The magic of Babylon and Persia based upon it the doctrine of their *machagistia*. The *Chaldean Oracles*, on which Pletho and Psellus have so much commented, constantly expounded and amplified their testimony.⁶ Zoroaster, Py-

¹ [Consult “Svabhava and Svayambhu,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² Burnouf, *Introduction à l’histoire du bouddhisme indien*, p. 118

³ [*De rerum natura*, Book III, 161-69, 445-48]

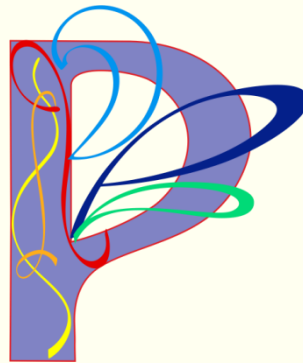
⁴ *The National Quarterly Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 96

⁵ [Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System*, etc., Vol. II, p. 114]

⁶ [Cf. Appendix to S. Gallæus, *Sibyllina oracula*, Amsterdam 1869; s.v. “Oracula magica Zoroastris cum scholiis Plethonis et Pselli.”]

thagoras, Epicharmus, Empedocles, Cebes, Euripides, Plato, Euclid, Philo, Boëlius, Virgil, Marcus Cicero, Plotinus, Iamblichus, Proclus, Psellus, Synesius, Origen, and, finally, *Aristotle* himself, far from denying our immortality, support it most emphatically. Like Cardan and Pomponazzi, “who were no friends to the soul’s immortality,” as says Henry More, “Aristotle expressly concludes that the rational soul is both a distinct being from the soul of the world, though of the same essence,” and that “it does pre-exist before it comes into the body.”¹

Years have rolled away since the Count Joseph De Maistre wrote a sentence which, if appropriate to the Voltairean epoch in which he lived, [252] applies with still more justice to our period of utter scepticism. “I have heard,” writes this eminent man, “I have heard and read of myriads of good jokes on the ignorance of the ancients, who were always seeing spirits everywhere; methinks that we are a great deal more imbecile than our forefathers, in never perceiving any such now, anywhere.”²



¹ Aristotle, *De Anima*, lib. I, cap. 3 (407A-B)

² De Maistre, *Les Soirées de St. Pétersbourg*, etc., I, p. 364; ed. 1821; [a theodicy in the form of a Platonic dialogue.]

Appendix.

Boris de Zirkoff on Epes Sargent.

EPES SARGENT, American author, born at Gloucester, Mass., September 27th, 1813. Educated chiefly at the Boston Latin School, which he entered at the age of nine. Although matriculated at Harvard College, he did not remain for graduation. When a boy, accompanied his father upon an extended trip to Russia, where he spent much time studying various collections of paintings. Upon his return, he started a small weekly paper, the *Literary Journal*, in which he gave an account of his experiences in Russia. From that time on, he devoted himself to literature. His first contributions appeared in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*. For a while, he associated himself with S.G. Goodrich in the preparation of the *Peter Parley Books*. In 1836 he wrote for Josephine Clifton a five-act play entitled *The Bride of Genoa*, followed the next year by the tragedy *Velasco*, both plays being successfully produced. In 1837, Sargent became connected with the *Boston Atlas*, as Washington correspondent. In 1839, he took charge for a while of the *New York Mirror*, but returned to Boston, 1846, where he edited for several years *The Evening Transcript*. He established himself at Roxbury, and after a few years withdrew from newspaper life and engaged exclusively in literary pursuits. It is during this period that he wrote a number of children's books, some of which reached a large sale. In 1852, he produced the *Standard Speaker*, a work of rare completeness which passed through thirteen editions within three years. He also prepared excellent readers for public schools, which had an enormous sale. He also continued to produce some plays, such as *The Priestess*, with great success. In 1849, Sargent published a collection of poems under the title of *Songs of the Sea*, some of which were set to music. He was on terms of intimacy with Henry Clay and wrote a life of that distinguished statesman. He was well known as a lecturer throughout New England, and counted among his close friends some of the famous men of the day, such as Daniel Webster and others.

Epes Sargent wrote a number of novels, such as: *Wealth and Worth* (1840); *Fleetwood, or the Stain of a Birth* (1845), and others; among his poems, there is a lyrical one called *Life on the Ocean Wave*, beginning with the stirring line, "Oh, ye keen breezes from the Salt Atlantic." He also published *American Adventures by Land and Sea* (1847, 2-vols.); *Original Dialogues* (1861); and edited several memoirs.

Sargent's interest in spiritual subjects is fully dealt with in H.P. Blavatsky's article on pages 239-40 of the present volume, wherein she speaks of his work entitled *The Scientific Basis of Spiritualism* (2nd ed., Boston: Colby & Rich, 1881; 6th ed., 1891). In an unsigned note, possibly by H.P. Blavatsky or by Col. Olcott, inserted in *The Theosophist* (Vol. II, March 1881, p. 139), reporting the death of this remarkable man, which took place at Boston, December 31st, 1880, and in which is acknowledged a

donation by Sargent of some of his school books to the Theosophical School for boys at Point de Galle, Ceylon, it is also stated that:

. . . there was something so sweet and winsome in his tone, expression of face and sentiments; such candour and evident devotion to what was good and true; and withal such a dignified purpose to act up to his light and his convictions, that for him to make an acquaintance was to secure a friend.

This is followed by a quotation from the Boston *Transcript* which praises Sargent in a genuine way.

It is also stated in *The Theosophist* that Sargent:

. . . was the author of various books of education which possess such superior merit that Mr. Jayasekara, Manager of our Galle school, declares them better than any English series he has even seen. A *Cyclopædia of Poetry* upon which he had been engaged for some years, was completed only about a month before his death.

Mention is also made of two other works by Sargent, namely, *Planchette* and *Proof Palpable of Immortality*, on subjects of grave concern in those days.

All in all, Epes Sargent was a man of sterling qualities, and apparently was in contact with the Founders by correspondence.¹

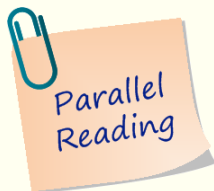


¹ Biographical Notes by Boris de Zirkoff, from his *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings* (BIBLIOGRAPHY) III pp. 528-30.

Suggested reading for students.



- BLAVATSKY ABOUT TO UNVEIL ISIS
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS ISIS UNVEILED
— *in our Blavatsky Speaks Series.*
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She being dead, yet speaketh.

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- ROSICRUCIANISM WAS AN OFFSHOOT OF ORIENTAL OCCULTISM
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- THE HERMETIC FIRE OF THE MIND IS THE KEY TO THE OCCULT SCIENCES
- THE REAL MEANING OF THE FIRST LINE OF GENESIS
- THE SECRET DOCTRINE (1888) VOL. 1 OF 2 ON COSMOGENESIS
- THE SECRET DOCTRINE (1888) VOL. 2 OF 2 ON ANTHROPOGENESIS
- THOTH IS THE EQUIVALENT OF HERMES AND MOSES
- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON CRITICISM AND AUTHORITIES
- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON THE EIGHTH WONDER
- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON THE MORNING STAR
- WE ARE MORE OFTEN VICTIMS OF WORDS RATHER THAN OF FACTS
- WITHOUT THE REVIVAL OF ARYAN PHILOSOPHY, THE WEST WILL FALL TO EVEN GROSSER MATERIALISM

