

ANCIENT SCIENCE, DOCTRINES, AND BELIEFS

Articles by H. P. Blavatsky

THE BABEL OF MODERN THOUGHT

THE SEVENTEEN-RAYED SUN DISC

A MYSTERIOUS RACE

CHRISTMAS THEN AND CHRISTMAS NOW

THE EIGHTH WONDER

THE THEORY OF CYCLES

ANCIENT DOCTRINES VINDICATED

BY MODERN PROPHECY

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FOREWORD

IN “The Babel of Modern Thought,” which appeared in *Lucifer* for February, 1891, H.P.B. once again presents evidence to show that the ancients anticipated modern knowledge in numerous ways, that their understanding was deeper and more philosophical than nineteenth-century theories, and that the scholars of her time were either reluctant or refused entirely to admit that the initiates of antiquity could know more of the meaning of old esoteric texts than European Orientalists. The occult reading given by H.P.B. of the Biblical account of the Tower of Babel also shows how knowledge of occult symbolism transforms the meaning of exoteric texts. Of particular interest in the second part of this article is the discussion of the controversy between the Evolutionists and the Comtean Positivists, pointing out the limitations of both sides. Reconciliation between the two lies not so much in critical analysis of either position, but in the larger perspective of the ancient teaching which, H.P.B. says, is “that aggregate of the subjective and objective facts which form the consistent, logical, harmonious whole called by us the *Wisdom Religion*”

“The Seventeen-Rayed Sun-Disk” gives H.P.B.’s brief comment in the *Theosophist* for December, 1879, on the report by a reader of finding in Central America a monumental symbol of the sun with seventeen rays, similar to corresponding Egyptian monuments. H.P.B. makes this report an occasion for confirming her correspondent’s idea of an Atlantean link between ancient Americans and Egyptians, going on to discuss the various deluges and the cataclysms which mark off the major cycles of race evolution.

The peculiar endowment of obscure races with particular faculties or powers is the subject of “A Mysterious Race,” first published in the *Theosophist*, December, 1883. This brief account is another

example of H.P.B.'s consistent effort to give practical evidence in support of the occult teachings.

“Christmas Then and Christmas Now,” which also appeared in the December, 1879, *Theosophist*, links the Holy Day of the Christians with various pagan observances, connecting it with the day on which the sun-gods of ancient times were said to be born. The symbolism of the Divine Babe is shown to be pagan, also, antedating Christianity. H.P.B. concludes with a tale reprinted from a New York newspaper, contrasting the true spirit of sacrifice with the morally indifferent quality of fashionable religion in the nineteenth century.

In “The Eighth Wonder,” H.P.B. pays her respects to the Eiffel Tower, calling it a “gigantic iron carrot,” wondrous in size, useless in its object. Her observations on this subject recall similar expressions in “Civilization, the Death of Art and Beauty.” “The Eighth Wonder” was published in *Lucifer* for October, 1891, a few months after H.P.B.'s death. In this article she contrasts the splendor and excellence of ancient monuments, arts, and industry with the crude industrialism of the nineteenth century.

The reality of cycles—cycles of every sort—is a central consideration in Theosophical philosophy, making it natural for H.P.B. to make extended note of the work of a German scholar on this neglected subject. She titled this discussion “The Theory of Cycles” and published it in the *Theosophist* for July, 1880. She says that astrologers of the distant past possessed genuine occult knowledge—a knowledge lost to modern practitioners—and based their predictions on accurate observations of recurring cycles. The soothsayers and augurs of antiquity, she adds, were the historians and astronomers of their time, although in those days the practice of true science was restricted to the few. After these introductory suggestions she reproduces from an article in a Prussian journal a wealth of statistical material on cyclic spurts of historical development, some of which involve wars and revolutions.

That occult or cabalistic knowledge is not only “mystical,” but may have quite practical application, as in the prediction of earthquakes, is the content of “Ancient Doctrines Vindicated by Modern Prophecy,”

which appeared in the *Theosophist* for May, 1881. The accuracy of the anticipations of Rudolph Falb, a German astronomer and editor, is indeed impressive, and H.P.B. suggests that he founded his method on secrets known to medieval mystics and fire-philosophers.

Lucifer, February, 1891

THE BABEL OF MODERN THOUGHT

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

Egyptian "Ritual of the Dead"

I

THAT the world moves in cycles, and events repeat themselves therein, is an old, yet ever new truism. It is new to most, firstly, because it belongs to a distinct group of occult aphorisms in *partibus infidelium*, and our present-day Rabbis and Pharisees will accept nothing coming from *that* Nazareth; secondly, because those who will swallow a camel of whatever size, provided it hails from orthodox or accepted authorities, will strain and kick at the smallest gnat, if only its buzz comes from theosophical regions. Yet this proposition about the world cycles and ever-recurring events, is a very correct one. It is one, moreover, that people could easily verify for themselves. Of course, the people meant here are men who do their own thinking; not those others who are satisfied to remain, from birth till death, pinned, like a thistle fastened to the coat-tail of a country parson, to the beliefs and thoughts of the goody-goody majority.

We cannot agree with a writer (was it Gilpin?) who said that the grandest truths are often rejected, "not so much for want of direct evidence, as for want of inclination to search for it." This applies but to a few. Nine-tenths of the people will reject the most overwhelming evidence, even if it be brought to them without any trouble to themselves, only because it happens to clash with their personal interests or prejudices; especially if it comes from unpopular quarters. We are living in a highly moral atmosphere, high sounding—in words. Put to the test of practice, however, the morality of this age in point of genuineness and reality is of the nature of the black skin of the "negro"

minstrel: assumed for show and pay, and washed off at the close of every performance. In sober truth, our opponents—advocates of official science, defenders of orthodox religion, and the *tutti quanti* of the detractors of Theosophy—who claim to oppose our works on grounds of *scientific* "evidence," "public good and truth," strongly resemble advocates in our courts of law—miscalled of justice. These in their defence of robbers and murderers, forgers and adulterers, deem it to be their duty to browbeat, confuse and bespatter all who bear witness against their clients, and will ignore, or if possible, suppress, all evidence which goes to incriminate them. Let ancient Wisdom step into the witness-box herself, and prove that the goods found in the possession of the prisoner at the bar, were taken from her own strong-box; and she will find herself accused of all manner of crimes, fortunate if she escape being branded as a common fraud, and told that she is no better than she should be.

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

Dear ladies and gentlemen, has it ever occurred to you, how truly grand and almost *divine* would be that man or woman, who, at this time of the life of mankind, could invent anything, or discover that which had not been invented and known ages before? The charge of

being such an inventor would only entitle the accused to the choicest honours. For show us, if you can, that mortal who in the historical cycle of our human race has taught the world something entirely new. To the proud pretensions of this age, Occultism—the real Eastern Occultism, or the so-called Esoteric Doctrine—answers through its ablest students: Indeed all your boasted knowledge is but the reflex action of the by-gone Past. At best, you are but the modern popularisers of very ancient ideas. Consciously and unconsciously you have pilfered from old classics and philosophers, who were themselves but the superficial recorders—cautious and incomplete, owing to the terrible penalties for divulging the secrets of initiation taught during the mysteries—of the *primaeva* Wisdom. Avaunt! your modern sciences and speculations are but the *rechauffe* dishes of antiquity; the dead bones (served with a *sauce piquante* of crass materialism, to disguise them) of the intellectual repasts of the gods. Ragon was right in saying in his *Maconnerie Occulte*,⁹ that “Humanity only *seems* to progress in achieving one discovery after the other, as in truth, it only finds that which it had lost. Most of our modern inventions for which we claim such glory, are, after all, things people were acquainted with three and four thousand years back.¹ Lost to us through wars, floods and fire, their very existence became obliterated from the memory of man. And now modern thinkers begin to *rediscover* them once more.”

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

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

Are not physics and natural sciences but an amplified reproduction of the works of Anaxagoras, of Empedocles, Democritus and others? All that is taught *now*, was taught by these philosophers *then*. For

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

they maintained—even in the fragments of their works still extant—that the Universe is composed of eternal atoms which, moved by a subtle internal Fire, combine in millions of various ways. With them, this “Fire” was the divine Breath of the Universal Mind, but now, it has become with the modern philosophers no better than a blind and senseless Force. Furthermore they taught that there was neither Life nor Death, but only a constant *destruction of form*, produced by perpetual *physicai* transformations. This has now become by *intelectuai* transformation, that

which is known as the physical correlation of forces, conservation of energy, law of continuity, and what not, in the vocabulary of modern Science. But “what’s in a name,” or in new-fangled words and compound terms, once that the identity of the essential ideas is established?

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

Even Sir Isaac Newton, the greatest among the great, is found constantly mirroring a dozen or so of old philosophers. In reading his works one sees floating in the air the pale images of the same Anaxagoras and Democritus, of Pythagoras, Aristotle, Timasus of Locris, Lucretius, Macrobius, and even our old friend Plutarch. All these have maintained one or the other of these propositions, (1) that the smallest of the particles of matter would be sufficient—owing to its infinite divisibility—to fill infinite space; (2) that there exist two Forces emanated from the Universal Soul, combined in numerical

proportions (the centripetal and centrifugal “forces,” of the latter day scientific saints); (3) that there was a mutual attraction of bodies, which *attraction* causes the latter to, what we now call, *gravitate* and keeps them within their respective spheres; (4) they hinted most unmistakably at the relation existing between the weight and the density, or the quantity of matter contained in a unit of mass; and (5) taught that the attraction (gravitation) of the planets toward the Sun is in reciprocal proportion to their distance from that luminary.

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

Wise was Solomon in saying that “there is *no new* thing under the Sun”; and that everything that *is* “hath been already of old time, which was before us”—save, perhaps, the theosophical doctrines which the humble writer of the present is charged by some with having “invented.” The prime origin of this (very complimentary) accusation is due to the kind efforts of the S. P. R. It is the more considerate and kind of this “world famous, and learned Society” of “Researches,” as its scribes seem utterly incapable of inventing anything original themselves—even in the way of manufacturing a commonplace illustration. If the inquisitive reader turns to the article which follows,

he will have the satisfaction of finding a curious proof of this fact, in a reprint from old Izaak Walton’s *Lives*, which our contributor has entitled “Mrs. Donne’s Astral Body.” Thus even the scientifically *accurate* Cambridge Dons are not, it seems, above *borrowing* from an ancient book; and not only fail to acknowledge the debt, but even go to the trouble of presenting it to the public *as new original matter*; without even the compliment of inverted commas. And thus—all along.

In short, it may be said of the scientific theories, that those which are true are not new; and those which are new—are not true, or are at least, very dubious. It is easy to hide behind “merely *working* hypotheses,” but less easy to maintain their plausibility in the face of logic and philosophy. To make short work of a very big subject, we have but to institute a brief comparison between the old and the new teachings. That which modern science would make us believe, is this: the atoms possess *innate* and immutable properties. That which Esoteric, and also exoteric, Eastern philosophy calls *divine Spirit Substance* (*?ur-usha Prakrit!*) or eternal Spirit-matter, one inseparable from the other, modern Science calls Force and Matter, adding as we do (for it is a Vedantic conception), that, the two being inseparable, matter is but an abstraction (an illusion rather). The properties of matter are, by the Eastern Occultists, summed up in, or brought down to, attraction and repulsion; by the Scientists, to gravitation and affinities. According to this teaching, the properties of complex combinations are but the necessary results of the composition of elementary properties; the most complex existences being the physico-chemical automata, called men. Matter from being primarily scattered and inanimate, begets life, sensation, emotions and will, after a whole series of consecutive “gropings.” The latter non-felicitous expression (belonging to Mr. Tyndall), forced the philosophical writer, Delboeuf² to criticize the English Scientist in very disrespectful terms, and forces us in our turn, to agree with the former. Matter, or anything equally conditioned, once that it is declared to be

² In the *Revue Philosophique* of 1883, where he translates such “gropings” by *atonnements successifs*.

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

What better illustrates the theory of cycles, than the following fact? Nearly 700 years B.C., in the schools of Thales and Pythagoras, was taught the doctrine of the true motion of the earth, its form and the whole heliocentric system. And in 317 A.D. Lactantius, the preceptor of Crispus Caesar, the son of the Emperor Constantine, is found teaching his pupil that the earth was a plane surrounded by the sky, itself composed of fire and water! Moreover, the venerable Church

Father warned his pupil against the *heretical doctrine of the earth's globular form*, as the Cambridge and Oxford “Father Dons” warn their students now, against the pernicious and superstitious doctrines of Theosophy—such as Universal Mind, Re-incarnation and so on. There is a resolution tacitly accepted by the members of the T. S. for the adoption of a proverb of King Solomon, paraphrased for our daily use: “A scientist is wiser in his own conceit than seven Theosophists that can render a reason.” No time, therefore, should be lost in arguing with them; but no endeavour, on the other hand, should be neglected to show up their mistakes and blunders. The scientific conceit of the Orientalists—especially of the youngest branch of these—the Assyriologists and the Egyptologists—is indeed phenomenal. Hitherto, some credit was given to the ancients—to their philosophers and *Initiates*, at any rate—of knowing a few things that the moderns could not rediscover. But now even the greatest *Initiates* are represented to the public as fools. Here is an instance. On pages 15, 16 and 17 (*Introduction*) in the Hibbert Lectures of 1887 by Prof. Sayce, on *The Ancient Babylonians*, the reader is brought face to face with a conundrum that may well stagger the unsophisticated admirer of modern learning. Complaining of the difficulties and obstacles that meet the Assyriologist at every step of his studies; after giving “the dreary catalogue” of the formidable struggles of the interpreter to make sense of the inscriptions from broken fragments of clay tiles; the Professor goes on to confess that the scholar who has to read these cuneiform characters, is often likely “to put a false construction upon isolated passages, the context of which must be supplied from conjecture” (p. 14). Notwithstanding all this, the learned lecturer *places the modern Assyriologist higher than the ancient Babylonian Initiate*, in the knowledge of symbols and his own religion!

The passage deserves to be quoted *in toto*:

It is true that many of the sacred texts were so written as to be intelligible only to the initiated; but the initiated were provided with keys and glosses, *many of which are in our hands* (?)... We can penetrate into the real meaning of documents which to him (the ordinary Babylonian) were a sealed book. Nay, more than this, the researches that have been made during

the last half-century into the creed and beliefs of the nations of the world both past and present, *have given us a due* to the interpretation of these documents *which even the initiated priests did not possess*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

II

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

HAVING done with modern physical Sciences we next turn to Western philosophies and religions. Every one of these is equally based upon, and derives its theories and doctrines from heathen, and moreover, *exoteric* thought. This can easily be traced from Schopenhauer and Mr. Herbert Spencer, down to Hypnotism and so-called “Mental Science.” The German philosophers modernize Buddhism; the English are inspired by Vedantism; while the French, borrowing from both, add to them Plato, in a Phrygian cap, and occasionally, as with Auguste Comte, the weird sex-worship or Mariolatry of the old Roman Catholic ecstasies and visionaries. New systems, yclept philosophical, new sects and societies, spring up now-a-days in every corner of our civilized lands. But even the highest among them agree on no one point, though each claims supremacy. This, because no science, no philosophy—being

at best, but a fragment broken from the WISDOM RELIGION—can stand alone, or be complete in itself. Truth, to be complete, must represent an unbroken continuity. It must have no gaps, no missing links. And which of our modern religions, sciences or philosophies, is free from such defects? Truth is One. Even as the palest reflection of the Absolute, it can be no more dual than is absoluteness itself, nor can it have *two* aspects. But such truth is not for the majorities, in our world of illusion—especially for those minds which are devoid of the *noetic* element. These have to substitute for the high spiritual and *quasi* absolute truth’ the relative one, which having two sides or aspects, both conditioned by appearances, lead our “brain-minds” —one to intellectual scientific materialism, the other to materialistic or anthropomorphic religiosity. But even that kind of truth, in order to offer a coherent and complete system of something, has, while naturally clashing with its opposite, to offer no gaps and contradictions, no broken or missing links, in the special system or doctrine it undertakes to represent.

And here a slight digression must come in. We are sure to be told by some, that this is precisely the objection taken to theosophical expositions, from *Isis Unveiled* down to the *Secret Doctrine*. Agreed. We are quite prepared to confess that the latter work, especially, surpasses in these defects all the other theosophical works. We are quite ready to admit the faults charged against it by its critics—that it is badly arranged, discursive, over-burdened with digressions into by-ways of mythology, etc., etc. But then it is neither *a* philosophical system nor *the* Doctrine, called secret or esoteric, but only a record of a few of its facts and a *witness* to it. It has never claimed to be the *full* exposition of the system (it advocates) in its totality; (*a*) because as the writer does not boast of being a great Initiate, she could, therefore, never have undertaken such a gigantic task; and (*b*) because had she been one, she would have divulged still less. It has never been contemplated to make of the sacred truths an integral system for the ribaldry and sneers of a profane and iconoclastic public. The work does not pretend to set up a series of explanations, complete in all their details, of the mysteries of Being; nor does it seek to win for

itself the name of a distinct system of thought—like the works of Messrs. Herbert Spencer, Schopenhauer or Comte. On the contrary, the *Secret Doctrine* merely asserts that a system, known as the WISDOM RELIGION, the work of generations of adepts and seers, the sacred heirloom of pre-historic times—actually exists, though hitherto preserved in the greatest secrecy by the present Initiates; and it points to various corroborations of its existence to this very day, to be found in ancient and modern works. Giving a few fragments only, it there shows how these explain the religious dogmas of the present day, and how they might serve Western religions, philosophies and science, as sign-posts along the untrodden paths of discovery. The work is essentially fragmentary, giving statements of sundry facts taught in the esoteric schools—kept, so far, secret—by which the ancient symbolism of various nations is interpreted. It does not even give the *keys* to it, but merely opens a few of the hitherto secret drawers. No new philosophy is set up in the *Secret Doctrine*, only the hidden meaning of some of the religious allegories of antiquity is given, light being thrown on these by the esoteric sciences, and the common source is pointed out, whence all the world-religions and philosophies have sprung. Its chief attempt is to show, that however divergent the respective doctrines and systems of old may *seem* on their external or objective side, the agreement between all becomes perfect, so soon as the esoteric or *inner* side of these beliefs and their symbology is examined and a careful comparison made. It is also maintained that its doctrines and sciences, which form an integral cycle of universal cosmic facts and metaphysical axioms and truths, represent a complete and unbroken system; and that he who is brave and persevering enough, ready to crush the *animal* in himself, and forgetting the human *self*, sacrifices it to his Higher Ego, can always find his way to become initiated into these mysteries. This is all the *Secret Doctrine* claims. Are not a few facts and self-evident truths, found in these volumes—all the literary defects of the exposition notwithstanding,—truths *already proved practically to some*, better than the most ingenious “working” hypotheses, liable to be upset any day, than the *un-explainable* mysteries of religious dogmas, or the most seemingly

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

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

Therefore is it that in this age of Materialism, Agnosticism, Evolutionism, and false Idealism, there is not a system, however intellectually expounded, that can stand on its own legs, or fail to be criticized by an exponent from another school of thought as materialistic as itself; even Mr. Herbert Spencer, the greatest of all, is unable to answer some criticisms. Many are those who remember the fierce polemics that raged a few years ago in the English and American journals between the Evolutionists on the one hand and the Positivists on the other. The subject of the dispute was with regard to the attitude and relation that the theory of evolution would bear to religion. Mr. F. Harrison, the Apostle of Positivism, charged Mr. Herbert Spencer with restricting religion to the realm of reason, forgetting that feeling and not the cognizing faculty, played the most important part in it. The “erroneousness and insufficiency” of the ideas on the “Unknowable”—as developed in Mr. Spencer’s works—were also taken to task by Mr. Harrison. The idea was *erroneous*, he held, because it was based on the acceptance of the metaphysical absolute. It was insufficient, he argued, because it brought diety down to an empty

abstraction, void of any meaning.⁸ To this the great English writer replied, that he had never thought of offering his “Unknowable” and Incognizable, as a subject for religious worship. Then stepped into the arena, the respective admirers and defenders of Messrs. Spencer and Harrison, some defending the *material metaphysics* of the former thinker (if we may be permitted to use this paradoxical yet correct definition of Mr. Herbert Spencer’s philosophy), others, the arguments of the Godless and Christless Roman Catholicism of Auguste Comte,⁴ both sides giving and receiving very hard blows. Thus, Count d’Alviella of Brussels,⁵ suddenly discovered in Mr. H. Spencer a kind of hidden, yet *reverential* Theist, and compared Mr. Harrison to a casuist of mediaeval Scholasticism.

It is not to discuss the relative merits of materialistic Evolutionism, or of Positivism either, that the two English thinkers are brought forward; but simply to point, as an illustration, to the Babel-like confusion of modern thought. While the Evolutionists (of Herbert Spencer’s school) maintain that the historical evolution of the religious feeling consists in the constant abstraction of the attributes of Deity, and their final separation from the primitive concrete conceptions—this process rejoicing in the easy-going triple compound of *deanthropomorphization*, or the disappearance of human attributes—the Comtists on their side hold to another version. They affirm that fetishism, or the direct worship of nature, was the primitive religion of man, a too protracted-evolution alone having landed it in anthropomorphism. Their Deity is Humanity and the God they worship, Mankind, as far as we understand them. The only way, therefore, of settling the dispute, is to ascertain which of the two “philosophical” and “scientific” theories, is the less pernicious and the more probable. Is it true to say, as d’Alviella assures us, that Mr. Spencer’s “Unknowable” contains all the elements necessary to religion; and,

³ As the above is repeated from memory, it does not claim to be quoted with verbal exactitude, but only to give the gist of the argument.

⁴ The epithet is Mr. Huxley’s. In his lecture in Edinburgh in 1868, *On the Physical Basis of Life*, this great opponent remarked that Auguste “Comte’s philosophy in practice might be compendiously described as *Catholicism minus Christianity*, and antagonistic to the very essence of Science.”

⁵ Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Brussels, in a philosophical *Essay on the religious meaning of the “Unknowable.”*

as that remarkable writer is alleged to imply, that “religious feeling tends to free itself from every moral element”; or, shall we accept the other extremity and agree with the Comtists, that gradually, religion will blend itself with, merge into, and disappear in *altruism* and its service to Humanity?

Useless to say that Theosophy, while rejecting the one-sided-ness and therefore the *limitation* in both ideas, is alone able to reconcile the two, *i.e.*, the Evolutionists and the Positivists—on both metaphysical and practical lines. How to do this it is not here the place to say, as every Theosophist acquainted with the main tenets of the Esoteric Philosophy can do it for himself. We believe in an impersonal “Unknowable” and know well that the ABSOLUTE, or Absoluteness, can have nought to do with worship on anthropomorphic lines; Theosophy rejects the Spencerian “He” and substitutes the impersonal It for the personal pronoun, whenever speaking of the Absolute and the “Unknowable.” And it teaches, as foremost of all virtues, *altruism* and self-sacrifice, brotherhood and compassion for every living creature, without, for all that, worshipping Man or Humanity. In the Positivist, moreover, who admits of no immortal soul in men, believes in no future life or reincarnation, such a “worship” becomes worse than fetishism: it is *Zoolatry*, the worship of the animals. For that alone which constitutes the *real* Man is, in the words of Carlyle, “the essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself T— . . . a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals himself in man.” This denied, man is but an animal—the shame and scandal of the Universe,” as Pascal puts it.

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

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

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

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

and built therewith a *city and a tower*.”

So far, this is a very old story, known as well to a Sunday school ragamuffin as to Mr. Gladstone. Both believe very sincerely that these descendants of the “accursed Ham” were proud sinners whose object was like that of the Titans, to insult and dethrone Zeus-Jehovah, by reaching “heaven,” the supposed abode of both. But since we find the story told in the *revealed*⁶ Scriptures, it must, like all the rest in them, have its esoteric interpretation. In this, Occult symbolism will help us. All the expressions that we have italicized, when read in the original Hebrew and according to the canons of esoteric symbolism, will yield quite a different construction. Thus:

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

Now the Kabalistic meaning of the term “words” and “word” may be found in the *Zohar* and also in the *Talmud*. “Words” (*Dabarim*) mean “powers,” and *word*, in the singular, is a synonym of Wisdom; e.g., “By the uttering of *ten words* was the world created”—(*Talmud* “Pirkey Aboth” c. 5., *Mish.* i). Here the “words” refer to the ten Sephiroth, Builders of the Universe. Again: “By the *Word*, (Wisdom, Logos) of YHVH were the Heavens made” (*ibid.*).

2-4. “And the man⁷ (the chief leader) said to his neighbour, ‘Go to, let us make *bricks* (disciples) *and burn them to a burning* (initiate, fill them with sacred fire), let us build us a *city* (establish mysteries

⁶ A curious and rather unfortunate word to use, since, as a translation from the Latin *revelare*, it signifies diametrically the opposite of the now accepted meaning in English. For the word “to reveal” or “revealed” is derived from the Latin *revelare*, “to reveil” and not to *reveal*, *i.e.*, from *re* “again” or “back” and *vel/ore* “to veil,” or to hide something, from the word *velum* or “a veil” (or veil), a cover. Thus, instead of un veiling, or revealing, Moses has truly only “reveiled” once more the Egypto-Chal-dean theological legends and allegories, into which, as one “learned in all the wisdom of Egypt” he had been initiated. Yet Moses was not the first revealer or reveiler, as Ragon well observes. Thousands of years before him Hermes was credited with veiling over the Indian mysteries to adapt them for the land of the Pharaohs. Of course, at present there is no longer classical authority to satisfy the orthodox philologist, but the occult authority which maintains that originally the word *revelare* meant to “veil once more,” and hence that revelation means the throwing a veil over a subject, a *blind*—is positively overwhelming.

⁷ This is translated from the Hebrew original. “Chief-leader” (*Rab-Mag*) meaning literally Teacher-Magician, Master or *Guru*, as Daniel is shown to have been in Babylon.

and teach *the Doctrine*⁸) and a *tower* (*Ziggurrat*, a sacred temple tower) whose top may reach unto heaven' “(the highest limit reachable in space). The great tower of Nebo, of *Nabi* on the temple of Bel, was called “the house of the seven spheres of heaven and earth,^f and “the house of the stronghold (or strength, *tagimut*) and the foundation stone of heaven and earth.”

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

“And *Adonai* (the Lord) came down and said: ‘Behold, the people *is one* (the people are united in thought and deed) and they have *one lip* (doctrine).’ And now they begin to spread it and ‘nothing will be restrained from them (they will have full magic powers and get all they want by such power, *Kriyasakti*,) *that they have imagined*’.”

And now what are the *Yezidis* and their version and what is *Adonai*? *Ad* is “the Lord,” their ancestral god; and the *Yezidis* are a heretical Mussulman sect, scattered over Armenia, Syria, and especially Mosul, the very site of Babel (see “Chaldean Account of Genesis”), who are known under the strange name of “Devil-worshippers.” Their confession of faith is very original. They recognize two powers or gods—Allah and *Ad*, (or *Adonai*) but identify the latter with *Sheitan* or *Satan*. This is but natural since *Satan* is also “a son of god”⁹ (see Job i). As stated in the *Hibbert Lectures* (pp. 346 and 347), *Satan* the “Adversary,” was the minister and *angel of God*. Hence, when questioned on the cause of their curious worship of one who has become the embodiment of Evil and the dark spirit of the

⁸ Some Homeric heroes also when they are said, like Laomedon, Priam's father, to have built cities, were in reality establishing the *Mysteries* and introducing the Wisdom-Religion in foreign lands.

Earth, they explain the reason in a most logical, if irreverent, manner. They tell you that Allah, being *All-good*, would not harm the smallest of his creatures. *Ergo*, has he no need of prayers, or burnt-offerings of the “firstlings of the flock and the fat thereof.” But that their *Ad*, or the Devil, being *All-bad*, cruel, jealous, revengeful and proud, they have, in self-preservation, to propitiate him with sacrifices and burnt offerings smelling sweet in his nostrils, and to coax and flatter him. Ask any Sheik of the *Yezidis* of Mosul what they have to say, as to the confusion of tongues, or speech when *Allah* “came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men had builded”; and they will tell you it is not Allah but *Ad*, the god *Sheitan*, who did it. The jealous genius of the earth became envious of the powers and sanctity of men (as the god *Vishnu* becomes jealous of the great powers of the *Yogis*, even when they were *Daityas*); and therefore this deity of matter and concupiscence confused their brains, tempted and made the “Builders” fall into his nets; and thus, having lost their purity, they lost therewith their knowledge and magic powers, intermarried and became “scattered upon the face of the earth.”

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

⁹ It is commanded in Ecclesiasticus XXI, 30, not to curse Satan, “lest one should forfeit his own life.” Why? Because in their permutations “the Lord God,” Moses, and Satan are one. The name the Jews gave while in Babylon to their exoteric God, the substitute for the true Deity of which they never spoke or wrote was the Assyrian Mosheh or Adar, the god of the scorching sun (the “Lord thy God is a consuming flame” verily!) and therefore, Mosheh or Moses, shone also. In Egypt, Typhon (Satan) the red, was identified both with the red Ass or Typhon called Set or Seth (and worshipped by the Hittites) and the same as E/ (the Sun god of the Assyrians and the Semites, or Jehovah), and with Moses, the red, also. (See Isis Unv. Vol. II. 523-24.) For Moses was red-skinned. According to the Zohar (Vol. I p. 28) B' sar d' Mosheh soomaq, i.e., “the flesh of Moses was deep red,” and the words refer to the saying, “The face of Moses was like the face of the Sun” (see Qabbalah by Isaac Myer p. 93). These three were the three aspects of the manifested God (the substitute for Ain Suph the infinite Deity) or Nature, in its three chief Kingdoms—the Fiery or Solar, the Human or Watery, the Animal or Earthy. There never was a Mosheh or Moses, before the Captivity and Ezra, the deep Kabalist; and what is now Moses had another name 2 000 years before. Where are the Hebrew scrolls before that time? Moreover, we find a corroboration of this in Dr. Sayce's Hibbert Lectures (1887). Adar is the Assyrian “War God” or the Lord of Hosts and the same as Moloch. The Assyrian equivalent of Mosheh (Moses) is Masu, the “double” or the “twin,” and Masu is the title of Adar, meaning also a “hero.” No one who reads carefully the said Lectures from page 40 to 58, can fail to see that Jehovah, Masu and Adar, with several others—are permutations.

confusion of *speech*. “I have translated the word ‘speech’ with a prejudice,” he says (*Chaldean account of Genesis*, p. 163), “I have never seen the Assyrian word with this meaning.” Anyone who reads for himself the fragmentary translation by G. Smith, on pages 160-163 in the volume cited, will find the version much nearer to that of the *Yezidis* than to the version of *Genesis*. It is he, whose “heart was evil” and who was “wicked,” who confused “their counsel,” not their “speech,” and who broke “the Sanctuary . . . which carried Wisdom,” and “bitterly they wept at Babel.”

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

The slack sail shifts from side to side;
The boat untrimm’d admits the tide;
Borne down adrift, at random toss’d,
The oar breaks short, . . . the rudder’s lost.

Theosophist, December, 1879

THE SEVENTEEN-RAYED SUN-DISC

[The following interesting letter was received by us from Fresno, California. As it is a private one, we can give but extracts from it.—*Ed.*]

Exploring Copan and Quinqua in Honduras and Guatemala last year, I had the good fortune to make a discovery, which I am sure will interest you. As you are aware, the most prominent sculptured monuments in Copan consist of four-sided columns of from 10 to 12 feet high. These columns represent generally only on one side large sculptured personages in high relief.

The other sides again contain ornaments and glyphic inscriptions, hitherto not read or deciphered. One pillar not previously described, however, contains only hieroglyphics arranged on all sides. It seems to be a record perhaps of laws, perhaps of historical events. This pillar is about 10 feet high, and the sides 3 and 4 feet wide respectively. But the most remarkable is that this pillar was covered by a cap in the shape of a very low truncate pyramid. On this pyramid was seen a forced dead head of colossal dimensions and surrounding the same was an expanded “sun-disc,” crowning the very cap. The rays of the sun-disc were distinctly marked. The similarity of the same and the sun discs common in the Egyptian monuments was so marked, that it immediately struck me that the *number of rays* must be 17, the sacred number of the Egyptian sun-disc. Upon counting the rays they were found to be as expected—17.

Now is this a pure “coincidence” or is it another link in the broken and scattered chain, whose finding points toward an ancient connection between the Central American peoples, the Mayas and other races, and the Egyptians by means of a connecting Atlantis?

Another curiosity, naturally a “coincidence,” “is worthy of notice. One of these sculptured personages dressed in priestly robes and

holding in his hand a small square box, has his legs above the sandals ornamented with the CRESCENT. The same sign was used by the Romans to signify immortality and similarly placed above the sandals.

Cannot your trans-Himalayan Brothers give us any clue to these hieroglyphics inscribed on the Central American Monuments? Or have you no Psychometrists who could decipher them psycho-metrically? If any one should be willing to try to do so, I would send him a small portion of one of the glyphs I have in my possession, and may be some good will come out of it.

E. G.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Assuredly the discovery mentioned in the above letter,—the pillar with its 17-rayed sun-disc,—points once more to an ancient connexion between the Central American peoples and the lost continent of Atlantis. The uniformity in the symbolical meanings of American antiquities, and of antiquities connected with “the wisdom religion” in Egypt or any other parts of Europe or Asia where they may be observed, is certainly far more remarkable than would be agreeable to theorists who wish to account for it by help of that hard-worked servant—coincidence. It has been traced with great patience through many different departments of archaeology by Mr. Donnelly in his recent “Atlantis; or the Antediluvian World.” The second part of the title of this volume, by the by, will not be quite acceptable to students of the subject who approach it from the side of occult science. The deluge is better left alone until cosmogony is more generally understood than at present. There is no one deluge that can conveniently be taken as a turning point in the world's history,—with everything before that antediluvian, and everything of later date—postdiluvian. There have been many such deluges cutting the various races of mankind at the appointed time in their development. The situation has already been referred to in the “Fragments of Occult Truth.” During the occupation of the Earth for one period by the great tidal wave of humanity, seven great races are successively developed, their end being in every case marked by a tremendous cataclysm which changes the face of the earth in the distribution of land and water. The present race of mankind, as often stated, is the fifth race. The inhabitants of the great continent of Atlantis were the fourth race. When they were in their prime, the European continent was not in existence as we know it now, but none the less was there free communication between Atlantis and such portions of Europe as did exist, and Egypt. The ancient Egyptians themselves were not an Atlantic colony. Mr. Donnelly is mistaken on that point, but the wisdom Religion of the initiates was certainly identical and hence the identities of symbolical sculpture. This is what the “Himalayan Brothers” say; whether any of our

psychometrists will see any further, depends on the degree of their development, at any rate, we accept the offer of our esteemed correspondent with thanks and will expect the promised portion of the glyph, before we venture to say anything further.

Theosophist, December, 1883

A MYSTERIOUS RACE

WHILE travelling from the landing place—on the Madras “Buckingham Canal”—to Nellore, we were made to experience the novel sensation of a transit of fifteen miles in comfortable modern carriages each briskly dragged by a dozen of strong, merry men, whom we took for ordinary Hindus of some of the lower or Pariah caste. The contrast offered us by the sight of these noisy, apparently well-contented men to our palankin-bearers, who had just carried us for fifty-five miles across the sandy, hot plains that stretch between Padagangam on the same canal and Guntoor—as affording relief—was great. These palankin-bearers, we were told, were of the washerman’s caste, and had hard times working night and day, never having regular hours for sleep, earning but a few *pice* a day, and when the *pice* had the good chance of being transformed into *annas*, existing upon the luxury of a *mud-soup* made out of husks and damaged rice, and called by them “pepper-water.” Naturally enough, we regarded our human carriage-steeds as identical with the palankin-bearers. We were speedily disabused, being told by one of our Brother members—Mr. Kasava Pillai, Secretary to our Nellore Theosophical Society—that the two classes had nothing in common. The former were low caste Hindus, the latter—*Yanadhis*. The information received about this tribe was so interesting, that we now give it to our readers, as we then received it.

WHO ARE THE YANADHIS?

The word *Yanadhi* is a corruption of the word “Anathi” (Aborigines), meaning “having no beginning.” The Yanadhis live mostly in the Nellore District, Madras Presidency, along the coast. They are divided into two classes: (1) *Cappaia* or *Challa*, “frog-eaters,”

“refuse-eaters”; and (2) the Yanadhis proper, or the “good Yanadhis.” The first class lives, as a rule, separated from the Sudra population of the district, and earns its living by hard work. The *Cappala* are employed to drag carts and carriages in lieu of cattle, as horses are very scarce and too expensive to maintain in this district. The second class, or *Yanadhis* proper, live partly in villages and partly in the jungles, assisting the farmers in tilling the land, as in all other agricultural occupations.

Yet both classes are renowned for their mysterious knowledge of the occult properties of nature, and are regarded as practical magicians.

Both are fond of sport and great hunters of rats and bandicoots. They catch the field-mouse by digging, and the fish by using simply their hands without the usual help of either angle or net. They belong to the Mongolian race, their colour varying from light brown to a very dark *sepia* shade. Their dress consists of a piece of cloth to tie around the head, and of another one to go round the waist. They live in small circular huts of about 8 feet in diameter, having an entrance of about lip. in width. Before building the huts they describe large circles round the place where the huts are to be built, muttering certain words of magic, which are supposed to keep evil spirits, influences and snakes from approaching their dwelling places. They plant round their huts certain herbs believed to possess the virtue of keeping off venomous reptiles. It is really astonishing to find in those little huts two dozens of persons living, for a Yanadhi rarely has less than a dozen of children. Their diet consists chiefly of rats, bandicoots, field mice, cangi, guano, and little rice—even wild roots often forming part of their food. Their diet, in a great measure, explains their physical peculiarities. Field-mice account partly for their having so many children each. They live to a good old age; and it is only very seldom that one sees a man with grey hairs. This is attributed to the starch in the cangi they daily drink, and the easy and careless lives they lead.

Their extraordinary merit consists in the intimate knowledge they possess of the occult virtues of roots, green herbs, and other plants. They can extract the virtue of these plants, and neutralize the most

fatal poisons of venomous reptiles; and even very ferocious cobras are seen to sink their hoods before a certain green leaf. The names, identity and the knowledge of these plants they keep most secret. Cases of snake-bite have never been heard of among them, though they live in jungles and the most insecure places, whereas death by snake-bite is common among the higher classes. Devil possession is very seldom among their women. They extract a most efficacious *remedy*, or rather a decoction from more than a hundred different roots, and it is said to possess incalculable virtues for curing any malady.

In cases of extreme urgency and fatal sickness they consult their seer (often one for 20 or 25 families), who invokes their tutelary deity by sounding a drum, with a woman singing to it, and with a fire in front. After an hour or two he falls into a trance, or works himself into a state, during which he can tell the cause of the sickness, and prescribe a certain secret remedy, which, when paid and administered the patient is cured. It is supposed that the spirit of the deceased, whose name they have dishonoured, or the deity whom they have neglected, tells them through the medium of the seer, why they were visited with the calamity, exacts of them promise of good behaviour in future, and disappears after an advice. It is not unfrequently that men of high caste, such as Brahmins, have had recourse to them for such information, and consulted with them with advantage. *The seer grows his hair and iets no razor pass his head.* The Yanadhis shave their heads with the sharp end of a glass piece. The ceremonies of naming a child, marriage and journeys, and such other things, are likewise consulted.

They possess such an acute sense of smell, or rather sensitiveness, that they can see where a bird they require is, or where the object of their game is hiding itself. They are employed as guards and watchmen for the rare power they have in finding and tracing out a thief or a stranger from his foot-marks. Suppose a stranger visited their village at night, a Yanadhi could say that the village was visited by him (a stranger) by simply looking at the footsteps.

Theosophist, December, 1879

CHRISTMAS THEN AND CHRISTMAS NOW

WE are reaching the time of the year when the whole Christian world is preparing to celebrate the most noted of its solemnities—the birth of the Founder of their religion. When this paper reaches its Western subscribers, there will be festivity and rejoicing in every house. In North Western Europe and in America the holly and ivy will decorate each home, and the churches bedecked with evergreens; a custom derived from the ancient practices of the pagan Druids “that sylvan spirits might flock to the evergreens, and remain unrippd by frost till a milder season.” In Roman Catholic countries large crowds flock during the whole evening and night of “Christmas-eve” to the churches, to salute waxen images of the divine Infant, and his Virgin mother, in her garb of “Queen of Heaven.” To an analytical mind, this bravery of rich gold and lace, pearl-broidered satin and velvet, and the bejewelled cradle do seem rather paradoxical. When one thinks of the poor, worm-eaten, dirty manger of the Jewish country-inn, in which, if we must credit the Gospel, the future “Redeemer” was placed at his birth for lack of a better shelter, we cannot help suspecting that before the dazzled eyes of the unsophisticated devotee the Bethlehem stable vanishes altogether. To put it in the mildest terms, this gaudy display tallies ill with the democratic feelings and the truly divine contempt for riches of the “Son of Man,” who had “not where to lay his head.” It makes it all the harder for the average Christian to regard the explicit statement that—“it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven,” as anything more than a rhetorical threat. The Roman Church acted wisely in severely forbidding her parishioners to either read or interpret the Gospels for themselves, and leaving the Book, as long as it was

possible, to proclaim its truths in Latin—"the voice of one crying in the wilderness." In that, she but followed the wisdom of the ages—the wisdom of the old Aryans, which is also "justified of her children"; for, as neither the modern Hindu devotee understands a word of the Sanskrit, nor the modern Parsi one syllable of the Zend, so for the average Roman Catholic the Latin is no better than Hieroglyphics. The result is that all the three—Brahmanical High Priest, Zoroastrian Mobed, and Roman Catholic Pontiff, are allowed unlimited opportunities for evolving new religious dogmas out of the depths of their own fancy, for the benefit of their respective churches.

To usher in this great day, the bells are set merrily ringing at midnight, throughout England and the Continent. In France and Italy, after the celebration of the mass in churches magnificently decorated, "it is usual for the revellers to partake of a collation (*reveillon*) that they may be better able to sustain the fatigues of the night," saith a book treating upon Popish church ceremonials. This night of Christian fasting reminds one of the *Sivaratree* of the followers of the god Siva,—the great day of gloom and fasting, in the 11th month of the Hindu year. Only, with the latter, the night's long vigil is preceded and followed by a strict and rigid fasting. No *reveillons* or compromises for them. True, they are but wicked "heathens," and therefore their way to salvation must be tenfold harder.

Though now universally observed by Christian nations as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus, the 25th of December was not originally so accepted. The most movable of the Christian feast days, during the early centuries, Christmas was often confounded with the Epiphany, and celebrated in the months of April and May. As there never was any authentic record or proof of its identification, whether in secular or ecclesiastical history, the selection of that day long remained optional; and it was only during the 4th century that, urged by Cyril of Jerusalem, the Pope (Julius I) ordered the bishops to make an investigation and come finally to *some* agreement as to the *presumable* date of the nativity of Christ. Their choice fell upon the 25th Day of December,—and a most unfortunate choice it has since proved! It was Dupuis, followed by Volney, who aimed the first shots

at this natal anniversary. They proved that for incalculable periods before our era, upon very clear astronomical data, nearly all the ancient peoples had celebrated the births of their sun-gods on that very day. "Dupuis shows that the celestial sign of the VIRGIN AND CHILD WAS IN EXISTENCE SEVERAL THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE CHRIST" —remarks Higgins in his *Anacalypsis*. As Dupuis, Volney, and Higgins have all been passed over to posterity as infidels, and enemies of Christianity, it may be as *well* to quote, in this relation, the confessions of the Christian Bishop of Ratisbone, "the most learned man that the middle ages produced"—the Dominican, Albertus Magnus. "The sign of the celestial Virgin rises above the horizon at the moment in *which we fix the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ*" he says, in the *Recherches historiques sur Falaise, par Langevin pretre*. So Adonis, Bacchus, Osiris, Apollo, etc., were all born on the 25th of December. Christmas comes just at the time of the winter solstice; the days then are shortest, and *Darkness* is more upon the face of the earth than ever. All the sun Gods were believed to be annually born at that epoch; for from this time its Light dispels more and more darkness with each succeeding day, and the power of the *Sun* begins to increase. However it may be, the Christmas festivities, that were held by the Christians for nearly fifteen centuries, were of a particularly pagan character. Nay, we are afraid that even the present ceremonies of the church can hardly escape the reproach of being almost literally copied from the mysteries of Egypt and Greece, held in honour of Osiris and Horus, Apollo and Bacchus. Both Isis and Ceres were called "Holy Virgins," and a DIVINE BABE may be found in every "heathen" religion. We will now draw two pictures of the Merrie Christmas; one portraying the "good old times," and the other the present state of Christian worship. From the first days of its establishment as Christmas, the day was regarded in the double light of a holy commemoration and a most cheerful festivity: it was equally given up to devotion and insane merriment. "Among the revels of the Christmas season were the so-called feasts of fools and of asses, grotesque saturnalia, which were termed 'December liberties', in which everything serious was burlesqued, the order of society reversed, and its decencies

ridiculed”—says one compiler of old chronicles. “During the Middle Ages, it was celebrated by the gay fantastic spectacle of dramatic mysteries, performed by personages in grotesque masks and singular costumes. The show usually represented an infant in a cradle, surrounded by the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, by bull’s heads, cherubs, Eastern Magi, (the Mobeds of old) and manifold ornaments.” The custom of singing canticles at Christmas, called Carols, was to recall the songs of the shepherds at the Nativity. “The bishops and the clergy often joined with the populace in carolling, and the songs were enlivened by dances, and by the music of tambours, guitars, violins and organs. . . . “ We may add that down to the present times, during the days preceding Christmas, such mysteries are being enacted, with marionettes and dolls, in Southern Russia, Poland, and Galicia; and known as the *Kalidowki*. In Italy, Calabrian minstrels descend from their mountains to Naples and Rome, and crowd the shrines of the Virgin-Mother, cheering her with their wild Music.

In England, the revels used to begin on Christmas eve, and continue often till Candlemas (Feb. 2), every day being a holiday till Twelfth-night (Jan. 6). In the houses of great nobles a “lord of misrule,” or “abbot of unreason” was appointed, whose duty it was to play the part of a buffoon. “The larder was filled with capons, hens, turkeys, geese, ducks, beef, mutton, pork, pies, puddings, nuts, plums, sugar and honey.” . . . “A glowing fire, made of great logs, the principal of which was termed the ‘Yule log,’ or Christmas block, which might be burnt till Candlemas eve, kept out the cold; and the abundance was shared by the lord’s tenants amid music, conjuring, riddles, hot-cockles, fool-plough, snap-dragon, jokes, laughter, repartees, forfeits, and dances.”

In our modern times, the bishops and the clergy join no more with the populace in open carolling and dancing; and feasts of “fools and of asses” are enacted more in sacred privacy than under the eyes of the dangerous argus-eyed reporter. Yet the eating and drinking festivities are preserved throughout the Christian world; and, more sudden deaths are doubtless caused by gluttony and intemperance during the Christmas and Easter holidays, than at any other time of

the year. Yet, Christian worship becomes every year more and more a false pretence. The heart-lessness of this lip-service has been denounced innumerable times, but never, we think, with a more affecting touch of realism than in a charming dream-tale, which appeared in the *New York Herald* about last Christmas. An aged man, presiding at a public meeting, said he would avail himself of the opportunity to relate a vision he had witnessed on the previous night. “He thought he was standing in the pulpit of the most gorgeous and magnificent cathedral he had ever seen. Before him was the priest or pastor of the church, and beside him stood an angel with a tablet and pencil in hand, whose mission it was to make record of every act of worship or prayer that transpired in his presence and ascended as an acceptable offering to the throne of God. Every pew was filled with richly-attired worshippers of either sex. The most sublime music that ever fell on his enraptured ear filled the air with melody. All the beautiful ritualistic church services, including a surpassingly eloquent sermon from the gifted minister, had in turn transpired, and yet the recording angel made no entry in his tablet! The congregation were at length dismissed by the pastor with a lengthy and beautifully-worded prayer, followed by a benediction, and yet the angel made no sign!” “Attended still by the angel, the speaker left the door of the church in rear of the richly-attired congregation. A poor, tattered castaway stood in the gutter beside the curbstone, with her pale, famished hand extended, silently pleading for alms. As the richly-attired worshippers from the church passed by, they shrank from the poor Magdalen, the ladies withdrawing aside their silken, jewel bedecked robes, lest they should be polluted by her touch.” “Just then an intoxicated sailor came reeling down the sidewalk on the other side. When he got opposite the poor forsaken girl, he staggered across the street to where she stood, and, taking a few pennies from his pocket, he thrust them into her hand, accompanied with the adjuration, ‘Here, you poor forsaken cuss, take this!’ A celestial radiance now lighted up the face of the recording angel, who instantly entered the sailor’s act of sympathy and charity in his tablet, and departed with it as a sweet sacrifice to God.”

A concretion, one might say, of the Biblical story of the judgment upon the woman taken in adultery. Be it so; yet it portrays with a master hand the state of our Christian society.

According to tradition, on Christmas eve, the oxen may always be found on their knees, as though in prayer and devotion; and, “there was a famous hawthorn in the churchyard of Glastonbury Abbey, which always budded on the 24th, and blossomed on the 25th of December”; which, considering that the day was chosen by the Fathers of the church at random, and that the calendar has been changed from the old to the new style, shows a remarkable perspicacity in both the animal and the vegetable! There is also a tradition of the church, preserved to us by Olaus, archbishop of Upsal, that, at the festival of Christmas, “the men, living in the cold Northern parts, are suddenly and strangely metamorphosed into wolves; and that a huge multitude of them meet together at an appointed place and rage so fiercely against mankind, that it suffers more from their attacks than ever they do from the natural wolves.” Metaphorically viewed, this would seem to be more than ever the case with men, and particularly with Christian nations, now. There seems no need to wait for Christmas eve to see whole nations changed into “wild beasts”—especially in time of war.

Lucifer, October, 1891

THE EIGHTH WONDER

BY AN “UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER”

(Written in 1889)

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

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

statue of Liberty.

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

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

Fane of the Ephesian Diana, what temple shall ever equal thee in poetry! Modern statues, whether equestrian or pedestrian, that now

fill the halls of the French Exhibition, which of you can ever put to blush the astral eidolon of the Olympian Jupiter by Phidias? To which of the sculptors or painters of our proud era shall a modern Philippus of Thessalonica address the words spoken to the divine Greek artist: “O Phidias, either the God has descended from heaven on earth to show himself to thee, or it is thou who hast ascended to contemplate the God!”

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

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

Jared,” Khanoch the Initiator, no true Mason ought to run over to gay Paris, with such a treasure within his reach.

But we have still the Pyramids of Egypt left to us to admire and unravel—if we can. The pyramid of Cheops is the sphinx and wonder of our century, as it was that of the age of Herodotus. We see only its skeleton, whereas the “Father of History” examined it with its outer coating of immaculate marble. It was defiled, however, with the record of 1,600 talents¹ spent only in radishes, onions and garlic for the workmen. Let us pause, before we turn our olfactory organ from the emanations of such un-poetical food. For with the ancients was wisdom, though it passeth now our understanding. Let us hesitate before we pass judgment lest we should be caught in our own craftiness. The said onions and garlic may be as symbolical as the Pythagorean beans. Let us humbly wait till better understanding descends upon us. *Quien sabe?* The beautiful outer casing of both the pyramids— of Cheops and Sen-Saophis—has disappeared, engulfed in the palaces of Cairo and other cities. And with them are gone inscriptions and engraved records and cunning hieratic symbols. Does not the “Father of History” confess his dislike to speaking of things divine, and does he not avoid dwelling on symbology? Let us seek light and help from the great learned Orientalists, the artificers of Greek Speech and Akkadian Lampesuk. We have hitherto learnt many a strange story. Perchance we may be yet told that these “radishes, onions and garlic” are but so many “*solar* myths” and—blush for our ignorance.

But what was the fate of the last of the Seven Wonders of the World? Where are we to look for the relics of the brazen giant, the Colossus of Rhodes, whose mighty feet trod upon the two moles which formed the gate of the harbour and between whose legs ships passed full sail, and sailors hurried with their votive offerings? History tells us that the *chef d’oeuvre* of the disciple of Lysippus, who passed

¹ £444,000 in English money.

twelve years in making it, was *partially* destroyed by an earthquake 224 B.C. It remained for about 894 years in ruins. Historians are *not in* the habit of telling people what became of the remains of the six wonders; nor that every great nation possessed its seven wonders—witness China, which had its Porcelain Tower of Nankin,² now, as says a writer, only “found piecemeal in walls of peasants’ huts.” Yet it is rumoured in some old chronicles that the poor Colossus was sold to a Jew.

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

“The Saracen having destroyed and despoiled the Roman land ceaseth not his wicked depredation even on the sea.³ Their leader Maguvius, strong and terrible, returneth to Rhodos the island, marcheth to the brazen idol, whose name was Colossus (*sic*), the idol exalted as the seventh World-Wonder, and which stood over the Rhodos harbour. His height was twenty-and-one-hun-dred feet (*stopa*).⁴ Soil-covered and moss-grown was the idol since its upper part fell to the ground, but he had remained otherwise whole to that very day. Maguvius overthrew the trunk-less legs and *sold them with the rest to a Jew*. Sad was the end of that world wonder.”

And elsewhere the chronographer adds that the Jew’s name was Aaron of Edessa. He is not the only one to volunteer the information. Other old writers add that the Jew having broken up the Colossus, with the help of the Saracen warriors, into pieces, loaded 900 camels

² Gutzlaff, *Hist. China*, Vol. I, p. 372

³ The original of this passage being written in old Church Slavonian can hardly be translated in all its originality, which is very queer.

⁴ Some classics give it only 105 feet feet or 70 cubits.

with them. The value of the brass material reached £36,000 English money in the Eastern markets. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

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

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

somehow or somewhere Karma involved in that business. Few are those Potentates who do not find themselves head over ears—golden thrones and breadless subjects—in debt with one or other king of Jewry. After all, the “Lord,” by whose grace they are all enthroned, from the late King Soulouk to the latest Prince of Bulgaria, is the same El-Shadai, the omnipotent, the mighty Jehovah-Izabaoth, the god whom they, or their fathers—which is all one to him “to whom a thousand years are as one day”—have unlawfully carried off from his “Holy of Holies” and confined in their own altars. The sons of Israel are, in fact and justice, his legitimate children, his “chosen people.” Hence it would only be a piece of retributive justice, a kind of tardy Nemesis, should the day come when the Jew, claiming his own, shall carry off as old material the last of the kings, before he proceeds to paint afresh, as new goods, the globe itself.

H. P. B.

Theosophist, July, 1880

THE THEORY OF CYCLES

IT is now some time since this theory, which was first propounded in the oldest religion of the world, Vedaism, then taught by various Greek philosophers, and afterwards defended by the Theosophists of the Middle Ages, but which came to be flatly denied by the *wise men* of the West, like everything else, in this world of negation, has been gradually coming into prominence again. This once, contrary to the rule, it is the men of science themselves who take up. Statistics of events of the most varied nature are fast being collected and collated with the seriousness demanded by important scientific questions. Statistics of wars and of the periods (or cycles) of the appearance of great men—at least those as have been recognised as such by their contemporaries and irrespective of later opinions; statistics of the periods of development and progress at large commercial centres; of the rise and fall of arts and sciences; of cataclysms, such as earthquakes, epidemics; periods of extraordinary cold and heat; cycles of revolutions, and of the rise and fall of empires, &c.; all these are subjected in turn to the analysis of the minutest mathematical calculations. Finally, even the occult significance of numbers in names of persons and names of cities, in events, and like matters, receives unwonted attention. If, on the one hand, a great portion of the educated public is running into atheism and scepticism, on the other hand, we find an evident current of mysticism forcing its way into science. It is the sign of an irrepressible need in humanity to assure itself that there is a Power Paramount over matter; an occult and mysterious law which governs the world, and which we should rather study and closely watch, trying to adapt ourselves to it, than blindly deny, and break our heads against the rock

of destiny. More than one thoughtful mind, while studying the fortunes and reverses of nations and great empires, has been deeply struck by one identical feature in their history, namely, the inevitable recurrence of similar historical events reaching in turn every one of them, and after the same lapse of time. This analogy is found between the events to be substantially the same on the whole, though there may be more or less difference as to the outward form of details. Thus, the belief of the ancients in their astrologers, soothsayers and prophets might have been warranted by the verification of many of their most important predictions, without these prognostications of future events implying of necessity anything very miraculous in themselves. The soothsayers and augurs having occupied in days of the old civilizations the very same position now occupied by our historians, astronomers and meteorologists, there was nothing more wonderful in the fact of the former predicting the downfall of an empire or the loss of a battle, than in the latter predicting the return of a comet, a change of temperature, or, perhaps, the final conquest of Afghanistan. The necessity for both these classes being acute, observers apart, there was the study of certain sciences to be pursued *then* as well as they are *now*. The science of today will have become an “ancient” science a thousand years hence. Free and open, scientific study now is to all, whereas it was then confined but to the few. Yet, whether ancient or modern, both may be called exact sciences; for, if the astronomer of today draws his observations from mathematical calculations, the astrologer of old also based his prognostication upon no less acute and mathematically correct observations of the ever-recurring cycles. And, because the secret of this science is now being lost, does that give any warrant to say that it never existed, or that, to believe in it, one must be ready to swallow “magic,” “miracles” and the like stuff? “If, in view of the eminence to which modern science has reached, the claim to prophesy future events must be regarded as either a child’s play or a deliberate deception,” says a writer in the *Novoye Vremya*, the best daily paper of literature and politics of St. Petersburg, “then we can point at science which, in its turn, has now taken up and placed on record the question, in its relation to past events, whether

there is or is not in the constant repetition of events a certain periodicity; in other words, whether these events recur after a fixed and determined period of years with every nation; and if a periodicity there be, whether this periodicity is due to blind chance or depends on the same natural laws, on which are more or less dependent many of the phenomena of human life.” Undoubtedly the latter. And the writer has the best mathematical proof of it in the timely appearance of such works as that of Dr. E. Zasse, under review, and of a few others. Several learned works, treating upon this mystical subject, have appeared of late, and of some of these works and calculations we will now treat; the more readily as they are in most cases from the pens of men of eminent learning. Having already in the June number of the THEOSOPHIST noticed an article by Dr. Blohvit *On the significance of the number Seven*, with every nation and people—a learned paper which appeared lately in the German journal *Die Gegenwart*—we will now summarize the opinions of the press in general, on a more suggestive work by a well-known German scientist, E. Zasse, with certain reflections of our own. It has just appeared in the *Prussian Journal of Statistics*, and powerfully corroborates the ancient theory of Cycles. These periods, which bring around ever-recurring events, begin from the infinitesimal small—say of ten years—rotation and reach to cycles which require 250 500 700 and 1000 years, to effect their revolutions around themselves, and within one another. All are contained within the *Maha-Yug*, the “Great Age” or Cycle of the Manu calculation, which itself revolves between two eternities—the “Pralayas” or *Nights of Brahma*. As, in the objective world of matter, or the system of effects, the minor constellations and planets gravitate each and all around the sun, so in the world of the subjective, or the system of causes, these innumerable cycles all gravitate between that which the finite intellect of the ordinary mortal regards as eternity, and the still finite, but more profound, intuition of the sage and philosopher views as but an eternity within THE ETERNITY. “As above so it is below,” runs the old Hermetic maxim. As an experiment in this direction, Dr. Zasse selected the statistical investigations of all the wars, the occurrence of which has been recorded in history, as a

subject which lends itself more easily to scientific verification than any other. To illustrate his subject in the simplest and most easily comprehensible way, Dr. Zasse represents the periods of war and the periods of peace in the shape of small and large wave-lines running over the area of the old world. The idea is not a new one, for, the image was used for similar illustrations by more than one ancient and mediaeval mystic, whether in words or picture—by Henry Kunrath, for example. But it serves well its purpose and gives us the facts we now want. Before he treats however, of the cycles of wars, the author brings in the record of the rise and fall of the world’s great empires, and shows the degree of activity they have played in the Universal History. He points out the fact that if we divide the map of the Old World into five parts—into Eastern, Central, and Western Asia, Eastern and Western Europe, and Egypt—then we will easily perceive that every 250 years, an enormous wave passes over these areas, bringing into each in its turn the events it has brought to the one next preceding. This wave we may call “the historical wave” of the 250 years’ cycle. The reader will please follow this mystical number of years.

The first of these waves began in China, 2,000 years B.C.—the “golden age” of this Empire, the age of philosophy, of discoveries and reforms. “In 1750 B.C., the Mongolians of Central Asia establish a powerful empire. In 1500, Egypt rises from its temporary degradation and carries its sway over many parts of Europe and Asia; and about 1250, the historical wave reaches and crosses over to Eastern Europe, filling it with the spirit of the Argonautic expedition, and dies out in 1000 B.C. at the siege of Troy.”

A second historical wave appears about that time in Central Asia. “The Scythians leave her steppes, and inundate towards the year 750 B.C. the adjoining countries, directing themselves towards the South and West; about the year 500 in Western Asia begins an epoch of splendour for ancient Persia; and the wave moves on to the east of Europe, where, about 250 B.C. Greece reaches her highest state of culture and civilization—and further on to the West, where, at the birth of Christ, the Roman Empire finds itself at its apogee of power and greatness.”

Again, at this period we find the rising of a third historical wave at the far East. After prolonged revolutions, about this time, China forms once more a powerful empire, and its arts, sciences and commerce flourish again. Then 250 years later, we find the Huns appearing from the depths of Central Asia; in the year 500 A.D. a new and powerful Persian kingdom is formed; in 750—in Eastern Europe—the Byzantine empire; and, in the year 1,000—on its western side—springs up the second Roman Power, the Empire of the Papacy, which soon reaches an extraordinary development of wealth and brilliancy.

At the same time, the *fourth* wave approaches from the Orient. China is again flourishing; in 1250, the Mongolian wave from Central Asia has overflowed and covered an enormous area of land, including with it Russia. About 1500, in Western Asia, the Ottoman Empire rises in all its might and conquers the Balkan peninsula; but at the same time in Eastern Europe, Russia throws off the Tartar yoke, and about 1750, during the reign of Empress Catherine, rises to an unexpected grandeur and covers itself with glory. The wave ceaselessly moves further on to the West, and, beginning with the middle of the past century, Europe is living over an epoch of revolutions and reforms, and, according to the author, “if it is permissible to prophesize, then, about the year 2,000, Western Europe will have lived one of those periods of culture and progress so rare in history.” The Russian press, taking the cue, believes that “towards those days the Eastern Question will be finally settled, the national dissensions of the European peoples will come to an end, and the dawn of the new millennium will witness the abolishment of armies and an alliance between all the European empires.” The signs of regeneration are also fast multiplying in Japan and China, as if pointing to the approach of a new historical wave at the extreme East.

If, from the cycle of two-and-a-half century duration, we descend to those which leave their impress every century, and, grouping together the events of ancient history, will mark the development and rise of empires, then we will assure ourselves that, beginning from the year 700 B.C., the centennial wave pushes forward, bringing into prominence the following nations—each in its turn—the Assyrians,

the Medes, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Macedonians, the Carthaginians, the Romans and the Germanians.

The striking periodicity of the wars in Europe is also noticed by Dr. E. Zasse. Beginning with 1700 A.D., every ten years have been signalized by either a war or a revolution. The periods of the strengthening and weakening of the warlike excitement of the European nations represent a wave strikingly regular in its periodicity, flowing incessantly, as if propelled onward by some invisible fixed law. This same mysterious law seems at the same time to make these events coincide with astronomical wave or cycle, which, at every new revolution, is accompanied by the very marked appearance of spots in the sun. The periods, when the European powers have shown the most destructive energy, are marked by a cycle of 50 years' duration. It would be too long and tedious to enumerate them from the beginning of History. We may, therefore, limit our study to the cycle beginning with the year 1712, when *all* the European nations were fighting at the same time—the Northern, and the Turkish wars, and the war for the throne of Spain. About 1761, the “Seven Years' War”; in 1810 the wars of Napoleon I. Towards 1861, the wave has a little deflected from its regular course, but, as if to compensate for it, or, propelled, perhaps, with unusual forces, the years directly preceding, as well as those which followed it, left in history the records of the most fierce and bloody war—the Crimean war—in the former period, and the American Rebellion in the latter one. The periodicity in the wars between Russia and Turkey appears peculiarly striking and represents a very characteristic wave. At first the intervals between the cycles, returning upon themselves, are of thirty years' duration—1710, 1740, 1770; then these intervals diminish, and we have a cycle of twenty years—1790, 1810, 1829-30; then the intervals widen again—1853 and 1878. But, if we take note of the whole duration of the in-flowing tide of the warlike cycle, then we will have at the centre of it—from 1768 to 1812—three wars of seven years' duration each, and, at both ends, wars of two years.

Finally, the author comes to the conclusion that, in view of facts, it becomes thoroughly impossible to deny the presence of a regular

periodicity in the excitement of both mental and physical forces in the nations of the world. He proves that in the history of all the peoples and empires of the Old World, the cycles marking the millenniums, the centennials as well as the minor ones of 50 and 10 years' duration, are the most important, inasmuch as neither of them has ever yet failed to bring in its rear some more or less marked event in the history of the nation swept over by these historical waves.

The history of India is one which, of all histories, is the most vague and least satisfactory. Yet, were its consecutive great events noted down, and its annals well searched, the law of cycles would be found to have asserted itself here as plainly as in every other country in respect of its wars, famines, political exigencies and other matters.

In France, a meteorologist of Paris went to the trouble of compiling the statistics of the coldest seasons, and discovered, at the same time, that those years, which had the figure 9 in them, had been marked by the severest winters. His figures run thus: In 859 A.D., the northern part of the Adriatic sea was frozen and was covered for three months with ice. In 1179, in the most moderate zones, the earth was covered with several feet of snow. In 1209, in France, the depth of snow and the bitter cold caused such a scarcity of fodder that most of the cattle perished in that country.

In 1249, the Baltic Sea, between Russia, Norway and Sweden remained frozen for many months and communication was held by sleighs. In 1339, there was such a terrific winter in England, that vast numbers of people died of starvation and exposure. In 1409, the river Danube was frozen from its sources to its mouth in the Black Sea. In 1469 all the vineyards and orchards perished in consequence of the frost. In 1609, in France, Switzerland and Upper Italy, people had to thaw their bread and provisions before they could use them. In 1639, the harbour of Marseilles was covered with ice to a great distance. In 1659 all the rivers in Italy were frozen. In 1699 the winter in France and Italy proved the severest and longest of all. The prices for articles of food were so much raised that half of the population died of starvation. In 1709 the winter was no less terrible. The ground was frozen in France, Italy and Switzerland, to the depth of several feet,

and the sea, south as well as north, was covered with one compact and thick crust of ice, many feet deep, and for a considerable space of miles, in the usually open sea. Masses of wild beasts, driven out by the cold from their dens in the forests, sought refuge in villages and even cities; and the birds fell dead to the ground by hundreds. In 1729, 1749 and 1769 (cycles of 20 years' duration) all the rivers and streams were ice-bound all over France for many weeks, and all the fruit trees perished. In 1789, France was again visited by a very severe winter. In Paris, the thermometer stood at 19 degrees of frost. But the severest of all winters proved that of 1829. For fifty-four consecutive days, all the roads in France were covered with snow several feet deep, and all the rivers were frozen. Famine and misery reached their climax in the country in that year. In 1839 there was again in France a most terrific and trying cold season. And now the winter of 1879 has asserted its statistical rights and proved true to the fatal influence of the figure 9. The meteorologists of other countries are invited to follow suit and make their investigations likewise, for the subject is certainly one of the most fascinating as well as instructive kind.

Enough has been shown, however, to prove that neither the ideas of Pythagoras on the mysterious influence of numbers, nor the theories of ancient world-religions and philosophies are as shallow and meaningless as some too forward free-thinkers would have had the world to believe.

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ANCIENT DOCTRINES VINDICATED BY MODERN PROPHECY

THE German press has recently attempted in numerous editorials to solve what seems a mystery to the ordinary and sceptical public. They feel that they are evidently betrayed by one of their own camp—a materialist of exact science. Treating at length of the new theories of Dr. Rudolph Falb—the editor of the Leipzig “popular astronomical journal,” the *Sirius*—they are struck with the faultless accuracy of his scientific prognostications, or rather to be plain, his meteorological and cosmological predictions. The fact is, that the latter have been shown by the sequence of events, to be less scientific conjectures than infallible prophecies. Basing himself upon some peculiar combinations and upon a method of his own, which, as he says, he has worked out after long years of researches and labour, Dr. Falb is now enabled to foretell months and even years in advance every earthquake, remarkable storm, or inundation. Thus, for example, he foretold last year’s earthquake at Zagrel. At the beginning of 1868 he prophesied that an earthquake would occur on August 13, in Peru, and it did take place on that very day. In May 1869 he published a scientific work entitled *The Elementary Theory of Earthquakes and Volcanic Eruptions*, in which, among other prophecies, he foretold violent earthquakes at Marseilles, at Utach, along the shores of the Austrian possessions in the Adriatic Sea, in Columbia and the Crimea, which five months later—in October—actually took place. In 1873, he predicted the earthquake in Northern Italy, at Belluno, which event occurred in the very presence of Dr. Falb, who had gone there to witness it himself, so sure was he of its taking place. In 1874, he notified to the world the then unforeseen and quite unexpected eruptions of Etna; and

notwithstanding the chaff of his colleagues in science, who told him there was no reason to expect such a geological disturbance, he went to Sicily and was able to take his desired notes on the spot, when it did happen. He also prognosticated the violent storms and winds between the 23rd and the 26th of February 1877, in Italy, and that prediction was also corroborated by fact. Soon after that, Dr. Falb went to Chile, to observe the volcanic eruptions in the Andes which he had expected and predicted two years before and—he did observe them. Immediately upon his return, in 1875, appeared his most remarkable work known as *Thoughts on, and Investigations of, the Causes of Volcanic Eruptions*—and which was immediately translated into Spanish and published at Valparaiso in 1877. After the predicted event at Zagrel had taken place, Dr. Falb was immediately invited to lecture in that city, where he delivered several remarkable discourses in which he once more warned the inhabitants of other forthcoming smaller earthquakes which, as is well known, did take place. The fact is that as was recently remarked by the *Novoye Vremya*, he has really “worked out something, knows something additional to what other people know, and is better acquainted with these mysterious phenomena of our globe than any other specialist the world over.”

What is then his wonderful theory and new combinations? To give an adequate idea of them would require a volume of comments and explanations. All we can add is, that Falb has said *all he could say* upon the subject in a huge work of his, called *Die Umwalrungen, im Welt All*, in three volumes. In Vol. I, he treats of the revolutions in the stellar world; in Vol. II, of the revolutions in the regions of clouds, or of the meteorological phenomena; and in Vol. III of the revolutions in the bosom of the earth, or earthquakes. According to Dr. Falb’s theory our *Universe* is neither limitless nor eternal, but is limited to a certain time and circumscribed within a certain space. He views the mechanical construction of our planetary system and its phenomena in quite a different light than the rest of the men of science. “He is very original, and very interesting (eccentric) in some respects, though we cannot trust him in everything”—seems the unanimous opinion of the press. Evidently, the doctor is too much of a man of

science to be treated as a “visionary” or a “hallucinated enthusiast”; and so he is cautiously *chaffed*. Another less learned mortal would surely be, were he to expound the undeniably occult and cabalistic notions upon the Cosmos that he does. Therefore, while passing over his theories in silence as if to avoid being compromised in the propagation of his “heretical” views, the papers generally add.—“We send the reader who may be curious to fathom the doctrines of Dr. Rudolph Falb to the latest work of this remarkable man and prophet.” Some add to the information given the fact that Dr. Falb’s theory carries back the “Universal” deluge to 4000 years B.C., and presages another one for about the year 6,500 of the Christian era.

It appears that the theories and teaching of Dr. Falb are no new thing in this department of science, as two hundred years ago, the theory was propounded by a Peruvian named Jorie Baliri, and about a century ago by an Italian called Toaldo. We have, therefore, a certain right to infer that Dr. Falb’s views are cabalistic, or rather those of the mediaeval Christian mystics and fire-philosophers, both Baliri and Toaldo having been practitioners of the “secret sciences.” At the same time—though we have not yet been so fortunate as to have read his work—that calculation of his, in reference to the Noachian deluge and the period of 6500 A.D. allotted for its recurrence, shows to us as plain as figures can speak that the learned doctor accepts for our globe the “Heliacal,” Great year, or cycle of six *sars*, at the close and turning point of which our planet, is always subjected to a thorough physical revolution. This teaching has been propounded from time immemorial and comes to us from Chaldea through Berossus, an astrologer at the temple of Belus at Babylon. Chaldea, as is well known, was the one universal centre of magic, from which radiated the rays of occult learning into every other country where the mysteries were enacted and taught. According to this teaching,—believed in by Aristotle if we may *credit* Censorinus—the “great year” consists of 21,000 odd, years (the latter varying) or six Chaldean *sars* consisting of 3,500 years each. These two decimillenniums are naturally halved, the first period of 10,500 years bringing us to the top of the cycle and a minor cataclysm; the latter decimillennium to a terrible and universal

geological convulsion. During these 21,000 years the polar and equatorial climates gradually exchange places, “the former moving slowly towards the line and the tropical zone: . . . replacing the forbidding wastes of the icy poles. This change of climate is necessarily attended by cataclysms, earthquakes and other cosmical throes. As the beds of the ocean are displaced, at the end of every decimillennium and about one *neros* (600 years) a semi-universal deluge like the legendary Bible flood is brought about” (see *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I, pp. 30-31).

It now remains to be seen how far Dr. Falb’s theory and the old antediluvian teaching mentioned by the author of *Isis Unveiled* agree. At all events, as the latter work antedated by three years, his *Die Umwalrungen im Welt All* which was published in 1881 (but two months ago), the theory was not borrowed from the Leipzig astronomer’s work. We may add that the constant verification of such geological and meteorological predictions besides its scientific value is of the utmost philosophical importance to the student of theosophy. For it shows : (a) that there are few secrets in nature absolutely inaccessible to man’s endeavours to snatch them from her bosom; and (b) that Nature’s workshop is one vast clock-work guided by immutable laws in which there is no room for the caprices of *special providence*. Yet he, who has fathomed the ultimate secrets of the Proteus-nature—which changes but is ever the same—can, without disturbing the LAW, avail himself of the yet unknown correlations of natural Force to produce *effects* which would seem miraculous and impossible, but to those who are unacquainted with their *causes*. “The law which moulds the tear also rounds the planet.” There exists a wealth of chemic force—in heat, light, electricity and magnetism—the possibilities of whose mechanical motions are far from being *all* understood. Why then should the theosophist who believes in *natural* (though occult) *law* be regarded as either a charlatan or a credulous fool in his endeavours to fathom its secrets? Is it only because following the traditions of ancient men of science the methods he has chosen differ from those of modern learning?